
Thematic section

From ethnomusicology to ethnochoreology and vice versa

In the history of ethnomusicology, over recent decades it is possible to note various types of transformations which may, with slight exaggeration, be characterized as a journey from science to theory. The originally dominating comparative aspect of the study constructed the discipline on the level of comparative science (Kunst 1959), and was defined as the science of music (Merriam 1964) or as the science of music history (Nettl 1983). An interpretive turn since the early '80s however has begun to retreat from this concept and shifted its paradigm from science to social theory. While scientific theory requires verification through experimentation and observation leading to an assessment of the facts, social theory allows “orientations” and “assumptions” that serve as fundamental guides for the study of various research questions (Rice 2010: 104–105). Behind ethnomusicological theory today it is possible, according to Timothy Rice, to label texts containing the description, classification, comparative study, interpretation and generalization of music (or sound) as such, but also as the study of a musical tradition or music in particular communities, as well as the study of music in relation to cognitive, artistic, experimental, social, cultural, political and economic bases, themes and processes; yet musical analysis and its interpretation remain the basic method of music theory. Contemporary ethnomusicology theory is also characterized by its discursiveness with ongoing theoretical conversations among researchers themselves, between researchers and participants or a community, and between researchers and the public; key then is the interdisciplinary conversation (ibid.: 126–127). The current path of ethnomusicology can thus be understood as a process of integration into the social sciences and humanities disciplines, which makes it what it is today. In particular, the relatively new so-called *choreomusicological approach* offers a wide field for the application of other variants of interdisciplinary studies. This neologism is justifiable and is becoming an increasingly used term.

That ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology are two separate disciplines is indeed an indisputable fact; ever more frequently, however, it is evident that their inseparability could prove far more effective with regards to many research topics. It is no coincidence that this thematic issue addresses these two disciplines. The contributions, among others, are the result of ongoing theoretical conversations, especially within the broad scope of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). The choreomusicological approach here shows the different levels in which music and dance are expressed in close

and interactive connection – as music and movement, musician and dancer, or as a cultural concept, etc.

The study by C. Quigley theoretically defines this dilemma and shifts the choreomusicological concept to its more general modification as choreomusical, which is to say to a principle of the mutually generated affective power of music and dance. The example of practising the violin to dance *fiddling* in Europe and North America shows specific ways in which the dancer and musician communicate in the framework of a joint performance. The inseparability of music and dance expression here, according to the author, corresponds with the perception of music and dance in traditional cultures where these two concepts often do not even exist, and music and dance has been referred to as one action. Research approaches and the formation of both disciplines began to regard this action separately, which allows no one side to make various important findings in the realm of the analysis of music and dance forms; at the same time, this also does not allow delving into the collective thoughts of the dancer and musician at the moment this action occurs and starts living its own specific life.

The next essay by writers D. Stavělová and M. Kratochvíl show this choreomusicological approach on a rather conceptual level – how the observed community in the framework of the invention of modern celebrations utilizes elements of traditional rural culture in an urban environment with musical and dance expression, treated and handled in the context of the framework of their intentions. The observation of a musical dance expression here provides insight into the thought process during the formation of the social space of groups, an insight into the cognitive dimension of those who participate in a common idea and communicate through music and dance among themselves, within the framework of a public space. Of importance here is the process of the formation of a shared musical and dance repertoire, which becomes significant for the group and the conveyor of its messages. Musical dance expression thus becomes one text, the communication of which can be understood as directed both inside and outside of the group.

Simultaneous perceptions of issues of music and dance is also addressed in the study by Z. Vejvoda, where the musical analysis of collections of records of dance tunes provides further reflection on musical dance forms of relevant types. In this case, however, at the same time he confirms the necessity of two analytical levels, since the analysis of formalized structures of music and dance types currently has its own procedures, and these should be conducted separately. Only by evaluating each analytical approach separately is it possible to identify in the dance and musical forms the mutual overlapping, or conversely the diverging into other typological perspectives. The choreomusicological approach here is reflected in the initial deconstruction of the anticipated musical dance type at its smallest structural units, and the subsequent interconnection of the collated results to those of the analysis of

the movement of forms, so as to allow for the merging of elements into broader musical dance structures.

Irish author C. Foley in his paper also notes the need to study records of dance in relation to music and underscores the necessity for the documentation and archiving of musical dance culture to be done in a manner and form which allows such knowledge to be expertly used for other purposes of analysis, classification or in comparative studies on a national and transnational scale. Besides the post-colonial concept, here is highlighted especially the proactivity in the Irish National Archives of dance culture. Dance culture is here meant as an inseparable link between music and dance leading to the same purpose, and the meaning of the concept of the archive is to provide all necessary information and data to enable the further study of musical dance expression, including its cognitive dimension, which is captured in the archived interviews with participants in dance and music, i.e. dancers and musicians, but also the recipients of performances as in the form of spectators and admirers of dance culture.

The contribution to issue of music and ritual of L. Tyllner, although it initially appears to be an independent exploration of the role of music in the context of the phenomenon, in the end here also confirms the need for a comprehensive perspective on musical dance expression. Music and dance, as demonstrated during the observation of several traditional manifestations still practised especially in the rural environment, which the author characterizes as rituals, with some exceptions, eventually generally play in this context a common role. Where this is not the case and on the contrary the music gains a dominant position, it then opens space for further reflection and comparisons with other contexts – historical or social. Comparisons of the role of music and dance in the majority of the observed contexts reveals however that both of these expressions are participants in ritualized events conceived in unity with concepts about what the purpose of the present form of the ritual is as a whole; what they themselves expect from it; and in what shared form today they are able to participate.

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