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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TRADITIONAL MUSIC  
Study Group on Multipart Music

Chronicle of its founding

Multipart music represents one of the most fascinating phenomena in numerous local musical cultures in Europe. It has therefore been a favoured object of research for a long time, particularly in the national framework. Regional studies, which extend beyond political boundaries, are, however, rare and sporadic. Since, as a rule, regional and the political boundaries in Europe do not coincide, there was an almost untouched area for research in local musical cultures in Europe. Therefore a network of researchers, many of them ICTM members, is working since 2003 focusing on multipart music traditions in Europe in the framework of the “*Research Centre of European Multipart Music*” established at the Institute for Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology of the Vienna University of Music. A first conference was organized in March 2005 in Vienna. Results of the research are published in the book “*European Voices I. Multipart Singing in the Balkans and the Mediterranean*” (Vienna: Böhlau. 2008), including audio-visuals from fieldwork in several countries of southern Europe.

The growing interest to the topic led to the extension of the network. The second Vienna meeting (October 2008) “*European Voices II. Cultural Listening and Local Discourse in Multipart Singing in Europe*” had to do with the diverse worldviews of the resource persons as bearers and presenters (musically and literally) of musical traditions in South, Central and Northern Europe. The publication of its results is being prepared.

Fragments of the work done until now have been presented also in panels in the ICTM World Conferences (Sheffield 2005 and Vienna 2007).

All this work served as basis upon which we were able to draw during the negotiations with the ICTM Board for the establishing of a Study Group on Multipart Music. The board reached a positive decision on the formation of the group in July 2009 after the ICTM World Conference in Durban, South Africa.

An ICTM Study Group on Multipart Music is of a great help to extend the existing network and our views on multipart music traditions worldwide, by means of research, documentation, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural study, intending a tight collaboration with local singers and musicians also in the scholarly discussion processes.