

RESEARCH CENTRE FOR CROSS-CULTURAL
MUSIC & DANCE PERFORMANCE

Newsletter 4

Welcome

We are approaching the end of the second year of the AHRB Research Centre. Work on all the constituent projects is well under way, but we are at a point that many colleagues will recognise, where the first fruits of our work is being submitted to publishers, but where a number of the outputs we would like to trumpet are, as we say, 'in press'. Offering an overview of progress would, then, fail to set the pulses racing. In the following pages, though, you will read some of the interesting things that have been happening, including reports from some of the SOAS short-term research fellows who have been working with us and reports on some of our core activities, a report on a conference the Research Centre co-organised and announcements for three upcoming conferences that we are preparing. There are also a set of CD reviews, a long contribution that forms part of the preparatory work for one segment of Project 6: *The Performance of Ritual in Asian Music and Dance* and a set of reviews prepared by postgraduate students that allow reflection of what we are trying to achieve in Project 2: *Documentation*.

Keith Howard

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THE MUWASHSHAH: History, Origins and Present Practices

School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS], Thornhaugh Square, London WC1

Friday 8 October – Sunday 10 October 2004

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/Muwashshah>

*If you wish to register for the conference, please reserve your place by sending an e-mail to ed.emery@britishlibrary.net. Alternatively write to the conference organiser, **Ed Emery**[**Muwashshah Conference**], Peterhouse, Cambridge CB2 1RD UK. A Registration Form and Programme will then be sent to you.*

The cost of Registration for this 3-day conference is as follows.

Normal rate: £45.00 [one-day rate £15.00]

Concessions: £20.00 [one-day rate £7.00]

If you cannot afford the lower rate, please write and we'll see what we can do.

The fee covers entrance to the conference and a ticket for the Saturday Night Concert in the Brunei Gallery. It does not cover food and accommodation.

Please fill in the following details:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

.....

PHONE: **E-MAIL:**

IF ATTENDING ONLY ONE DAY, PLEASE SPECIFY:

Improvisation in Musical Performance

Saturday 23 October 2004

with a concert on Friday evening 22 October

Venue: SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London

Improvisation is a form of musical practice that is shared by different musical traditions throughout the world, but as an elusive phenomenon it has often been neglected in both theoretical scholarship and practice-based research. This study day aims to present through performance demonstration and academic discussion the theory and practice of improvisation in different musical traditions. We anticipate a cross-cultural dialogue will emerge through the juxtaposition of speech with performance, and as synergies emerge between different cultural practices. Researchers from both practical and theoretical backgrounds are invited to explore the interfaces between systems of improvisatory practices.

Grammars of improvisation operate within a continuum that stretches between pre-existing structures and spontaneity, or between constraint and opportunity. How, though, do musicians (in, for example, jazz or European, African and Asian classical and popular traditions), negotiate between musical frameworks and traditions of improvisation?

If you are interested in participating, please contact Iain Foreman (iainforeman@soas.ac.uk) or Susan Bagust (sjbagust@onetel.net.uk)

MUSIC AND DANCE PERFORMANCE: CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACHES

A JOINT CONFERENCE OF

THE BRITISH FORUM FOR ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

AND

THE AHRB RESEARCH CENTRE FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MUSIC AND DANCE PERFORMANCE

Wednesday 13 April – Saturday 16 April 2005

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

Ethnomusicologists and Dance Anthropologists are particularly well placed to conduct 'participant observation', by learning to become practitioners of performance. Much of the knowledge we seek to document is held by people who demonstrate their expertise less in words than in performance. Researchers are increasingly exploring the interface of academia and performance, encouraged by the emphasis within governments and government agencies on the creative industries. The 2005 Annual Conference of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology, hosted jointly with the AHRB Research Centre for Cross-Cultural Music and Dance Performance, will explore this interface, and consider the connections between music and dance.

Running throughout the conference, in addition to more general sessions, will be a series of sessions devoted to specific sub-themes. We anticipate that each session will last between two and three hours. Five that are already planned are given below, with convenors; these arise from the Research Centre projects. If you are interested in participating in one of the five given below, you are invited in the first instance to contact the convenor. We encourage you to propose additional topics for paper, panel and workshop sessions that relate to the overall conference theme and which you would like to convene and organise.

In addition to this overall theme, papers are invited that report on 'work in progress' in other areas of ethnomusicology and dance research.

Abstracts for papers, workshop, and performance proposals should be submitted to Keith Howard (kh@soas.ac.uk) by 30 November 2004. All abstracts should be sent *by Email wherever possible* in the following format: NAME OF PRESENTER, SPACE, TITLE, SPACE, TEXT (Maximum length: 200 words).

Sub-Themes

1. Approaches to the analysis of musical performance

Convenor: Richard Widdess (rw4@soas.ac.uk)

The epistemology of musical analysis in the West has developed almost exclusively in the context of written scores that represent models for performance rather than performance itself; what is analysed is normally the score. How far can Western analytical techniques be applied to music for which there is no written score? What other approaches may be possible? How far can an ethnomusicological approach help us to understand the structure of musical performance in relation to its experience and meanings?

2. Ritual and Performance

Convenors: Keith Howard (kh@soas.ac.uk) and Stephen Jones (zhongsidi@hotmail.com)

Within this sub-theme, we want to explore the place of ritual music and dance in contemporary society. What is the value of ritual music and dance in local contexts? As ritual is also performed on stage, and as it is recorded by national and international media, how does it adapt to or resist social and cultural change? How can liturgical and para-liturgical performance be integrated into studies of the whole ritual event? When local practices are marketed as entertainment, who debates issues of tradition and preservation? Papers are invited that explore these issues of continuity, preservation and change in the music and dance of ritual.

3. Transformations in African Music and Dance

Convenors: Jean Johnson-Jones (J.Johnson-Jones@surrey.ac.uk) and James Burns (cepafrica@yahoo.com)

Scholars have often looked at traditional culture in Africa as if it is entirely the product of communal authorship. By doing so, however, the ongoing creative process that is taking place within many traditions in contemporary Africa is often neglected. Of particular interest is the investigation of transformation, both socially, through discourse with practitioners, and empirically, through transcription and analysis. Papers are invited that investigate aspects of the creative process in contemporary African arts (including, but not exclusively, music and dance).

4. Performing Indonesian dance and music in transnational contexts

Convenors: Alessandra Lopez y Royo (al19@soas.ac.uk) and Matthew Cohen (m.cohen@tfts.arts.gla.ac.uk)

Indonesian dance and music are increasingly performed by both Indonesians and non-Indonesians in transnational contexts. Indonesian performers are internationalizing their music and dance, now conceived against a world backdrop, while simultaneously modern digital technology has impacted on the dissemination and reception of Indonesian performance worldwide. Performers of Indonesian origin engage in artistic partnerships, internationally, with non-Indonesians, creating 'traditional' and 'hybrid' work. They take on, sometimes against their own wishes, the role of culture bearer or culture representative in extra-local contexts, embodying Indonesianness, Javaneness or Balineseness. Papers, workshops and short performances—in any combination—are invited to explore the transnationalism of Indonesian dance and music and issues of tradition and hybridity

5. Postcolonial Identity Construction in South Asian Dance and Music

Convenors: Andrée Grau (a.grau@roehampton.ac.uk), Stacey Prickett (s.prickett@roehampton.ac.uk) and Janet O'Shea (J.O'Shea@surrey.ac.uk)

Issues of tradition and transformation within South Asian dance and music practices inform postcolonial identity formation in the Indian subcontinent and the UK. The various 'texts' of dance and music practices and their contexts allow analysis of different versions of identity. Papers are invited which explore the construction of South Asian identities and the transformation of dance and music practices in relation to aesthetics, technique, political and/or social contexts.

Venue

School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), University of London

Hosts

British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the AHRB Research Centre for Cross-Cultural Music & Dance Performance (SOAS, UniS, Roehampton)

The conference will take place at SOAS' Vernon Square Campus, London. Accommodation has been reserved in John Adams Hall, 15-23 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H. This is a clean and well-furnished student hall of residence with shared bathrooms; delegates may alternatively opt for hotel accommodation, and a list of suitable hotels can be provided on request.

Project 7: New Directions in South Asian Dance

Report from Acting Associate Director, Roehampton
Dr Stacey Prickett

Administration:

In response to advertisements, short-term research fellowships and performer residencies are in the process of being finalised for the 2004/2005 academic year.. Since Dr. Andrée Grau is currently on sabbatical, her duties as Associate Director of the Research Centre and co-director of Project 7 have been temporarily taken over by Dr. Stacey Prickett (S.Prickett@roehampton.ac.uk). Noreen Markwell has been appointed Roehampton Administrator for Projects 7 and 4, and can be contacted at N.Markwell@roehampton.ac.uk. Due to Dr. Grau's sabbatical and Dr. Janet O'Shea's current fieldwork, the following report provides partial coverage of Project 7 activities at UniS and RUS.

Research and Outcomes

On May 22, 2004, Akademi (South Asian Dance in the UK) and the ICA co-sponsored *No Man's Land: exploring South Asian-ness*, a day long conference at the ICA. Dr. Andrée Grau's presentation entitled "A sheltering sky? negotiating identity through South Asian dance" explored some of the notions embedded in labels such as 'Indian dance/dancer' and 'South Asian dance/dancer', framing the discussion within a debate on identity/alterity and inclusion/exclusion. Dr. Grau highlighted how many discussions about dance today focus on the social and cultural identities of dancers/choreographers rather than engaging with the artistic and aesthetic elements of their work. In addition, Dr. Grau continued her association with the Darpana Performance Group during their week-long May residency at RUS, detailed below.

In May, 2004, Dr Stacey Prickett organised a lecture demonstration with Kathak exponent Pratap Pawar and New Delhi based tabla player Hari Mohan Sharma for the RUS BA module World Music and Dance. This output further developed contacts with artists and scholars Dr. Prickett established during her 2003 Indian fieldwork. Dr. Prickett has a 6,000 word article in press for *Dance Research*, a peer-reviewed journal. *Techniques and Institutions: The Transformation of British Dance Tradition through South Asian Dance* considers the inclusion of kathak and bharatanatyam in the portfolio of dance examinations offered by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. Delving beyond ISTD's response to the increasing multicultural face of British society, the organisation's expansion opens avenues of inquiry into the relationship between dance techniques and British institutions, and issues of identity and tradition in relation to the location and function of South Asian dance in Britain. The implications of standardisation of the dance forms and the ISTD's need to establish criteria for assessing knowledge of dance's cultural foundations are also considered.

In June 2004, Dr. Stacey Prickett presented a paper at the Society of Dance History Scholars annual conference held at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Entitled *India's gurukula system: Classical Dance Training Traditions in Transition*, Dr. Prickett drew on her fieldwork in New Delhi and Chennai during 2003, examining ways in which both state-supported dance academies and independent gurus perceive their teaching as perpetuating aspects of the gurukula system.

Dr. Mandakranta Bose took up her fellowship to conduct research on the role of dance in South Asian diasporic communities in Britain, carried forward from last year. Dr. Bose shared her work on *The Re-fashioning of Classical Indian Dancing in the South Asian Diaspora* during UniS research week. Research Fellow Martin Welton is conducting fieldwork on the martial art of kalarippayattu in Kerala during the summer.

Other Research Centre related activities include former Research Fellow Liz Lea's solo programme as part of Roehampton's Dance Diary events. Ms. Lea and Dr Alessandra Lopez y Royo both presented work at *Text, Context, Performance: reconstruction and*

reinvention in African Asian and European dances, a one day work shop seminar organised by Dr Janet O'Shea at UniS.

Resident Performers/Workshops:

Project 7 recently hosted its second residency. Resident Performer-Researchers Dr Mallika Sarabhai and six members of The Darpana Performance Group (Yadavan Chandran, Jayan Nair, D Padmakumar, Anahita Sarabhai, Revanta Sarabhai, and Sonal Solanki) worked at Roehampton 17th –23rd May. This residency was especially linked to Dr Grau's investigation of issue-based work. It also continues Dr Grau's work on institutions as exemplified by The Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, Ahmedabad where she did fieldwork last year. The company worked on a human rights piece *Colours of the Heart*. Daily training and rehearsals were observed and documented. A public workshop for a small group of professional dancers was held on May 23rd. Dr. Sarabhai conducted a practical workshop based on her yoga derived training for dancers in addition to sharing aspects of her choreographic process. Research Fellow Martin Welton was among the workshop participants. The Darpana Performance Group performed excerpts of *Colours of the Heart* to close the event.

During her stay Dr Sarabhai also participated in an event hosted by Akademi and the South Asia Solidarity Group at the Hampstead Town Hall where she discussed the harassment she suffered from the Gujarati government over the past two years.

Project 7's third residency will take place at Roehampton during the summer and will involve dancer Prarthana Purkayastha and two musicians. Ms Purkayastha's practice based residency will entail teaching Navanritya (new dance) technique to British based dance students. After adaptation of the form for British students, Ms. Purkayastha will run a one-week summer school to teach the fundamental movement principles of Navanritya. Ms. Purkayastha will also choreograph a new work based on the Navanritya methodology, exploring the relationship between music and dance in the context of this contemporary dance form.

Project 7: Dancing Dissent, An Account of a Workshop with Mallika Sarabhai

Carol Brown

How do choreographers, invested with the knowledge and skills of a classical tradition, create innovative and politically challenging work? Furthermore how might this work survive within a context of political repression? These questions underpinned my attendance at a workshop given by Mallika Sarabhai and the Darpana Ensemble. The workshop, as an introduction to the creative and critical processes of the Darpana Ensemble, elucidated many aspects of the company's work: It provided an introduction to the company's training and compositional methods; and it demonstrated how social and political issues can be animated through the rhythmic structures of Indian classical music and dance. In the context of Roehampton's Michaelis Theatre the workshop focused upon the use of abstract musical structures as a foundation for the embodying of political issues which confront ideologies and social injustice.

After group introductions we were invited to propose how best to utilise this one-off opportunity to work with members of the Darpana Ensemble. Most people in the workshop had some familiarity with Classical Indian dance and were curious about how the company made work which was politically challenging. There was also a curiosity about how the company prepared for making and performing their work.

A group warm-up, led by Mallika, centered on yoga postures and breathing. Yoga training forms a foundation for the company and is practiced by all dancers and musicians. Mallika directed this together with company members who were on hand to demonstrate the more advanced postures. The warm-up was followed by an extended game to name oneself whilst retaining a rhythm through gesture and movement. This training in embodying rhythm formed the foundation for further explorations in which issues, moods and emotions were elaborated through choreographic composition. As a choreographer who does not work from a strictly musical base nor a very literal foundation, I found this work to be challenging. In adding an emotion or theme to a choreographed movement, the relationship between form and content had an arbitrary quality which though it felt unfamiliar and anti-intuitive, nonetheless did create a degree of freedom to explore the movement fully before adding to it a narrative or literal component. The process emphasised a directness of content which is unusual within the contemporary dance context in the UK. It also proposed a looser relationship between movement invention and narrative content thus departing from the more mimetic use of gesture evident in classical dance. In moving this way, effectively from the musical structure, to the embodied phrase, to the citation of dissent, the work held a powerful tension between *innovation*, as opposition to dominant forces and *tradition*, as that which is habitually embodied in rhythm and movement shaping.

Much of the work was developed in pairs enabling a feedback mechanism between partners during the emergent process. Together with Revanta Sarabhai, I worked on a duet which explored the to and fro action of a simple phrase collectively compiled through the rhythmic structure we were given. This was further elaborated through a number of variations which explored the theme of domestic violence. Other workshop participants embraced themes to do with the colonisation of land, the stripping of resources and poverty. All meaty issues and ones which, to my knowledge, most contemporary choreographers in London would steer clear of. This drew attention to the different imperatives at work for choreographers working in conditions which do not afford the privileges of a first world cultural industry. It also provided a wakeup call from the comfort zone and dominant logic of a late capitalist Western empire. For Mallika and the Darpana Ensemble, the inner necessity to create is channelled into the making of works which embrace issues to do with women's rights, poverty and the environment. The resulting

works are disseminated widely within the context of Gujarat and internationally through the festival circuit. From listening to Mallika speak and witnessing her work at the end of

the workshop it was evident that passionate held beliefs merge with a strong performance presence to create a powerful alchemy which transforms choreography into social and political agency.

Project 4: Interpreting and Re-constructing Indonesian Dance and Music Heritage - Update

Dr Alessandra Lopez y Royo

Project 4 is about to enter its second year. Co-ordinated at Roehampton, but with most of the research work taking place at SOAS, project 4 reflects the inter-institutional culture which characterises the Centre.

Throughout the year, Ni Madé Pujawati and her dancers have continued to work on the *Jayaprana* choreography which is now ready to be performed – hopefully there will be opportunities to do so next term.

In April 2004 Professor Sardono W. Kusumo joined the Centre as a Visiting Fellow for a period of four weeks. He is currently working on *Macbeth* which he intends to develop into a full fledged theatrical production over the next few months, with the dancers of the Sardono Dance Theatre, in Solo, Java. He delivered an illustrated lecture about his work and research at Roehampton on 5th May 2004. He also spent time at the University of Glasgow, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, liaising with Dr Matthew Cohen.

In summer 2004, Dr Hobart, Dr Lopez and Ni Madé will be embarking on their fieldtrip, researching dance and music in the construction of Indonesian heritage.

The Centre's website is being revamped but by September it should be in working order. All information about project 4 will be posted on the new Centre's website at SOAS, with appropriate links to other relevant websites.

From October to November 2004 Professor I Wayan Dibia from ISI, Bali will join the Centre as performer researcher, based at SOAS. He will be working with Ni Madé Pujawati and Eka Damayanti, a Sundanese dancer based in London, on a piece of *kontemporer* (contemporary) choreography.

Professor Dibia will deliver a series of lectures on Indonesian Performing Arts at SOAS, during his residency. Check the website for details nearer the time. Professor Dibia will also be Research Fellow of the Centre (Roehampton) for five weeks from early November, following his residency at SOAS. During that time he will work together with bharatanatyam dancer Chitra Sundaram, resident performer of project 7, on a choreography exploring cross-rhythms in bharatanatyam and Balinese dance. This is a very exciting development which has organically grown out of the sharings organised for project 4 throughout the year and which will see different artists in dialogue with each other, discussing their practice, with a performance outcome.

Research Seminar Series.

From January to March 2004 the Centre held its first series of Research Seminars. The seminar series was started as a pilot. The aim of these research seminars was to bring together in discussion experienced and less experienced researchers, including researchers of the Centre, visiting research fellows and researchers not involved in any of the Centre's projects to explore any aspect of the music, dance and theatrical arts of Asia and Africa.

The seminars, given by Dr Matthew Cohen (Glasgow), Dr Stephen Jones (SOAS) and Dr Janet O'Shea (UniS) have been very successful with good attendance from within and

outside the Centre. A number of speakers have already volunteered to present papers during the next academic session.

Seminars will resume in last week of October 2004. The first speaker will be Dr Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe (Aberystwyth) who will talk about the Guru in the Indian performing arts tradition. All are welcome to attend.

For further details please contact Dr Alessandra Lopez y Royo, al19@soas.ac.uk

Project 5: Transformations in African Music and Dance Performance – Update

James Burns

Project convenor Jean Johnson-Jones (Surrey) and project ethnomusicologist James Burns (SOAS) have recently returned from a month of fieldwork in Ghana. Project 5 is centred on exploring the processes of transformation currently operating within certain dance drumming traditions in Africa. The Ewe dance drumming tradition, out of many possible traditions, was selected for the first fieldwork trip based upon its suitability to the projects aims, namely it continues to support and sustain social life in its traditional cultural context, and concurrently has been adopted by the two national dance companies, as a piece of “Ghanaian culture.” Our project seeks to investigate the process of transformation within its various contexts, and to explore the dynamic relations articulated within the avenues of intercultural contact. In Ghana three dance ensembles were selected that represented, more or less, the full panorama of music performance in

Ghana: The Ghana Dance Ensemble- Legon, The Ghana Dance Ensemble- National Theatre, and the Dzigbordi Haborbor from the Ewe town of Dzodze.

First, we worked and lived with the Dzigbordi Haborbor, a rural dance troupe from Dzodze, in the Volta Region of Ghana. The Dzigbordi group plays many genres of dance-drumming, often at funerals and festivals, and we not only were able to witness their performances at three local funerals, but also observed several important ritual dances by the Yeye shrine. This portion of the project was concerned with looking at the dances in their native contexts, where they continue to function in life rituals.

Next we looked at these dances as they have been transformed out of the villages and on to the national stage. The two national companies we worked with have pursued different artistic directions, based upon their perceived missions in representing Ghanaian culture. The Dance Ensemble at Legon, for example, is located within the University of Ghana at a special international institute for African music and dance, headed by renowned ethnomusicologist Kwabena Nketia. They pioneered the approach of arranging the traditional dances of Ghana's various ethnic groups for the stage not only to promote the artistic qualities of Ghanaian music traditions, but also to study, preserve, transcribe, and analyse these traditions by working closely with academics from both Ghana and outside. Currently, the ensemble at Legon, led by Benjamin Ayettey, has sought to continue to preserve the original choreographed renditions of the dances, as they were conceived by the late Dr. A.M. Opoku, the man most responsible for the dances' current forms. However the ensemble at the national theatre, led by Nii Yartey, has followed the idiosyncratic path of its director, who has sought to realize his own artistic vision of African dance that draws from his diverse influences including ballet, modern dance, Jazz, and his own ethnic Ga traditions.

Therefore the two ensembles allowed us to explore different approaches to representing Ewe dance traditions on the stage. One approach, represented at Legon, is to preserve their original adaptations of the dances as standardized works that can even be taught and assessed by students in the School of Performing Arts, and the other, represented by the National Theatre, is to use the dances as inspirational springboards for constantly evolving adaptations, that are not limited by any theoretical limitations. Jean and James will be presenting their findings at the upcoming conference of the British Forum of Ethnomusicology next Spring.

Soul of the Fiddle Conference: The Fiddle in Traditional Cultures, SOAS 28–30 March 2004

Stephen Jones

This conference was organized by the Jewish Music Institute at SOAS in collaboration with the AHRB Research Centre as part of the larger 'Genius of the Violin' festival. The festival programme proclaimed, "The festival has as its core objectives the breaking down of unnecessary barriers between classical and non-classical music". One can indeed trace this idea back to Yehudi Menuhin, whose global vision encompassed Indian music and jazz. Several dozen participants came to the conference, over which Geraldine Auerbach presided genially, assisted ably by Laoise Davidson, with Ed Emery making provocative comments. A concert at the South Bank and workshops elsewhere continued the 'hands-on' approach.

As one who tends to avoid conferences for their excessive theoretical bent, I was slightly disturbed by the lack of theoretical probing, wonderful as it is to hear demonstrations from so many fiddlers. As a theme, an instrument (or an instrument family) needs conceptual back-up. It was good to hear many contributors stressing links with the voice and with

dance; many fiddle traditions have been heard in concert for many years, but concerts have supplemented, not replaced, social music-making, and fiddling worldwide remains largely a social phenomenon, in pubs, for weddings, for dancing, for exorcisms... I would have loved to see film of fiddling in such social contexts.

In a sense it was a great relief that no-one was present to bandy organological terms like 'friction chordophone', but we do, I fear, need to place both classical violin and folk fiddle families within the whole spectrum of bowed lutes. A fleeting reference to the labyrinthine Borghesian classifications of Sachs-Hornbostel and its revisions would not have been amiss (Sachs-Hornbostel type 352; Myers 1992: 245–300; for bowed lutes see 278–9). Apart from some welcome gate-crashing by the Chinese *erhu*, the conference featured only fiddles, rather than bowed lutes or bowed zithers. Not to mention the double bass, and viola jokes. So this was probably a wise limitation.

Instruments are only tools, not music. As a classical fiddler, I grew out of the whole violin fetish quite early in which I just wanted to hear, and play, Bach and Mahler. That is not to deny that instrumentalists in other cultures may have just as much fascination for the personalities and techniques of their instrument as Western art musicians collecting different interpretations of the Bruch, or yapping on about string gauges. Several speakers appositely reminded us that any instrument within a given culture is entirely subject to its whole music.

Bowed lutes commonly accompany both dance and voice (I am reminded of Lord's early film clips of Balkan *guslar* bards; but why should some cultures, like itinerant folk Chinese story-tellers, prefer plucked lutes?). Perhaps the most obvious question, long broached by Bruno Nettl, is that of the compatibility of various aspects of the invading culture. Fiddles have largely been prestigious instruments of colonial invaders, inviting us to reflect further on modernization and Westernization (see, for example, Nettl 1983: 345–54; and for Iran and India, Nettl 1985: 47–50). Why does a culture choose to replace its traditional bowed lutes with the fiddle, or how are their respective functions allocated? Apart from the prestige of the strong modern invading culture, what other elements make a culture decide that it needs the fiddle? What can it do that the indigenous bowed lutes can't? Indeed, why do some places have no bowed lutes at all? Why do others not replace them with fiddles?

Fiddles may be perceived to have several advantages, besides their general social prestige derived from that of the dominant invader. I'll mention a few more objectively musical reasons:

- Versatility: in class, and in context. The fiddle crosses class boundaries, but so do other instruments, not to mention the voice. Court, church, entertainment, professional, dance (court, folk), epic, song, accompaniment, solo, ensemble, chamber, outdoors...
- Volume is not necessarily a determining factor, although dynamic range may be: not so much within the piece, but between diverse chamber and outdoor contexts.
- Pitch range is not necessarily a desideratum, but it may come to be valued, changing the music. Four strings are not necessarily superior to two. OK, the fiddle can play chords more easily than most indigenous bowed lutes, but more often it does not, only playing occasional drones. It can indeed play drones in different keys, but again this is seldom useful in cultures where modulation is rare.
- Agility, again, depends on cultural parameters. Virtuosity is subjective, not an obvious criterion. Ornaments within a small range are often the most valued. Can the Indian violin do anything the *sarangi* cannot?
- Intonation: despite Nettl's examples in Iran of how the fiddle (as well as fixed-pitch instruments) tends to subvert traditional intonation, fiddlers often retain traditional intonation. Romanian fiddlers retain their scale while playing with diatonic accordions.
- Expressiveness is another elusive concept. Fiddles may be more apt than some plucked or wind instruments to imitate the sustained lyrical expression of the voice,

with *gamak*-like ornaments, but not necessarily more than indigenous bowed lutes. And this doesn't explain the growing popularity of accordions.

The conference offered few clues to such casual reflections. One might also seek to define more clearly changing physical attributes such as the body of the fiddle and its 'accessories', notably the strings (the modern change from silk/gut to metal was a vast aesthetic leap, barely broached in the conference) and the bow, as well as tunings.

In sum, the conference trod an unsteady line between celebration of diversity and a feel-good fusion. The individual style of players was a common theme (Irish, Turkish, Norwegian), and due homage was paid to early recordings.

Mary Anne Alburger plunged us right into a terminological morass, introducing early bowed lutes in iconography and discussing the 1545 Mary Rose 'fiddle'. Even what we know as the western art music violin has changed a lot over 500 years, as is clear from the early music movement, represented in other parts of the main conference. And that is before we consider the violin's antecedents, or bowed lutes in other cultures. **Jim Woodhouse** gave a highly technical but entertaining talk on the acoustics of the violin, though his main premise that the basic desideratum was loudness seemed presumptuous—and I doubt that an analysis that overlooks variable cultural preferences in context and aesthetics can hold good for all bowed lutes. **Cahit Bahlav** discussed Turkish fiddling, and distributed an interesting article by Cihat Askin on indigenous bowed lutes and violin.

Jon Boden and **Pete Cooper** both spoke on the English fiddle tradition, stimulating us with discussion on the decline of dancing masters, the Industrial Revolution, enclosures, urbanization, and church bands. Jon opened refreshingly with a 1945 recording of the Morris fiddler Jinky Wells, which to our great relief he described as "rubbish", and then went on to refine: "I don't mean he was rubbish, he just couldn't play the fiddle". He found validity in Wells' disregard for technical ability. Referring to the English aesthetic of aggression, and pointing out the weird juxtaposition of twee and primal in Morris tradition, he adduced the Sex Pistols; the violin makes a good punk instrument, scratchy and full of grinding *sforzandi*. In the end, we all develop skills suitable to the music we're playing. **Frances Wilkins** discussed Shetland fiddling, both the tradition and modern heritage revival.

Kyriakos Gouventas introduced regional traditions of the Greek-Anatolian fiddle, nicely illustrated with early American recordings and his own playing. He hinted at subtle changes in ornamentation where musicians converted from *lyra* to fiddle: fiddle technique contains "memories of the *lyra*", and indeed of the bagpipe. **Brendan Mulkere** gave another suitable reminder of the fiddle's links with the voice, in the form of the plaintive Irish *sean nos*, again utilizing a historical perspective and some fine unaccompanied recorded examples. His demos with two fiddlers evoked a nice atmosphere, if not to be compared with a smoky pub.

Colin Huehns was the only intruder featuring a bowed lute, not a fiddle, which to me was most welcome. Rather than introducing the variety of bowed lutes played in Chinese ensembles accompanying vocal music, or even the better-known solo modern concert repertory of the conservatories, he chose to play new solo pieces by a student at the Royal Academy of Music in London and himself, which must have been hard for outsiders to locate: this was the tip of the tip of the iceberg. He prompted me to reflect on Chinese bowed lutes. Cantonese music, a genre which took off in the 1920s as a fusion of the indigenous ensemble of the Canton-Hong Kong area with the colonial jazz scene, soon began incorporating the violin—as well as sax and Hawaiian guitar—in a style resembling that of local bowed lutes. The music was popular in pre-revolutionary Shanghai, another centre for jazz decadence. By this time, western art music, and new Chinese compositions using the violin, were prestigious in China among the urban literate classes; even in the 1940s' Communist base-area at Yan'an, violins were often part of opera and propaganda ensembles. Since the 1980s the western classical violin has dominated the urban conservatories, yet it has barely intruded into Chinese folk traditions. Diverse bowed lutes accompany opera and narrative-singing, and you can occasionally find a

couple of violins in the band accompanying northern *bangzi* opera, but the leading instrument there remains the wailing and aggressive (as Jon Boden would say) *erxian* bowed lute. Meanwhile in Shanghai, home of cosmopolitanism, the local ensembles of the teahouses have never experimented with adding violin or other Western instruments; I wonder why not.

Sven Olav Lyngstad gave a survey of the Hardanger fiddle, again with historical background, mentioning the distribution of the “ordinary” violin. He demonstrated wedding marches, rare pieces, and scordatura tunings. Since his playing is at the literate end of the spectrum, and since he acknowledges fully the older folk end, here again I wanted videos of the more traditional rural style in social life. To illustrate various pre-modern threats to fiddling traditions he showed a great 19th-century painting of some truly morose Puritans, who would have been welcome guests at a Taliban rave. For fiddle fetishists, Sven also showed photos of some lovely early violin cases. That reminds me: you used to be able to tell a folkie from a ‘real’ classical violinist as the latter had rectangular cases, the former shaped ones (at best; or a plastic bag?), but “they all look the same nowadays”... **Sophie Solomon** gave a good introduction to *klezmer* fiddling. She noted the replacement of fiddle by clarinet prompted by louder sound preferences in America, and the revival’s brief to reconstruct fiddle playing, “making the violin speak in Yiddish”. She gave nice illustrated technical details, but I still missed some good old Transylvanian fiddle bands (for a good recent study, see Bouet 2002).

For me the Turkish fiddler **Nedim Nalbantoglou** was the star at the related concert, playing in utterly sympathetic duo with the *oud* player Mehdi Haddab. Fed up as I am with hearing terms like “the Paganini of the *erhu*” bandied around (especially since to my ears Paganini was not music), this guy really is a Paganini, visually and spiritually – I would love to watch the rosin fly if he got together with the equally manic Hungarian fiddler Lazko Felix. At the conference, Nedim still preferred to let his fiddle speak for itself. He sounds jazzy, but he was reluctant to isolate stylistic elements in his personal vocabulary. If other speakers have been too articulate, he wasn’t articulate enough!

Balu Raguraman gave a charming introduction to the violin in the Carnatic tradition, where there was apparently no indigenous tradition to compete with, unlike the northern *saranggi*. While ornamentation is basic to all fiddle traditions, his *gamaka* were most exquisite. **Rick Townend** concluded the proceedings with a free-form hoe-down through bluegrass, again reminding us of the value of early recordings. If America and bluegrass are “land/music of the free”, as he observed rather too emically, then I look forward to getting down to the Guantanamo Bay blues: yee-HA!

As Geraldine Auerbach summed up, the conference appropriately began with old Europe and ended with new world pop, offering “a new way of looking at something we thought we knew”. And London is so great: you can find it all here, Irish, bluegrass, Indian, jazz... Now, for the sake of both practising musicians and ethnomusicologists, I look forward to a jamboree spreading the net to *kemence*, *lyra*, Uyghur *setar*, Ecuadorian shamans’ fiddles, central and southeast Asian spike fiddles, and the whole vast range of African bowed lutes—and more ethnic jazz.

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The Impact of Rhythmic Cycles on Improvisation of Iranian Music

Mohammad R. Azadehfar, (University of Sheffield)

As an Iranian musician, I was not aware of the hidden impact of two major sources of rhythm, namely the Persian poetic feet and rhythmic cycles, on my improvisation until reading an article on Indian music. This was the impetus for the current research, and the article I read was Richard Widdess' 'Involving the Performers in Transcription and Analysis: a Collaborative Approach to Dhrupad', published in *Ethnomusicology* in 1994. During the transcription of an *alap* and a reconsideration of the outcome with the performer, Widdess found that while *alap* appeared to be entirely in free metre, the performer maintained an internal rhythmic cycle. Performers normally may not be directly aware of such internal rhythmic cycles during improvisation—in the above case, the Indian performer, Ritwik Sanyal, is an exceptional performer who also has knowledge of music theory.

The analogy between the principle of improvisation in Iranian and Indian music encouraged me to investigate this issue more. I set a time table for interviewing and recording musicians from both cultures, Iranian and Indian. I have had more than 19 years of experience as an Iranian musician and some 10 years of research activity in Iranian music. On the other hand, though, I had very limited knowledge of Indian music, and this had mainly been gained as a student of ethnomusicology at the University of Sheffield and while attending a course run by Widdess at SOAS, in addition, of course, to reading a few books and articles. After, some seven months of interviews, recordings and attending different Indian music events, I still find it impossible to balance the two sides of my research, Indian music and Iranian music. Either I had to make my analysis of the Iranian part very brief and inferior, or I should spend another 19 years of my life studying Indian music. Finally, I decided to go ahead by completing the Iranian part of the research—a summary of which with the general findings will be published in a future issue of this *Newsletter*. At the same time, however, I am still seeking researchers specialised in Indian music for a cooperation to take part in developing the work so that we can complete a comparative study of Iranian and Indian music.

Gestures on the Five-String Pipa and Improvisation Inspired by Butoh Dance

The Creative Process of an Intercultural Composition

Dr. Kim-Ho Ip (University of Edinburgh)

This research on the interculturality of music is a composition and performance-based project that aims to construct a possible model for fusing materials from Chinese traditional music with dance improvisation elements inspired by Japanese Butoh in an aleatoric composition more or less along the line of 20th-century western experimentalism. The main focus for exploration is how to provide an intercultural environment for diverse elements in creative work. By documenting the creative process of the composition and its performance, the research will provide information for composers, performers and analysts who are interested in intercultural music.

From the creative process to the performance of the composition, I have collaborated with two artists from different cultural backgrounds who in their careers have been involved in different multi-cultural collaborations. Cheng Yu, a pipa soloist trained in

China, has been based in London since 1990. The instrument she plays in this composition is a five-string Chinese lute, a newly reconstructed instrument based on an ancient model from the Chinese Tang Dynasty developed as a result of her separate research project. Anne-Marie Culhane is a choreographer and dancer based in Scotland who has already collaborated with me in a music and dance project entitled *Commusico*. The first phase of my research within the AHRB Research Centre was to investigate and select materials drawn from the five-stringed pipa. I explored harmonics, particularly 'noise harmonics', and ways to bring in a series of special effects, including the right-hand gestural effects of *sao* and *fu*, and left-hand slides. These I linked with calligraphic gestures, such as the directional nature of the eight basic strokes used in producing Chinese characters, the relationship between the change of brush speed and the change of the density of the ink, as well as the emphasis on the importance of space. *These were combined with an extension of Commusico, working with Anne-Marie on dance inspired by the Japanese post-1945 tradition of Butoh.*

The collaboration between a traditional Chinese *pipa* player and an improvisation dancer inspired by Japanese *Butoh* was not a project about fusion. The composer's job is to build a bridge to communicate the two worlds of expression through composition rather than fusing the two ideas into one amalgamated unit. Hence, I also played the Chinese dulcimer, *yangqin*, adding a further element to performance. In other words, the composer attempts to preserve the characters of the two elements, trying to leave space for them to express in their own languages and in their own expressive forms. The composition resulting from this research presents a potential model of an intercultural composition. The sources of expression can be traced back to Chinese music and Japanese dance, but the composition also provides an arena for encounter and inter-communication between two forms of performing languages. The composition, named *Commusico IV* was performed at SOAS in London on 21 April 2004.

Project 6: China, Shawm Bands in Village Ceremonial

Stephen Jones

This report is about one part of Project 6, *The Performance of Ritual in Asian Music and Dance*.

Both music and ritual in China were largely historical subjects until the 1980s. Since then, fieldwork by Chinese and Western scholars has shown that in the vast countryside music is still performed in the context of life cycle and calendrical ceremonies (see Stephen Jones (2003), 'Reading between the lines: reflections on the massive Anthology of folk Music of the Chinese peoples', *Ethnomusicology* 47/3: 287-337). If the meanings of such ceremonies are doubtless variable for diverse participants over the three main periods of modern Chinese history, changes in the rituals and their music often seem less obvious than one might expect. Despite the occasional concert tour by folk groups, most of this music is not known in mediated versions from the professional urban conservatory-style troupes.

The contemporary practice of ritual music in the PRC has become a popular topic of Chinese, and to a lesser extent, Western writings. Until now it has focused on institutional rituals of the great Buddhist and Daoist temples in towns and on mountains. However, the majority of Chinese ritual practice resides in the 'diffused' hands of lay specialists. Temple fairs, funerals, the building of a new cave dwelling—all involve ritual performance. The present study focuses on one type of instrumental group which is surely the single most ubiquitous—and the least understood—in the whole of China.

Shawms are found throughout the Islamic world, but their ubiquity in China is still little known. Semi-professional bands (commonly known as *chuigushou*) of (usually two) *suona* shawms and a small group of percussion (usually drum, small cymbals and gong) perform regularly for life-cycle and calendrical ceremonies; in north China at least they are by far the most common form of instrumental music-making. The many contexts for which shawm bands are required include weddings, funerals, temple fairs, rain processions, celebrations of new houses and the opening of new shops. I first drew attention to the importance of these bands in my 1995 book, *Folk Music of China: Living Instrumental Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press).

The geographical focus of the present project is a manageable and rather homogeneous area of northern China. This project focuses on bands, and hence ceremonies, in one county, that of Yanggao in the Yanbei (Jinbei) region of north Shanxi, in Datong municipality just below the Great Wall with Inner Mongolia. Detailed material on one band, the Hua family band in Yangjiabu village, is set in the context of a more general survey of bands there and further afield in north Shaanxi. Similarities and differences in the evolution of bands in the areas will be noted against their changing social, economic and political conditions.

Apart from shawm bands, the main musical component of ceremonial life in this area of north Shanxi is the activities of lay Daoists, who perform an impoverished version of vocal liturgy and *sheng-guan* instrumental music for funerals and other rituals. Their changing condition is also assessed. While exploring the bands' present fortunes, attention is paid to the common adaptation since the 1980s of adding brass-band instruments including trumpet and saxophone and playing pop music and TV theme tunes—a phenomenon noted for many other countries but still hardly for China. Here the 'big-band' format became common in some areas by the early 1980s, in others not until the mid-1990s; in some areas it is still rare. The part of cultural cadres in this is assessed, and the gradual modification of the musicians' traditional lowly social status. This gives a basis to assess the changing lives of musicians and audiences, and the place of ceremonial, in post-reform rural society.

Progress report

I visited Yanggao county in August 2003, collaborating with colleagues from the Music Research Institute in Beijing: Zhang Zhentao, the Director of the Institute, and two bright PhD candidates, Wu Fan and Wang Yingrui. We made audio and video recordings of funerals and temple fairs, as well as interviewing musicians from several bands. In December 2003 I returned to the area with Wu Fan as well as Jing Weigang, an experienced local fieldworker. Apart from witnessing more funerals, we met several senior blind shawm players who gave us further insights into ceremonial life under Maoism and recent changes. The local Bureau of Culture was supportive, providing Jones with copies of a valuable 1989 series of recordings of shawm bands.

Meanwhile, I have released an audio CD, *Walking Shri!l: the Hua family shawm band* (Pan Records 2109 (2004)), which presents the 'classic' repertory of the Hua band. While the present project complements that CD, the use of video material enriches the subject immeasurably. It looks beyond this kind of prestigious ancient repertory that has been the focus of Chinese scholars, revealing the wider ritual context, making a more complete illustration of the total ritual-music experience of villagers. Thus, it will show both how music must take second place to the whole ritual context, and how music should not be relegated by scholars of ritual. As I refine the text, a fascinating DVD is in preparation. I identify a cohesive story-line from video recordings in the field (from 1992, 2001, and the two trips in 2003) and cue the sequence to the booklet, while Sarah Biiby, the Research Centre officer appointed to develop DVD output, edits the clips. The availability of video material seems to me a most fundamental aspect of communicating my research.

One of the most delightful and instructive aspects of this project is the regular meetings of a shawm band at SOAS, consisting of dedicated students and staff (including Rachel Harris, Simon Mills, and Manuel Jimenez). However rudimentary our attempts to learn the Hua band's repertory, we discover much about the music through playing it. Moreover, the learning processes of such outsiders make an instructive contrast with those of our Chinese models. Jones invited the Hua band to take part in the 2002 Silk Road festival of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC. To date we have failed to fund a concert tour that would allow us to invite the Hua band to the UK, but we intend to invite some senior musicians to work in the Research Centre as resident performers in 2005; this will allow us all to learn with them and further document their music.

This project contrasts much of the Centre research, since it cautions against the recent focus on global links and the commodification of ritual (apart from the invasion of pop). Given that we have to study all manifestations of expressive culture, it is quite natural to pay some attention to mediated versions of ritual on the concert stage (whether in China or in the West), where we are exposed to ritual in new conditions. However, we should not suppose that this is a dominant or inevitable tendency in world musics: most music-making in the world still takes place away from the concert stage.

The shawm bands took part in propaganda teams under Maoism, and now take on board revolutionary repertory and maintain casual contacts with cadres, occasionally participating in officially organized contests in the county town. Yet their daily 'rice-bowl' activity remains ceremonial, albeit a ceremonial which is always related to change in society. The Hua band's continuing reliance on local folk ceremonial after their brief international fame in Washington is the starkest illustration of this. On one hand, shawm bands (and their local audiences) have remained resistant to central official policy, sticking to their traditional contexts and repertoires; and opportunities to commodify themselves on the international stage are strictly limited.

On the other hand, our taste in encouraging the traditional suites has no influence on them whatsoever: their local audiences, who were so resistant to state-imposed repertory under Maoism, now only want to hear pop music, and this is another theme of this project. The pop music now demanded for funerals and temple fairs is not international, but neither is it exactly local, since it parrots conformist songs heard on national TV and in karaoke bars, far from asserting local identity or subverting official images. The project will further ponder why shawm bands make no interface between their traditional and modern repertoires.

Project 6: CD Review Article, Sonic Transformations of Shamanic Representations

Keith Howard

This report concerns one part of Project 6, *The Performance of Ritual in Asian Music and Dance*. It is extracted from a paper presented at the 2004 conference of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology; a longer version will be published in the journal *World of Music*.

A contemporary fashion exists for things shamanic. Asian and Siberian shamans increasingly venture to Europe and America, to mix, perform, and perhaps 'fuse' with musicians trained in contrasting cultural traditions. Traffic need not be one way: travel to Siberia has become more feasible since the collapse of the Soviet Union, allowing us to explore the region characterised by Marcia Eliade in his classic *Shamanism: The Archaic Technique of Ecstasy* (1951/1964) as the spring from whence shamanism flowed. In the new millennium, though, what remains of the spring? We may expect to find something pristine, authentic, and untouched by the modern world; something where altered states of consciousness are a core component. If so, we will often be disappointed. In Siberia, challenging the supposed archetype, the agenda of revival leaves unanswered questions about the depth of ritual experience, about apparent continuities and potential overlaps between ritual and secular performance, and about influences from abroad now appropriated by Siberian musicians, often as a result of international collaboration.

As part of Project 6, we will invite a Siberian shaman as a resident performer in the Research Centre. We intend to collaborate in two ways: to document his or her experience and expertise, and in a performance collaboration with UK-based musicians. As part of the preparatory phase, I here explore three recent recordings that emerge out of previous collaborations: *TranceSiberia. Hulu Project featuring Sepanida* (CCn'C Records, CCn'C 01212, 2001); *Borissova and Fajt* (Sacha, 2002); *Bear Bones: K-Space* (Slam, SLAMCD247, 2002). In many ways, these three albums stand as evolutions from the subculture that was once known as 'free jazz', escaping Learyesque psychedelia by supplanting it with visions of animist magic. The basis of collaboration ranges from encapsulation to something approaching appropriation, at times allowing Siberia to stand unchecked and at other times manipulating the soundworld to create electro-acoustic collages that mirror a contemporary zeitgeist.

TranceSiberia and *Borissova and Fajt* both feature the Yakutian actress, singer and shaman Stepanida Borisova. Stepanida was born in 1950 in the Megino-Khangalaas district and trained in Yakutsk as an actress, graduating from the Shepkin Theatre Institute in Moscow and performing experimental theatre from 1974 onwards at the Ojunki Sakha Theatre. She supplemented her expertise first by singing epics then by incorporating shaman materials. The collaboration that is represented by the first CD considered here, with the Hulu Project, began in 1996; the collaboration with the Czech percussionist, Pavel Fajt, as reflected on the second CD, began in 1998.

TranceSiberia mixes instruments and voices with programmed, sampled, and turntable sounds. The instruments are assembled from diverse worlds, featuring acoustic and electronic mouth harps and the Mongolian spiked fiddle, guitars, sax and bass, Celtic harps and didgeridoos. Stepanida began her involvement by improvising to segments of Hubl's music, and played no part in the later manipulation and dubbing of her recorded vocalisations; she is reported to be unsatisfied with some of the results. Nonetheless, the whole album evokes—and is meant to evoke, since this is the primary selling point—the ritual practices of Siberia. The accompanying booklet notes state this, continuing with the comment that the music brings back to life the lost spirits of the ancients, because it comes from a culture "as old as the stones". Yakutians, we are told, "see themselves as the last representation of a culture that is pantheistic, where there exists no difference between magic, music, culture and nature...Music is still described as a realistic chaos in which sounds and movements...enter the human soul".

Who is in charge? Stepanida is foregrounded throughout. She sings characteristically Yakutian material on each track. She gives two of the tracks as solos: “Keghe/Cuckoo” and “Udagan yryta [yryata]/First Song of the First Shaman” (the last would better be translated as “Song of the Female Shaman”). Several others, too, are familiar Yakutian melodies, including “En Kellergin/When you come to me” and “Osuokhai/Yakutian dance”. When instruments, programmed drums and sampled materials join Stepanida, the music is neither eastern nor western. On the first two tracks, the regularity given by drums and repeating melodic ostinato vamps roots us in a European dance club. The album changes abruptly with track 3, where the regular pulse is taken away, a mouth harp added to punctuate and separate the vocal stanzas, and vocal reverb is increased to give an ethereal edge. DJ Rebel joins in track 6, offering turntable magic. And so on.

Compared to *TranceSiberia*, *Borissova and Fajt* has the look of a cottage production. The recordings do not sound particularly ambient; there is no evidence of enhancement through the addition of reverberation or anything similar. It is a much simpler product, featuring just two musicians, one purely vocal and the other adding electronic wizardry only to the extent that he is able to in live performance through self-actuated pedals starting and stopping pre-programmed sequences. Pavel Fajt is a well-known Czech

percussionist, here mixing an expanded kit with home-made amplified instruments morphed by computer. Always, he supports Stepanida, reacting to her every vocal melisma, building tension, fading as she subsides to whispering. Four tracks duplicate material on *TranceSiberia* but each track allows Stepanida the space to be herself. Calls, melodic flurries, shouts, yodels, sprechstimme, imitations of animals and laughs all intermingle. Sometimes, Stepanida recites, giving her imagined audience ritual instructions, or telling them about the text to follow, sometimes she calls out at full volume. The soundworld offers little connection to the West, but, although this might be seen as an evocation of an unknown shamanic world, the reality is that we remain distant from any Siberian ritual.

The third album, *Bear Bones*, starts in a promising way: steady drums seamlessly mix a shaman’s frame drum with a western drum kit, rather like a take on the regularity beloved by Michael Harner’s shamanic drumming series. Into this texture come immensely deep and rich guttural groans, the overtone singing technique known as *kargyraa* from the Tuvan shaman and musician Gendos Chamzyryn. The sound of shaman bell trees can be heard faintly in the background. Cries imitating birds and animals, and rapid in-out breathing signify movement into trance. Throughout, Gendos creates much of the Siberian sound, contributing vocals, percussion, lute, and—somewhat incongruously—piano. He is joined by Tim Hodgkinson and Ken Hyder, between them playing lap steel guitar, clarinet, alto sax and amplified *ektara* (the South Asian one-stringed bowed instrument).

The mix is carefully thought through. Not for this trio is the Siberian soundworld to be left untouched and unfiltered; Gendos moves towards the improvisations of Hodgkinson and Hyder; the duo, in turn, work off his creativity. The album, then, is neither Tuvan nor European, yet at the same time it is both. As Hodgkinson has it, though in relation to all his music-making with Hyder, “Aware that improvised music often relies on the constant challenge of working in untried combinations of musicians, we set out to do exactly the opposite, and committed ourselves to long-term...work” (cited from <http://users.unimi.it/~gpiana/dm1s01th>, accessed on 28 August 2003). Hodgkinson co-founded the experimental group Henry Cow in Cambridge in 1968 while studying Social Anthropology; after 1978, he moved on, developing solo and collective improvisation projects, one of the first being a community street orchestra with “non-musicians” co-founded with Hyder in 1979. As a duo, the two worked together in 1986 on a European tour as The Shams, and since 1990 they have regularly toured Siberia.

Hodgkinson’s take on his collaborative work mixing improvisation with Siberian shaman soundworlds was first published in *Musicworks* 66 (Fall 1996); Hyder, too, has written about his contacts with shamanism (www.hyder.demon.co.uk/trip, accessed on 28 September 2003). Their path to Siberia began with awareness that the improvisation they sought required drawing on previously-absorbed techniques to meet the demands of the

moment, so they explored ways to prepare their minds for performance, creating rituals of darkness and silence against a normative chaos. They realised a potential connection to mystical rituals and, in particular, shamanism. Trips to Siberia challenged their neat categorisations, forcing them to avoid “assimilating the shaman’s ways into Western concepts or techniques”. Initially searching for the last vestiges of pre-Soviet shamanism, they roamed widely. A note of caution is, though, in order, since they have ended up linked to Tuva, where a state-sanctioned shaman association named after the shaman drum, Dungur, in the capital, Kyzyl, gives out consultations and certificates for a small fee. It is a place where “the old shamanic ceremony, its rapt and collusive audience, seemed to have withered to a ten-minute séance...this guild of shamans, I was sure, had mutated out of recognition. The thread with the past had snapped, and they had lost touch with the ancestors” (Colin Thubron, *In Siberia*. London: HarperCollins, 1999: 102).

By this point, I will have raised the heckles of many. We do though, surely, need to judge the reality of Siberia, not just impose our perceptions on the way things should be. It is of note that throughout Siberia, as post-Soviet euphoria diminishes, the ‘shamans’ most easily met are caught up in the movement to preserve and revive something of local culture. Many live in urban centres and those who still practice old local rituals do so typically in isolated, rural enclaves. How relevant are they in a contemporary Siberia, where the shamanic mindset appears to remain, but where Siberia is connected—and becoming ever closer with every collaboration—to global cultural flows?

CD REVIEWS

Project 2 within the Research Centre involves the development and publication of a set of audio CDs. At the outset we observed that commercial recordings do not tend to provide everything we feel is needed, in terms of documentation, and in terms of a broad and full coverage of a musical genre. A recurrent theme within Centre projects is transformation, or at least, a consideration of what happens now that globalisation, the ubiquity of western pop, and the access that musicians have to international touring, mean that “there is no they there” (to quote Jody Diamond). One record label whose output involves considerable overlap between musical traditions and contemporary cross-cultural collaboration, and where the themes we are exploring appear particularly pertinent, is ARC Music Productions (<http://www.arcmusic.co.uk>). The company has been kind enough to send us CDs for review, and below are six reviews of some of their recent releases, written by Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg, Neville Murray, Giovanni Guazotti, and Melissa Payne, current postgraduate students at Roehampton and SOAS.

***Didgeridomania II* (ARC Music Productions, EUCD 1819, 2003)**

Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg

This album integrates the didgeridoo with synthesised and acoustic sounds, and in so doing often creates ambient and trance-like synthesis. The didgeridoo is an aerophone, traditionally played by the Northern Aboriginal peoples of Australia. It is an accompanying rhythmic instrument to ritual song and dance. Today the instrument is played throughout Australia mainly, but not exclusively, for the tourist industry. This has created an undifferentiated, exoticised perception of Aboriginal culture, but has also helped to produce livelihoods for Aborigines. The didgeridoo has been transported to other parts of the globe where new contexts have allowed it to become associated with different musical genres whilst still ostensibly representing traditional Aboriginal culture and spirituality.

My main concern with the recording is precisely to do with issues of representation. The difficulties start when the soloist, Corter, sets out to develop “a larger audience of appreciation and awareness” but does not specify what it is the listener should be aware or appreciative of. Those who enjoy listening to an eclectic combination of instruments and genres will, though, like the album. Corter draws on various styles including rock guitar (track 7), Western orchestral (track 10), ambient (various tracks) and trance (various tracks), as well as more traditional-sounding music (tracks 3, 6 and 9). Many tracks have snippets of text interspersed with the music, spoken by what appear to be American, Asian (track 1) and Aboriginal (track 9, 11). What cannot be appreciated from this particular recording, however, is a sense that it retains a “tribal spirituality that is inherent to indigenous music” as Corter purports on page 1 of the booklet.

Traditional Aboriginal religion is extremely complex and intricately linked with music. This music is rhythmically, as well as melodically and structurally related to geographical location and kinship. Whilst using rhythms taught to him by an Aboriginal elder on tracks 3, 6 and 9, Corter does not derive any other elements from Aboriginal music or religion other than the actual instrument. Neither does he mention the geographical home of this elder or the person’s clan name. Tracks 3, 6 and 9 are also fused with natural sounds of thunder, chirping crickets and bird life. As a result, the uninformed listener is left with an exoticised impression of Aboriginal music. Admittedly, Corter never claims to reproduce Aboriginal traditional music, but he has put forward something that sounds similar. In my opinion, he would do better to abstain from using traditional-sounding idioms altogether and focus even more on his intention to demonstrate the didgeridoo’s “space...in every musical style” (booklet, p.1). This latter objective is achieved quite well, and in the process he moves away from virtuosic solos and integrates the didgeridoo into the ensemble. Ironically, though, he shows his greatest aptitude for playing the didgeridoo in tracks 3, 6 and 9, where he is the soloist.

This brings me to consider the concept of awareness. Corter is successful in his aim to raise awareness in the astute listener of the “plight of indigenous people and their struggles with contemporary society” (p.1), but not in a positive sense. His is a good example of how traditional music is shared by its creators with visitors who then re-package and market it with a minimum of background information. Recordings like these frequently lack acknowledgement of the music’s creators or their precise geographical location. Are the voices we hear those of phantasmal beings? Who was the elder who so kindly taught Corter his rhythms? Are any of the proceeds being returned to the community? We are not told.

I realise I may have been too critical here in some respects. Perhaps this CD was put together with the best of intentions, and it might stimulate listeners to delve further into Aboriginal music. Whilst the liner notes are inadequate, at least there are some, contrasting other CDs of supposedly Aboriginal or didgeridoo music that I have seen without any notes. For those who enjoy this type of music it will no doubt be a rewarding listening experience, but listeners must realise they will not emerge imbued with “tribal spirituality” or gain deep insights into Aboriginal culture or its oppression.

Klezmer. Gregori Schechter and the Wandering Few (ARC Music Productions EUCD 1832, 2003)

Melissa Payne

This is a charming collection of mostly traditional East European melodies as performed by the Russian born clarinetist and saxophonist Gregori Schechter. Nominally *Klezmer*, it is spiced up by more than half the tracks foraying into Greek, Romanian, Armenian, Russian and Romani tunes, that are nonetheless performed in Schechter’s *Klezmer* style.

Schechter is quoted in the liner notes as saying “if there is one kind of music that cannot be captured in studio conditions, it’s *Klezmer*. The very spontaneity and changes in rhythm make it extremely difficult to get a wonderful sound when you are laying down

instruments on different tracks. There is something about the blend and vitality that only works in live performance” (booklet, p.1). I rather agree with him, which makes it all the more surprising that this collection was recorded in the ARC Studios in May 2003! Certainly the CD would have had a much more exciting feel if it had been recorded at a live concert; a few tracks (eg, tks 3 and 11, do contain background noises that give the impression there are people around having a good time. As it is, the technical near perfection of the instrumentalists, the almost ubiquitous solo clarinet tone and the carefully planned arrangements, make for slightly monotonous listening. Schechter’s arrangements are highly praised in the liner notes, but come across as predictable and standard: they mostly involve speeding up, transposing up a tone, giving a small segment of the tune to the piano or accordion, adding a countermelody in thirds, along with occasional interesting harmonisations (*skotchna* –particularly in tk 3, ‘A Journey to Moldavia’ –and tk 9).

There are many biographical details about the performers, but nowhere in the liner notes does it say what *Klezmer* is (for those who don’t know, it’s East European Jewish wedding music) or anything substantial about any of the music. Non-*Klezmer* tunes are erratically titled with either the name of the tune, its nationality, or “A Journey to ...”. The focus is on Schechter as a musical personality, and the liner notes are liberally sprinkled with his anecdotes and personal reminiscences in relation to the tunes. These are all presented in a quaint, “folk-like” way that I presume is meant to charm the listener.

The most outstanding track is tk 10, a medley of Jewish tunes entitled “A Journey to a Jewish Shtetl”. The accompanying anecdotes are carefully chosen in order to communicate the joy tinged with sadness that characterizes so much of Klezmer music. Track 11 is an extremely well put together medley of Russian and Romani dance tunes and songs, with an infectious energy and rhythmic dynamism that make it possible to forget that you are listening to a CD of a studio recording. Perhaps the longer tracks allow Schechter’s strengths to shine through more effectively.

I have been critical of the CD, but having seen Schechter perform live twice, this should not take away from his ability to charm, impress and move an audience, with his flashy and emotional style. This CD, in my opinion, does not contribute much to the world of Klezmer or East European music, but is an appealing collection of tunes and personal reminiscences that provides an undemanding introduction to the genre.

Romanian Tradition. Doina Timisului (ARC Music Production EUCD 1835, 2003)

Melissa Payne

This collection offers a great introduction to traditional music of the Banat region of Romania. The vibrant, energetic and rhythmically fascinating music is supported by well-written liner notes (a collaboration between regional music and dance experts Liz Mellish and Nick Green) and colourful photographs of the performers, their instruments and folk dancing.

The group, Doina Timisului, was founded in 1959 during Ceausescu’s Communist regime by the Student Association of the University of Timisului, in order “to pay homage and to preserve the very varied customs of the country” (booklet, p.1). They have had enormous success at international folk festivals. However, there is no indication of how the group has been shaped by their experience of Communism and its subsequent fall, even on their website. Are they still preserving the same music as in 1959? Were they only preserving Communist sanctioned folk music, and has that changed since 1990 (—when they employed a new choreographer)? They boast of “artistic quality and authenticity” that has earned them their reputation but, whilst there is no doubt about quality, one cannot help asking to what notion of Romanian culture they are they authentic?

Although the CD is called “Romanian traditions” and the group performs dances representing all regions of Romania, the focus is traditional folk and ritual dances from the southwest area. This region includes an area of flat lands (Campia Banatului) that was drained in the 19th century and populated by Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Serbs and Slovaks. The significance of this multicultural population is not made clear, particularly regarding how they have interacted with “Romanian” music. There are other long-established ethnic minorities in Romania who receive no mention at all, such as the Roma who have been there since the 14th century and undoubtedly have had a great deal of interaction with Romanian music. There seems to be a particular brand of being Romanian that this CD proudly promotes under the guise of respecting and preserving “the very varied customs” of Romania.

Without overwhelming the reader, the liner notes give enough information to provide insight into the different dances and styles performed. Internet links are provided for further information, and each Romanian word is concisely translated or explained. There is an attractive variety of dances and *doinas* (lyrical song forms) presented in an array of time signatures, including the *Braul* (men’s dance) in the characteristic limping 7/16 rhythm (3+2+2). The phenomenal musicianship is inspiring: the rhythmic instruments are metronomical yet sensitive and the melodic instruments are dazzling in their technique, energy and sheer musical stamina. However, most impressive of all is the interplay between melody and rhythm, at times incisively simultaneous, at others pushing and pulling against each other in that heart-stopping way characteristic of so much Romanian music.

In my opinion, there is no question about the musical calibre of the recordings. However, there remain issues concerning the group’s claimed authenticity, the particular brand of nationalist culture they promote, and the musical significance of the multi-culturalism in the Banat region, that need clearing up before I am comfortable that this CD really promotes “Romanian traditions”.

***The Music of Corsica: Petru Guelfucci, Voce di Corsica, A Filetta* (ARC Music Production, EUCD 1816, 2003)**

Giovanni Guazzotti

As pointed out in the booklet accompanying the CD, the geographical characteristics of Corsica, high mountains with isolated villages, and its political past, often conquered but never succumbed, have contributed to a strong cultural identity and to the safeguard of Corsican musical traditions connected to it. Tourism is now the main revenue of the island and the graphics on the CD cover reflect this. The title, though, may be misleading in that it is not comprehensive of all aspects of traditional music of the island, focussing, rather on a particular style, polyphony. This style is closely associated with the island’s cultural expression and identity.

The booklet contains explanatory notes, in four languages, but fails to include the texts of songs (or their respective translations, as Corsican dialect is related to those of Tuscany and Genovese but is hard for outsiders to understand). As the revival of polyphony coincided in the 1970s with the resurgence of national political ambition, one may be forgiven for thinking that the lyrics have not been included for political reasons. Corsican Polyphony is sung *a cappella* by small groups of three to eight or nine people. It originated in ancient times and is an oral tradition passed from generation to generation that still persists in Corsican daily life, being used for social, political and religious events. The compilation here reflects all these aspects, and Voce di Corsica and Petru Guelfucci, the latter a part of the former group and known abroad, with his passionate voice and original arrangements and lyrics, take centre stage on eight of the 14 tracks. These convey a modern, but traditionally based, use of polyphony.

The omission of lyrics in the booklet, forces the listener, assuming he or she does not understand Corsican, to listen as if the tracks were instrumentals. However,

through the power of music, the character of the tunes comes across and it is easy to identify the appropriate context. Attentive listening also enables one to hear musical influences from different cultures, such as those of Spain or Italy, emphasised by the use of the mandolin and the acoustic guitar. In one song performed by *Voce di Corsica* we recognise characteristics of mountain music from elsewhere in Europe. A curious tone similar to the *bouzouki* given by the *cetera*, the traditional Corsican lute with eight double strings, makes some tunes resemble Greek music.

To my mind, this album is not aimed at a tourist market, whatever the cover may suggest. It is part of a revival that puts the music back at the heart of Corsican life. It is a statement of the strong identities that live on through the singing of polyphony in the Corsican native language.

The Pulse of Africa: drums and rhythms from Senegal, Ghana, Mali, Congo, Botswana, Nigeria, Mozambique (ARC Music Productions, EUCD1867, 2004)

Neville Murray

I love drums and I love drumming and so when I offered to review this CD I was really looking forward to listening to it. I was promised 18 tracks of drums and rhythm's from Africa. But, in the event, North Africa is not represented, and East Africa only minimally. Perhaps the producers meant 'pulse', as in heartbeat, that is musically central to or of most prominence to Africa? Anyway, as I listened to the CD my initial reaction was one of disappointment, followed by *well there are some good points*, to *why did they even bother?* To me this is a missed opportunity, but nonetheless, for me the positive points are far outnumbered by the negative ones.

To start with the things I liked. The presentation, with photographs, made it useful to be able to see some of the instruments they were referring to. Indeed, I would like to have been able to look at some more of support instruments like the bush shakers and rattles. While the liner notes most of the time provided helpful information, however, frustratingly on some tracks they did not tell me all that what I wanted to know, for instance in 'o Domba' (tk 13) more than one instrument is playing but only one is mentioned.

One of the main aspects of this CD (and in life generally) that I really dislike is the ubiquitous use of the *djembe* drum, outside of the ensembles of its native Sene-Gambia. For some unfathomable reason the *djembe* seems to have become the world's drum of choice, but for me an album recorded in Africa must have had easier access to the regional instruments appropriate to each rhythm—or did the record's producers see the *djembe*'s popularity as a selling point? Of the record's 18 tracks seven feature the *djembe*, although only one 'Mala' (tk 5) has a legitimate reason for doing so. It also seems to me that the use of the same pool of musicians for each track has an overall homogenising effect which lessens the potential of each rhythm. In many ways I think that I would have preferred field recordings of the same pieces. Much of the playing on the album is also uninspiring. and on 'Eboka' (tk 3), 'Unwabu' (tk 9) and 'Eshe Eyele' (tk 16) it is sloppy.

The recordings have no songs attached and minimal melodic input, and in the physical absence of the rhythm's corresponding dances and cultural context plus the poor performances I found it difficult to sustain interest. Two or three of the rhythms, like 'Basoga Lusoga' (tk 4), 'Nxai' (tk 8) and 'Yolo Male' (tk 14), sustain interest, with tight playing and good energy levels. On the whole, then, I feel that *The Pulse Of Africa* is missing a beat or two and that in the future I should curb my enthusiasm for something just because it has the words 'drums' and 'rhythms' in the title or the accompanying overview.

Jewish Travels: A Historical Voyage in Music and Song - Massel Klezmerim (EUCD 1825, 2003)

Melissa Payne

This is an excellent quality double CD recording of an eclectic variety of Jewish songs, prayers and dances, dating from—it is claimed—3000 years ago to the twentieth century, and spanning Jewish cultures in North America, Spain, Central/Eastern Europe, Russia, Israel and Yemen. The project was the initiative of the singer, guitarist and songwriter, Lutz Cassel, who since the 1960s has become increasingly interested in all things Jewish. He started to incorporate this material into his cabaret acts, and later collaborated with the guitarist Peter-Wolfgang Fischer. However, it seems that Cassel himself does not perform on these CDs. Rather, he was responsible for engaging the musicians that were to become the “Massel Klezmerim”, and organizing the concert in the Hamburger Musikhalle in 1986, the recording of which forms the bulk of the tracks here.

The principle aim of the recording appears to be to challenge the stereotype that Jewish history is not only about the “Bible, Roman Empire, Holocaust and Israel” but also the history of wanderings and divisions throughout the world (booklet, p.1). Indeed, through a combination of attractively presented anecdotes and songs from various eras and from all over the world, in my opinion, a convincing attempt has been made. There is an emphasis on Jewish religion in the anecdotes and choice of songs, which is perhaps coincidental, but I do feel that prominent stereotypes could be further challenged through the inclusion of more secular Jewish culture. The religious emphasis is supported by the “Jewish Travels” that begin and end in Israel. Perhaps I am reading too much into this, but the Jewish diaspora has become much more than a scattering and return to Israel, only partially acknowledged by Cassel’s anecdote concerning a poor Jewish musician and a rich Jewish banker who merged into the melting pot of New York.

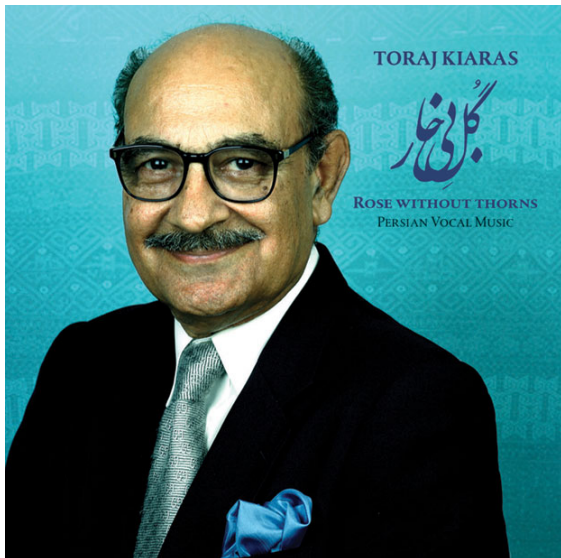
The quality of performance is outstanding: this group of nine musicians in different combinations manages to perform, convincingly, a breathtaking variety of styles. It would be interesting to know a little about the performers, apart from their names. Charming, amusing and culturally revealing though the accompanying anecdotes are, sometimes their relationship to the song is unclear, and listeners are often left to assume that the connection lies in their mutual cultural and historical context. Sometimes listeners are left with precious little information about the actual music, and this is not helped by song titles that do not always have a translation.

Each track is rewarding in its own way, but particularly striking are the performances of older songs. They are less obviously appealing to a contemporary audience, yet are performed with such conviction, aplomb and sensitivity that they are equally accessible (especially the 14th century Chassidic prayer CD2 track 2, and the Yemenite dance CD1 track 7). The 15th century Sephardic songs (CD1 track 3 and 4) featuring Fischer’s guitar solos, are remarkable for their musical tension and beauty, and the drama of the Eastern European material is also carried off with great success. Despite the seemingly frenetic time and geographical travels of these CDs, each track is allowed to breathe and forms a satisfactory unit in its own right.

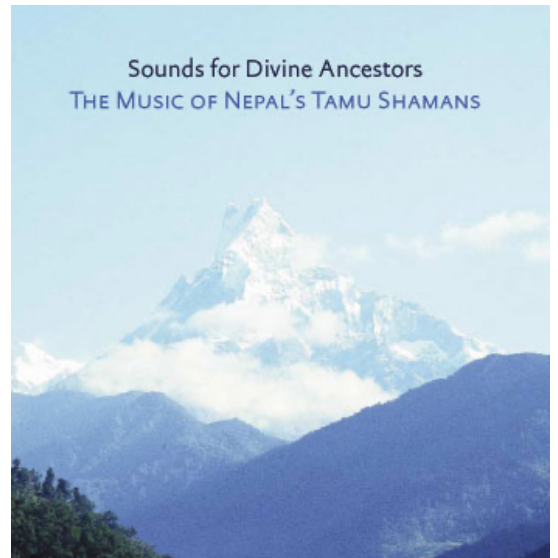
Overall, these CDs achieve what they set out to do: they challenge stereotypes concerning Jewish culture, and give a broader insight into less well-known aspects. Clearer liner notes concerning the music would have helped, and more representations of secular Jewish culture would have furthered the goal of giving a broader and less stereotypical picture of Jewish history and culture.

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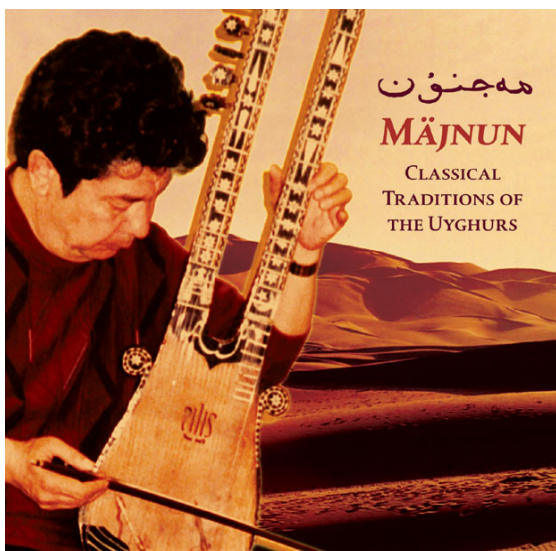
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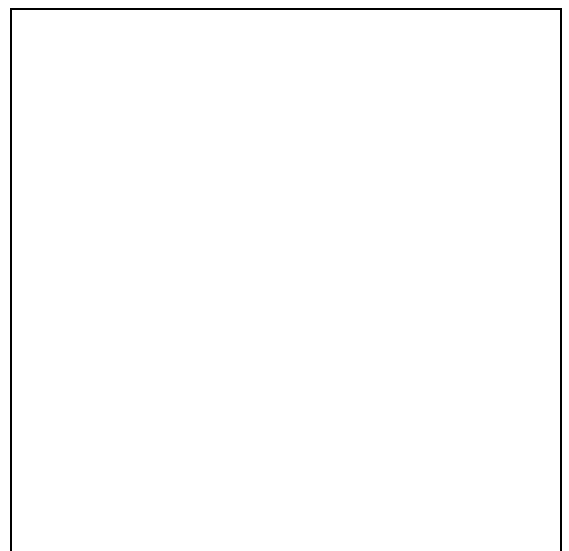
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