UNESCO ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FOLKLORE

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It may happen that folklorists express some surprise to see that activities in the field of their science do not have in the Programme of UNESCO the prominence they thought them worth. This is partially true. In accordance with the policy adopted by the Organization since the Fifth Session of the General Conference, held at Florence in 1950, its work was concentrated in a limited number of projects which were selected not because of their connection with the various fields of education, science, or culture, but in accordance with the tasks allotted to the Organization by the Constitution signed in London on November 16, 1945. An attempt was made in the Basic Programme, adopted in Florence, to classify these tasks in a practical way to establishing a certain number of categories of aims, as, for instance, "to demonstrate world cultural interdependence." Now, it is clear that folklore can contribute to such a demonstration. That same conference in Florence, for instance, invited member states "to initiate or encourage research and experiment in the educational and cultural utilization of Folk-Lore." And here and there, in the working plans of the Organization, some activities connected with folklore appeared, related to projects of a larger scope. The UNESCO Secretariat, as usual, carries them out in co-operation with its National Commissions in the various countries and international organizations admitted to official relations (consultative status); they constitute the big UNESCO "family," whose members represent each country of the world and each branch of human knowledge.

In the following paragraphs the reader will find a brief description of the methods employed by the Organization to achieve those results.

Co-operation with specialized international organizations

UNESCO maintains a working relationship with two organizations which represent folklore on the international level: the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore (CIAP), for folklore in general, and the International Folk Music Council, for folk music in particular. Through these organizations, to which it makes financial grants, UNESCO keeps in touch with the numerous experts in all parts of the world belonging to them.

The International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore, founded at Prague in 1928, when an International Congress of Folk Arts was held in that city under the auspices of the League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, was re-organized after the war, at a General Assembly held in Paris from October 1 to 5, 1947. In 1949 it was one of the organizations assembled to constitute the International Council of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (CIPSH), set up under the auspices of UNESCO. Today the affiliation of the CIAP is no more with the CIPSH but with the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, itself a member of that Council. The activities of the CIAP have suffered some reduction these past years, and no statutory General Assembly has been held since that of July 1 to 3, 1954.

But the International Folk Music Council, set up in London in 1947, is full of energy. With other international organizations in the field of music, it was, in 1949, one of the founders of the UNESCO-sponsored International Music Council. Each year the Conference of the International Folk Music Council is held in a different country: Basel (Switzerland), in 1948; Venice (Italy), 1949; Bloomington, Indiana (U.S.A.), 1950; Opatija (Yugoslavia), 1951; London, 1952; Biarritz (France) and Pampeluna (Spain), 1953; São Paulo (Brazil), 1954; Oslo (Norway), 1955; Trossingen and Stuttgart (Germany), 1956; Copenhagen (Denmark), 1957; Liège (Belgium), 1958; Sinaia (Rumania), 1959; Vienna, 1960; Québec (Canada), 1961.

Publications

In 1949 UNESCO undertook the preparation and publication of a collection of catalogues of recorded music — whether recorded on gramophone records or by some other method — under the general title of Archives of Recorded Music. One of the series of this collection was devoted to Ethnographical and Folk Music. In that series four volumes were published, giving particulars on the collections of records preserved in certain specialized institutions — such as the French Phonothèque Nationale and Musée de l'Homme, or the German Institut für Musikforschung.
at Ratisbon — and also on records of unquestionable value from the standpoint of folklore, issued by commercial firms and even, in some cases, by institutions desiring to make part of their store available to specialists in different countries. This last catalogue provides some information, too, about original recordings preserved in libraries, museums, universities, and so forth, and about facilities for the exchange, purchase, or reproduction of these recordings. A fifth volume, belong to a different series (Oriental Music) and devoted to Classical and Traditional Indian Music, is only partially related with true folklore. As the author, Alain Danielou, says, “India has an immense Folk-Lore; each tribe, each social or professional group maintains its traditions and preserves songs and dances which are sometimes of great antiquity and originality. Unfortunately, not even a rough survey of these riches has so far been made, and in the very few songs that have been recorded the original form and accompaniment have often been altered."  

With the financial help of UNESCO the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore resumed, in 1949, the publication of the International Folklore Bibliography, initiated in 1917 by John Meier and Hoffmann-Krayer, continued by Paul Geiger, and then suspended because of the war. Five volumes, edited by Paul Geiger and, after his death, by Robert Wildhaber, have been published, covering the years 1939-1954.  

At a later stage the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore undertook the publication of an International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklores, for which UNESCO is providing financial help. A first volume, devoted to General Ethnological Concepts, appeared in 1960.  

In addition, Folk Songs of Europe, first of the International Folk Anthologies series of the International Folk Music Council, appeared in 1956; the manuscript was prepared with the assistance of UNESCO. Songs are presented with music, in the original language, and in English.  

UNESCO also supported the two periodicals published by the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folk-Lore: CIAP Information (which appeared from 1948 to 1951) and Laos, a magazine devoted to comparative studies of folklore or regional ethnology, and edited by Sigurd Erixon. Three volumes of Laos appeared, in 1951, 1952, and 1955.  

The International Folk Music Council receives regularly a grant to help in the publication of its yearly Journal, the first number of which appeared in 1949. The contents are based to a great extent on the proceedings of the annual Conference of the Council; but the Journal also prints information of interest to specialists in folk music, including abstracts of publications (music, books, periodicals, and records).  

**Recordings**  

A World Collection of Recorded Folk Music has been published by the International Archives of Folk Music, at the Ethnographic Museum of Geneva, under the auspices of the International Music Council and supported with financial assistance from UNESCO. The International Archives of Folk Music was founded in 1942 on the initiative of Constantin Brailoiu, the late ethnomusicologist, who, with Samuel Baud-Bovy, now Director of the Geneva Conservatory of Music, acted as Scientific Director. He was, also, one of the editors of the World Collection of Recorded Folk Music, built up with the co-operation of national institutions, such as libraries, museums, universities, conservatories, broadcasting services, research centers, ethnographic societies and any other institutions where folk music recordings are stored. The records issued in the Collection were copies of originals they lent to the Geneva Archives. In this way the Collection has acquired a real international character. It consists of 40 ten-inch 78 rpm records, presented in eight albums of five records each, with descriptive pamphlets. Ethnographic and folk music from Africa, America, Asia, and Europe is represented in the Collection. In the Preface which he wrote to it, Ernest Ansermet says that the interest of the Collection “derives from the fact that it brings out not only the differences, but equally the similarities, between the various kinds of music of different regions or races, thereby underlining those features of music that are most truly human.” And he adds: “Only from this sort of resemblance can we hope, one day, to establish what was the common basis of music throughout the world.”  

A second series of records (12-inch, 33 rpm), voted to the music of Africa and Asia and promoted by the International Music Council, appeared later, under the label of Ducretet-Thomson (France): Anthology of Classical Music of India (3 records, 320 C 096/8), Anthology of African Life (3 records, 320 C 126/8), and Anthology of Traditional Japanese Music (2 records, 320 C 137/8). Each set of records is complemented by a beautiful illustrated booklet, with comments on the music and musical instruments of the country.  

In 1961, Bärenreiter-Musikaphon (Germany) started the publication of a UNESCO Collection — Musical Anthology of Oriental Music, under the direction of Alain Danielou. A first set of five records (12-inch, 33 rpm) was issued, illustrating the music of Laos, Cambodia, Afghanistan (one record each), and Iran (two records).  

**Meetings**  

Financial support from UNESCO has enabled folklore experts to meet in several congresses and experts' committees. These meetings have done much to develop practical co-operation among them on the international level and have also, in some cases, provided them with an opportunity of laying down guiding principles on questions which they consider of special importance.  

General Assemblies of the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore, to which UNESCO granted a subsidy, were held in Stockholm (Sweden) in 1951, Namur (Belgium) in 1953, and Paris (France) in 1954.  

A Mid-century International Folklore Conference convened by the Folklore Institute of Indiana University, was held from July 22 to August 5, 1950, at Blooming-
Bloomington, Indiana (U.S.A.). With the aid of a grant from UNESCO, the organizers of the Conference were able to invite a number of European experts who took part in the proceedings. Four working committees considered the following questions: 1) collecting folklore, 2) archiving folklore, 3) making folklore available, and 4) studying folklore.

An International Congress of European and Western Ethnology was held at Stockholm and Uppsala from August 26 to 31, 1951. UNESCO gave financial assistance to ensure the widest possible geographical distribution of those attending the Congress and to provide for the Proceedings²


Two meetings of experts, convened to draw up regulations for the notation of folk music, took place respectively at Geneva, from July 4 to 9, 1949, and at Paris, from December 12 to 15, 1950. They were organized by the International Archives of Folk Music, under the auspices of the International Music Council and with financial assistance from UNESCO. The Recommendations of the experts were published, in 1952, by the International Music Council.

Another meeting organized by the International Archives of Folk Music was held at Freiburg-Brisgau (Germany) from March 9 to 12, 1953, to discuss problems connected with the classification and cataloguing of tunes recorded by mechanical or other means. The committee expressed the view that a standard form of index-card should be adopted for classifying such tunes, and approved certain types of cards, which were afterwards circulated to institutions and experts.

With financial support from UNESCO, the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore organized two meetings of experts to discuss the standardization of methods of cartographic presentation of folklore subjects. The first of these meetings was held at Namur (Belgium) in September, 1953, and the second in Paris on July 1 and 2, 1954. The committee drew up regulations for the cartographic presentation of folklore subjects, and recommended that they be applied to the study of the plow and of dwellings.

In 1954, a committee of experts appointed by the International Commission on Folk Arts and Folklore met at Copenhagen to carry out the experimental project of cartographic presentation. European types of plows were studied.

1. SC/Resolution 1.21113.

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