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In the proceedings of the fourth Music and Minorities Study Group (2006 in Varna, Bulgaria) there are 50 contributions (of the nearly 70 papers presented). In addition to pictorial and graphic figures, the publication includes a CD with 53 musical examples (mastered by Gerda Lechleitner, Phonogrammarchiv Wien).

All four conference themes are represented:

1) “Hybridity as a Musical Concept” (introductory theoretical article, plus 18 case studies, among them the only two Czech papers);

2) “Minority-Minority Relations in Music and Dance” (The majority of the 14 contributions clearly show how unclear the determination of a minority is. Discussed are, e.g., two groups with a shared religion that is interpreted in different ways, groups on opposite sides of national or ideological borders, mutual relations of two or more groups that are defined some other way), etc.;

3) “Music Education of Minority Children” (the narrowest and most concrete theme, in which the authors, using 14 different examples, demonstrate how a community hands down what it considers basic for the preservation of its own identity; the absolute majority deal with children of national, ethnic or religious minorities);

4) “Race – Class – Gender” (a theme of stimulating contributions not focused on ethnically or religiously defined minorities. This shortest portion surprisingly (?) most clearly shows how music in an environment of asymmetric relations functions as a symbolic means for agents to present new self-representation. The astonishing discovery reveals, in the case of some delimitations, that it is possible to arrive at certain generalizations, while, in other cases, not at
all. This compels one to repeated reflection about the appropriateness of those delimitations, thus, e.g., about the formulations of conference themes. (Reyes 1999 describes a very similar situation in the case of immigrants in the USA: only after recognizing the importance of the difference between voluntary and forced immigration did the research lead to meaningful conclusions.) In the case of research on minorities, on one hand, it is certainly true that a group of people identified as a minority appears to create an exceptional variety of expressions, including musical expressions, out of cultural configurations often burdened with conflict. For this reason, no matter how well thought out the topics for discussion may be, they almost always turn out to be somewhat too narrow or schematic to capture the rich varied musical and socio-cultural reality (p. 9). On the other hand, too broad a theme (as the first of them obviously is) or an otherwise inappropriate delimitation enables us to put together phenomena, situations and data which convince us of an exceptional variety of musical expressions, but do not allow for more general interpretation. The editors express the same thought: It is difficult to identify any regularities in these relationships... (p. 11).

The proceedings contain all of the contributions that were submitted. This inclusiveness (here the editors call this a “democratic approach”) is one of the concomitant characteristics of the “Music and Minorities” Study Group. (Unsurprisingly – in regard to its democratic or, shall we say, socially solidary character – this group chose, among the many possible definitions of majority, the one which emphasizes an asymmetry of approach to power. “Minorities are groups of people distinguishable from the DOMINANT group for cultural, ethnic, social, religious, or economic reasons.”)

The other side of this democratic/allinclusive coin is perhaps the obvious inequality of the articles: not only in the initial theories, methods, and terminologies, but also, e.g., in the non-unified way of quotations.

Recordings from the 1960s in Bulgaria;
Ventislav Dimov: On Some Early Sonic
Evidence of Musical Hybridization: Observations
on Commercial Gramophone
Recordings from Bulgaria; Gergana Panova-
Tekath: Dance as an Expression of
Hybridity and Ethnocentrism; Bozena
Muszkalska: Freilach, Jazz, and Chopin:
The Klezmer Movement in Contemporary
Poland; Veronika Seidlová: Music
– Religiosity – Community: A Case Study
of the Jewish Community in Prague;
Zuzana Jurková: The Czech Rompop
Scene: (Un?) surprising Continuity; Nalia
Cerbašić: Macedonian Music in Croatia:
The Issues of Traditionality, Politics of Representation
and Hybridity; Alma Bejtullahu:
“Our Genuine Songs”: Perceptions of
Musical Change; Aleksandra Marković”:
“Jugonostalgija Is the People’s Choice”:
Interethnic Influences Between Slovene
and South Slavic Music; Nino Tsitsishvili:
Authenticity and Hybridity in Three
Soundscapes of Georgian Musical Culture
in the Context of Political Change; Ayhan
Erol: Change and Continuity in Alevi
Musical Identity; Caroline Bithell: A Song
of Many Colors: Musical Hybridity in Corsica;
Lozanka Peycheva: The Hybridization
of Local Music From Bulgaria:
The Role of Gypsy Clarinetists; Judith
R. Cohen: Music in the Lives of Judeus
and Ciganos in a Portuguese Village: Two
Adjacent and Separate Minorities; Gjermund
Kolltveit: The Development of Musical
Style and Identity Among the Romani
People of Norway; Elena Shishkina: The
Growth of Hybrid and Conglomerate Tendencies
in the Povolgie Germans: Traditional
Musical Culture at the Beginning
of the Third Millennium; EDUCATION:
Vesselka Toncheva: The Bulgarian School
in Vienna and Its Role in the Formation of
Bulgarian National Identity; Wolf Dietrich:
The Musical Education of Arvanites
Children in Central Greece; Petar Baganić,
Željka Petrović and Tihana Rubić: Dervishes
in Croatia; Dorit Klebe: Transmission
of Musical Traditions of the Alevi
Ceremony: Musical Education of Young
People Playing Baglama in Berlin; Hande
Saglam: Music as a Cultural, Social and
Religious Transmission Element among
Alevis in Vienna, Austria; Rumiana Margaritova,
Stephan Balastchev: The Early
Saz Education of a Young Alevi (Bektashi)
Performer from Bulgaria; Hilde Binford:
Values and Culture Transmitted Through
Music in the Old Order Amish Community;
Gerda Lechleitner: Education, Tradition,
and Rules – The Pillars of Immigrant Societies:
Bukharian Jews in Vienna; Rosemary
Statelova: The Musical Education

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