ICTM Study Group on Musics of Oceania
Circular No. 15

30th World Conference of ICTM, Schladming, Austria, 23-30 July 1989

Judging from comments at our meeting in Australia last summer, I informed the Chairman of the Programme Committee that our Study Group will not need a room for a meeting during that Conference. However, if members who may be planning to attend let me know, I will be glad to circulate the information.

Our Next Study Group Meeting
According to recent information from the Secretary General, the place for the 1991 ICTM Conference has not yet been set, so I am not yet able to explore the possibility of our meeting back-to-back with it. Meantime, if any of you know of a meeting of some other organization (SIMS 1990 in Osaka or any other) which you and a substantial number of our members may attend, please let me know—as far in advance as possible because it takes quite a while to organize a meeting of our Study Group because of the long-distance travel involved.

Follow-up of Our Meeting at Deakin University, September 1988
It has been suggested that more detail about the content of the presentations at Deakin than I included in Circular No. 14 be circulated to our membership. This may be desirable for several reasons including: (1) sharing with members who were not able to attend; (2) stimulating exchange of data/experiences/ideas through the Circular; and (3) selecting specific foci for future meetings. Therefore I request those who presented papers to send me a summary of the main points (at least in some cases a summary written after the fact may be a more accurate statement of what was actually said than an abstract submitted in advance; however if any of you prefer to send me a copy of what you sent Florian please feel free to do that.) I suggest a summary of 100 to 200 words or, if longer, typed (single space) so I can simply xerox it for the Circular. These will be included in future Circulars as they arrive and space permits. Amy Stillman's is included in this Circular.

Publications by Members
Feld's Sound and Sentiment, translated into Japanese by Yamaguti together with Yamada and two of his other students, has been published by Heibonsha.

R. Moyle's Traditional Samoan Music is now available.

Thomas' "Report on Survey of Music in Tokelau, Western Polynesia" was issued in August 1988 as No. 79 in the Working Papers Series of the Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland.

News of Members
Kaeppler was in Tonga briefly for a conference on Tongan history. She is in Honolulu for meetings preparatory to the Hawai'i presentation (as this year's featured State) at the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Festival in Washington D.C. this summer, and will extend her stay a few weeks to work on a study (jointly with Tatar) on Hula Pahu.

Lawson was awarded the James T. Koetting Prize for the outstanding paper presented by a graduate student at the Northeast Chapter meeting of SEM.
Messner has returned from two months of research in East Flores, Indonesia, where he examined the music for Melanesian and Indonesian traits.

Spearritt has retired from the University of Queensland. Congratulations, Gordon, on your distinguished career there and best wishes for the future—which we hope will include further contributions to our field of interest!

Thomas reports that he and Jennifer Shennan "have prepared a collection of articles, reviews, and extracts from books for their course 'Pacific Island Music and Dance' at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. There are 36 papers in the collection, which is an internal printing available at cost (not known at present). If any members of the ICTM Study Group would like to comment on omissions/inclusion I would be pleased to send a copy of the contents page." He also informs us of a 'Polynesian Drum & Dance Festival' (Wellington, 27 & 28 January). "Seminars will be given on drum styles, and there will be cricket matches and dancing with drum accompaniment. The performers will all be local people from the Tongan, Cook Island, Samoan, Tokelau, Niue and Fijian communities." Allan is a member of the organising committee and "hopes to have tapes and other information available from it."

Yamada has returned from three months field work in Papua New Guinea among the Waxei people of the Korosameri River (his second period of field work there) as a member of the scientific research project "Ethnological Studies on the Sepik Hills" financially supported by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. A collection of articles by the project's members is planned for 1989. He will now work on writing his doctoral dissertation, which will be on the Waxei, and will be published in both Japanese and English.

Yamaguti, though having to withdraw from participation in events in Australia, nevertheless had a productive summer. In addition to the translation of Feld's book, he is co-editor for the Asian and Oceania portions of Music Traditions of Japan, Asia and Oceania (being published in Japanese by Iwanami Shoten).

Other News

A New organization, ADPA (The Asia Pacific Dance Alliance), "an independent, non-profit-making, non-political organization" has been established. It is reported to be eager to get 'Pacific people' involved. Its stated objectives include: (1) to promote the recognition, development and mutual understanding of all forms of dance of Asia and the Pacific; (2) to facilitate communication and exchange among dance individuals, institutions, or organizations; (3) to provide a forum for discussion of matters relating to dance of Asia and the Pacific; and (4) to encourage the performance of dance of Asia and the Pacific. Annual meetings are planned for July in Hong Kong (presumably at the time of the International Festival of Dance Academies). The membership fee for individuals is US$10, and for institutions US$20 (to be paid by international bank draft). For an announcement or other information, write to: Asia Pacific Dance Alliance, c/o The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, 1 Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Pacifica, a journal that is interdisciplinary, and "as international as possible" has issued a call for articles. For more information, write to Robert D. Craig, editor, PACIFICA, Alaska Pacific University, 4101 University Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508-4672 USA.

WATCHING A TRADITION DIE

Amy K. Stillman
Harvard University

In two areas of French Polynesia that I have done fieldwork, the traditions I sought to document were in decline. My activities contributed to altering patterns of transmission, raising questions about our roles and responsibilities as ethnomusicologists and fieldworkers.

In Mangareva, my contribution was in bringing an almost dead tradition back to life. I used song texts in Peter Buck's Ethnology of Mangareva in order to document performance practice. Buck's informant, the last acknowledged expert, left no heirs to the material as a whole or to the performance tradition; knowledgeable practitioners in the 1980s know only a small fraction of that material. There are ethical problems in reintroducing material collected decades ago that is no longer extant in the societies in which we are working: in the name of repatriating cultural materials, repertory that was formerly the domain of trained experts has now become community property. Also, several performances I recorded were reconstructions; some were "new solutions". Where and how do we distinguish between calling something wrong and calling that same thing "evolving"?

In the Society and Leeward Islands, my contribution was in stemming the decline of a tradition. In a generational standoff, elders are reluctant to teach the complex three- to nine-part choral singing tradition to the youth who they consider to be uninterested in the choral tradition; youth blame the elders for being too demanding and stifling enthusiasm. Among Tahitians, a large number are literate in staff notation. Thus my transcriptions generated great interest and excitement: they could be used to accurately teach the youth, bypassing the elders. In the first place, we are all too aware of the incompleteness of Western staff notation. In the second place, much of that which remains unnotated is the understanding that comes with maturity--in other words, that knowledge held by the elders. My transcriptions provide a means of ensuring that the choral singing will be perpetuated, but bypassing the elders will result in partial perpetuation and a radically altered pattern of transmission.

Perhaps there are no conclusive solutions for the dilemmas that I have described; moreover, other fieldworkers can describe other dilemmas. However, these situations and the questions they pose do merit reflection and discussion.
MEMBERS OF ICTM STUDY GROUP ON MUSICS OF OCEANIA (31 January 1989)

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