

# Book Review

# Urban

# People

Alan Kinear<sup>†</sup> International Editor

Since 1999, *Urban People* has made a place for itself as a scholarly journal focused on anthropological studies and related social sciences and humanities. It is the only anthropological journal from the Czech Republic and is published three times a year (twice in Czech and an English issue in September) by the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University in Prague.

Back in 2012 *Urban People*'s thematic Issue titled Theory and Methods in Urban Ethnomusicology revisits and revived the field of urban ethnomusicology from its early mention in the 1982 article titled Explorations in Urban Ethnomusicology: Hard Lessons from the Spectacularly Ordinary by Adelaida Reyes Schramm published in the Yearbook for Traditional Music. Now in 2015, ethnomusicology is once again its theme, albeit with a wider focus of how music bridges "human interactions across geopolitical, social and cultural borders." *Music and Crossing Bridges* is its theme.

The field of ethnomusicology has changed greatly over time following the migration from rural and primarily agricultural-based economies through the industrial revolution and now the information age to collections of cultures housed in urban cities of millions. One can no longer simply categorize music by country or its sub-geographical region. Urban areas are complex collections and combinations of culture made up of individuals with ever-changing personal diversity intensified through global internet exposure and mass media. More recently there is also the recognition of applied ethnomusicology and the impact of social media which transforms research into practical action as indicated by the creation of specific study group on this topic by the International Council for Traditional Music and their subsequent symposiums. The reverberations from the six young Iranians arrested for recording their playful version of Pharrell Williams's "Happy" comes to mind.

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Zuzana Jurková as both an editor and author makes the distinction between actor-specific and environment-specific e.g. what is the cultural orientation of the performers and what are their social and economic motivations? Then spatially what comprises the Tokyo sound making up its uniqueness from Toronto for example? She states the connection between both of these are fundamental to understanding the characteristics of the urban musical environment.



Below is an excerpt from Zuzana's editorial describing this Urban Ethnomusicology volume:

In an attempt to come more deeply to the problematics of the theory of ethnomusicology, we organized a round table "Theory and Method in Urban Ethnomusicology" in June 2011 in Prague. We invited those who we knew were involved in urban problematics in ethnomusicology. The contributions of the round table are the main contents of this issue. The theoretical approaches and topics are very diverse.

I see the emphasis of the first three articles on theory (I read the text of Kay Kaufman Shelemay as an exemplum par excellence of the above-mentioned socio-logically oriented direction) or on methodology (McMurray).

In the following block there are examples of research in Wroclaw (following up on and reconsidering that spatial direction), Vienna, Prague and Singapore, differing in material through which the urbanness is investigated (to a great extent, they confirm the words of Adelaide Reyes: "the strong tendency to focus on parts..."). The Nestor of applied ethnomusicology, Kjell Skyllstad, describes in his theoretically rather unorthodox article a monumental Norwegian multicultural project, Resonant Community.

The article by Zita Skorepová Honzlová in the Students Work section originated in her thesis and is not only thematically connected to this issue, but is even more concretely related to the Viennese research presented here by Ursula Hemetek.

From its inception in 1999 Urban People, has continued to cover and expand upon contemporary topics in urban culture from a diverse range of authors. It is worthy of your readership in keeping abreast of the ever-changing sphere of urban culture.

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