



Music, Communities, Sustainability

DEVELOPING POLICIES & PRACTICES

Edited by Huib Schippers & Anthony Seeger

Music, Communities, Sustainability

Music, Communities, Sustainability

Developing Policies and Practices

Edited by

HUIB SCHIPPERS AND ANTHONY SEEGER

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

© Oxford University Press 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Schippers, Huib, 1959- editor. | Seeger, Anthony, editor.

Title: Music, communities, sustainability : developing policies and practices / edited by Huib Schippers & Anthony Seeger.

Description: New York : Oxford University Press, 2022. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022002580 (print) | LCCN 2022002581 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780197609118 (paperback) | ISBN 9780197609101 (hardback) |

ISBN 9780197609132 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural

Heritage (2003) | Cultural property—Protection. | Cultural policy. |

Intangible property. | Sustainability. | Music—Social aspects. |

Applied ethnomusicology.

Classification: LCC ML3916 .M8739 2022 (print) | LCC ML3916 (ebook) |

DDC 306.4/842—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022002580>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022002581>

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780197609101.001.0001

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Paperback printed by Marquis, Canada

Hardback printed by Bridgeport National Bindery, Inc., United States of America

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Jeff Todd Titon</i>	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
<i>Companion Website</i>	xvi
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xvii
1. Introduction: Approaching Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage	1
<i>Anthony Seeger and Huib Schippers</i>	
PART I: THE GENESIS OF THE ICH CONVENTION	
2. Recognizing Intangible Cultural Heritage	21
<i>Richard Kurin</i>	
3. Modalities for Community Participation in Implementing the UNESCO ICH Convention	52
<i>Noriko Aikawa-Faure</i>	
4. Definitions Related to the Safeguarding of Living Culture: Words Matter	78
<i>Wim van Zanten (summary; full text available on companion website)</i>	
5. Reclaiming Community Agency in Managing Intangible Cultural Heritage: Paperwork, People, and the Potential of the Public Voice	81
<i>Naila Ceribašić</i>	
PART II: THE ICH CONVENTION IN ACTION	
6. The “ICH Movement” in China: The Status of Traditional Musics after ICH Certification	101
<i>Xiao Mei and Yang Xiao</i>	
7. UNESCO-Based and UNESCO-Free: Governmental and Non-Governmental Efforts for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Turkey	118
<i>Olcay Muslu</i>	

8. Community Engagement as a Site of Struggle: UNESCO Conventions, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and State Agendas in Malaysia <i>Tan Sooi Beng</i>	139
9. There Is No Price for That: UNESCO as Translator Between Conflicting Value Systems in Guatemala <i>Logan Elizabeth Clark</i>	158
10. Sustainability, Agency, and the Ecologies of Music Heritage in Alentejo, Portugal <i>Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco</i>	177
PART III: THE FUTURE OF MUSIC AS ICH	
11. Reading ICH in Cultural Space: China's National Cultural Ecosystem (Experimental) Conservation Areas <i>Gao Shu</i>	199
12. Archives, Technology, Communities, and Sustainability: Overcoming the Tragedy of Humpty Dumpty <i>Anthony Seeger (summary; full text available on companion website)</i>	211
13. Mapping Musical Vitality: A Comparative Approach to Identifying Musical Heritage in Need of Safeguarding <i>Catherine Grant</i>	214
14. Working Musically Through Crisis: What Will It Take to Push for a Sound(er) Future for Haiti? <i>Rebecca Dirksen</i>	232
<i>Index</i>	265

Foreword

Jeff Todd Titon

In June 1999, experts in music from all over the world gathered at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, to discuss efforts to ensure the vitality and diversity of music on this planet. One of its main outcomes was the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Twenty years later, in September 2019, the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage invited another group of experts—some of whom also attended the 1999 meeting—to reflect on the consequences and impact of declaring music an intangible cultural heritage, as well as the framework surrounding it. While I was sadly unable to attend this meeting, it is a pleasure to offer some reflections in this Foreword to the important volume that emanated from it, critically assessing cultural policy and practice in regard to music.

In this book, 15 authors from three continents who have been deeply involved in these efforts review successes and failures of UNESCO and other cultural institutions in working to ensure future continuity in musical traditions. This book is about music-making communities, cultural policy, and sustainability. Music-making communities are social groups that participate in music through exchanges of sound, information, behavior, social solidarity, and at peak moments, exchanges not only of expression, but also emotion and feelings of flow. The community's total involvement with music is termed its music culture: ideas, actions, institutions, material objects—everything that has to do with music. We can identify music cultures with Indigenous peoples, with ethnic groups, with religious communities, with geographic communities, and with occupational communities, among others; we can also identify musical communities clustered around musical genres and sub-genres such as bluegrass, taiko, reggae, hip-hop, *guqin*, Afropop, jazz, and classical music.

Consider the two following vignettes, each focused on a different music-making community in the United States. One: Ralph Stanley, a renowned bluegrass musician and winner of a Heritage Award from the US National

Endowment for the Arts, performs with his band at a county fair. After the performance is over, he sits behind a portable table, with dozens from the audience queued up waiting to buy an autographed copy of his latest CD. A fan thanks him, saying if it weren't for her stumbling on one of his record albums 40 years ago, she'd not have become a bluegrass musician herself. Two: a half dozen members of the Indian Bottom Association of Old Regular Baptists, an obscure religious denomination in Kentucky with a singing tradition five centuries old, demonstrate their musical heritage for tourists at a folk festival, unwilling to think of it as a performance. Although CDs of this music happen to be available in a festival sales tent, they did not bring them and are not interested in marketing their music. These contrasting attitudes toward music commodification are expressions of two different music communities. The bluegrass community is presentational; that is, performers present music to an audience that pays to hear it. This religious community is participatory; that is, everyone in a worship service sings; there is no separate audience. The music is intended as worship, not entertainment; no one pays to make it or hear it. We can find examples of presentational and participatory musics all over the world.

Bluegrass music is secure through at least the next generation, with a professional organization (the International Bluegrass Music Association, or IBMA), an industry, and an international reach. Bluegrass music-making communities exist in many nations, including the Czech Republic, Sweden, and Japan. The religious community had considered its musical tradition endangered. Now it too is secure in its original context of church worship through at least the next generation, in part because of the community's partnership with applied ethnomusicologists, public folklorists, arts organizations, museums, and colleges and universities. No cultural policy is directed at the bluegrass music community today and none is needed; a network of supporters, some well-connected in the music industry, boosts the music through recordings, concerts, festivals, music instructions camps, and a presence on the internet.

On the other hand, the religious music community was the recipient of attention from historians, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and musicologists, as well as arts administrators with their own connections to the music industry. This was the oldest, continuous English-language religious music in oral tradition in the United States. It had been thought to have become extinct, but 50 years ago it was found to have survived here. In the years since, these sympathetic outsiders visited and got to know community members,

each group gaining the others' friendship and trust. The visitors marked the music as cultural heritage, and they arranged for its recognition outside of its region in demonstrations at museums, colleges, and festivals. Singers from this community were invited to academic conferences on the history of their music and its international kin. Community members shared their music and talked about its meaning. They also learned things about their music they had not known before. They had already known its value in worship; now they realized its historical import. They had already known that this music belonged to them; now they understood that they were its stewards. This musical community benefited from cultural policies at the national level in the United States that arose in the 1970s, policies that were directed at music and other folk arts among marginal social groups, with the goal of promoting cultural diversity and equity.

These two vignettes raise issues that confront the contributors to this book: How do differences in music-making communities impact the cultural policies directed at them? When should culture workers, such as arts administrators, museum specialists, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, sociologists, community scholars, and practitioners, attempt to intervene in musical life, and when should they leave music-making communities alone? How should cultural policymakers assess the health of music-making communities and their traditions, and with what inputs from and partnerships with the communities themselves? How should policymakers and culture workers define and carry out their roles? What are the cultural values that a given community assigns to its various musical activities, and how do cultural values determine economic value, and vice versa? If sustainability is a goal, what strategies may best be adopted to achieve it? What are the factors that enable a music-making community to be resilient in the face of disturbance and change, and how may a pragmatic, adaptive management strategy work toward sustaining cultural and musical integrity?

Moreover, underlying these particular issues is a broader consideration: Why is it the business of cultural policy to promote diversity and equity? Chiefly for two reasons: the belief, shared by many, in cultural equity; and the survival value of diversity, whether cultural diversity or biodiversity. Post-World War II decolonization and establishment of new nation-states, the growing influence not only of the United Nations but also of UNESCO, and a series of declarations of human rights and cultural sovereignty have led to a gradual acceptance of cultural democracy. Cultural democracy embodies cultural justice on the basis of the principles of human dignity

and the rights of all to life, liberty, and self-realization. Every music tradition of every social group has cultural rights, just as all peoples throughout the world have the right to physical and cultural survival. Today sweeping social, political, and economic changes induce sweeping cultural changes that have profound effects upon music throughout the world. Modernization, development, political and cultural conflicts, refugee resettlements, industrial and technological revolutions all have subjected musical traditions to culture change, sometimes rapid and sometimes less so but no less profound. Ecology teaches that diversity itself has survival value in the face of profound change. An analogy between cultural and biological diversity was on Alan Lomax's mind in his influential "Appeal for Cultural Equity": "[At the same time that] folklorists and musicologists were studying the varied traditions of the peoples of the earth their rate of disappearance accelerated." With the loss of these communicative systems, "the human species not only loses a way of viewing, thinking and feeling but also a way of adjusting to some zone on the planet which fits it and makes it liveable" (Lomax, 1972, pp. 4-5). Cultural democracy thus couples with sustainability to provide a philosophical basis for inclusion and cultural pluralism initiatives in cultural policy, and especially for the more recent efforts, including those from UNESCO, in cultural conservation, heritage, and safeguarding.

Cultural conservation was the umbrella name that public folklorists and ethnomusicologists in the United States gave to their efforts since the mid-1970s in partnering with communities to encourage their traditional arts and expressive culture as heritage, music prominent among them, by identifying, documenting, and presenting them in museums, festivals, fairs, on recordings, and in film and other media (Loomis, 1982; Feintuch, 1988; Hufford, 1994). But the focus of this volume is on the international arena and UNESCO, which came to this practice late in the last century. UNESCO drew upon American public folklorists' and applied ethnomusicologists' experiences, but also on the 1950 Japanese Law for Protection of Cultural Properties, which included music and other "important intangible cultural properties" of utmost value (Article 71, Section 1), as well as conservation efforts in Korea (Howard, 2006). The concept of intangibility is meant to distinguish music and other ephemeral cultural performances from the tangible heritage embodied in material objects such as historically important architecture. International efforts in archiving and preservation and the activities of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM, a UNESCO-affiliated NGO) also influenced UNESCO when it constructed its more

far-reaching and ambitious version of cultural conservation, its Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). Rejecting the term *folklore* in favor of the phrase *intangible cultural heritage* (ICH), UNESCO adopted the goal of what it termed “safeguarding” in its efforts to encourage member nations to identify, document, set aside, and care for their people’s ICH, particularly those thought to be endangered. Often this exemplary heritage is carried by minority and Indigenous populations, themselves at risk as well as their traditions—populations that are already committed to and often struggling to maintain their way of life insofar as possible.

The concepts of cultural and musical sustainability arrived only a few years after the 2003 UNESCO safeguarding Convention. Unlike conservation, preservation, and safeguarding, which “put applied ethnomusicologists and public folklorists in a defensive posture of safeguarding property assets . . . with tourist commerce [and] staged authenticities,” sustainability partnerships are targeted “interventions aimed directly inside music cultures” (Titon, 2009, p. 119). The sustainability principles that guide them do not come from developmental economics (sustainable development) but, rather, from “conservation ecology—diversity, limits to growth, interconnectedness, and stewardship” (Titon, 2009, p. 119). Sustainability quickly gained prominence in the worlds of public folklore and applied ethnomusicology in the United States, largely replacing the earlier concept of cultural conservation (see Cooley, 2019). Acknowledging its currency, the American Folklore Society themed its 2013 annual conference on cultural sustainability. Sustainability entered UNESCO’s rhetoric not as cultural sustainability, however, but in the older sense of sustainable development, as popularized in the Brundtland Report (1987) and later reiterated in the 17 goals formulated in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (UN 2015), which significantly lack a clear reference to culture, in spite of lobbying efforts by international cultural organizations to the contrary. Translated to the cultural sector, sustainable development seems to be limited primarily to a collateral economic benefit that may accrue from safeguarding ICH: namely, that ICH may also be regarded as a cultural asset that will generate income for the tourist industry. Heritage tourism depends on a local creative economy, that portion of the economy that relies primarily on arts and innovation (Howken, 2001).

If the traditional arts potentially do confer an economic benefit, then instead of their usual role as beggars at the policymaking tables, arts organizations become power brokers. Yet innovation and marketing are not always a good match for traditional expressive culture. As the second of the vignettes

above shows, not all intangible, community-based cultural heritage is easily commodified; and sometimes the result is a confusion of cultural values with economic value (Titon, 2013a; see also van Zanten, Chapter 4, and Clark, Chapter 9, in this volume). The demands of the tourist market may come to take precedence over those of the original, tradition-bearing community and affect both the content and delivery of the “cultural asset.” Moreover, targeted interventions to support one component of a music culture have sometimes had unpredicted negative consequences for other components and processes. It is ironic to consider cultural heritage tourism as an example of sustainable economic development if modernization and presumably unsustainable economic development endangered the cultural traditions in the first place. In addition, scholars from a critical heritage perspective have pointed out that just as traditions are social constructions of the past in the present, so heritage is made, rather than discovered. This is especially true when traditions are subject to revivals, as for example during the 1960s when blues revivalists thought we had discovered something called “blues,” but in our acts of discovery we constructed the object we thought we had discovered (Titon, 1993). Finally, a few scholars have critiqued the sustainability discourse within applied ethnomusicology for diverting attention from social justice concerns that are central in feminist, Marxist, and Indigenous approaches to music and culture (Keogh & Collinson, 2016; Diamond & El Shawan, 2021, p. 3). Yet social justice concerns are paramount in many applied ethnomusicology projects targeted at sustainability (e.g., Summit, 2015; see also Haskell, 2015).

Cultural policies are the subject that the contributors to this book consider. The authors are themselves practitioners and contributors to these cultural policies, and their chapters are themed about music communities, commodification, heritage, cultural tourism, and best practices for musical diversity, inclusion, and equity. Taken as models, successes as related in this volume may succeed elsewhere. Or they may not. Failures, moreover, lead us to question even the fundamental assumptions behind our work, as well as the reasons for the difficulties in their implementation and the consequences of their outcomes. As Svanibor Pettan and I realized more than a decade ago, applied ethnomusicologists in one part of the world were unaware that they were developing and putting into practice models that had already been theorized, practiced, thoroughly critiqued, and either modified or abandoned in other parts of the world (Pettan and Titon 2015, p. 10). Among the fortunate consequences of *Music, Communities, Sustainability* will be a better

understanding of the development of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, some of the influences of its ratification on communities and nation-states, the continuing exchange of ideas among professionals of sustainable cultural policies, and recommendations for improvements.

References

- Brundtland, G. H. (Chairman). (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our common future*. Oxford University Press.
- Cooley, T. J. (Ed.). (2019). *Cultural sustainabilities: Music, media, language*. University of Illinois Press.
- Diamond, B., & El-Shawan Castelo Branco, S. (2021). Ethnomusicological praxis: An introduction. In B. Diamond & S. E. Castelo Branco (Eds.), *Transforming ethnomusicology*, Vol. 2: *Political, social, and economic issues* (pp. 1–25). Oxford University Press.
- Feintuch, B. (Ed.). (1988). *The conservation of culture: Folklorists and the public sector*. University Press of Kentucky.
- Haskell, E. (2015). The role of applied ethnomusicology in post-conflict and post-catastrophe communities. In S. Pettan & J. T. Titon (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of applied ethnomusicology* (pp. 453–480). Oxford University Press.
- Howard, K. (2006). *Preserving Korean music: Intangible cultural properties as icons of identity*. Ashgate.
- Howken, J. (2001). *The creative economy: How people make money from ideas*. Penguin Global.
- Hufford, M. (Ed.) (1994). *Conserving culture: A new discourse on heritage*. University of Illinois Press.
- Keogh, B., & Collinson, I. (2016). “A place for everything, and everything in its place”: The (ab)uses of music ecology. *MUSICultures*, 43(1), 1–15.
- Lomax, A. (1972). Appeal for cultural equity. *The World of Music*, 14(2), 3–17.
- Loomis, O. (Coordinator). (1982). *Cultural conservation*. Library of Congress, the American Folklife Center.
- Pettan, S., & Titon, J. T. (Eds.) (2015). *The Oxford handbook of applied ethnomusicology*. Oxford University Press.
- Summit, J. A. (2015). Advocacy and the ethnomusicologist: Assessing capacity, developing initiatives, setting limits, and making sustainable contributions. In S. Pettan & J. T. Titon (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of applied ethnomusicology* (pp. 199–228). Oxford University Press.
- Titon, J. T. (1993). Reconstructing the blues: Reflections on the 1960s blues revival. In N. V. Rosenberg (Ed.), *Transforming tradition* (pp. 220–240). University of Illinois Press.
- Titon, J. T. (2009). Music and sustainability: An ecological approach. *The World of Music*, 51(1), 119–137.
- Titon, J. T. (2013a). Music is not a cultural asset. <https://sustainablemusic.blogspot.com/2013/03/music-is-not-cultural-asset-2.html>.
- United Nations. (2015). *The 17 goals for sustainable development*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Acknowledgments

Many people contributed directly and indirectly to the realization of this volume. First, we would like to thank the Smithsonian Institution, particularly the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and its former Director Michael Mason. They supported the idea of organizing the working conference that spawned this book in the context of the Smithsonian Year of Music 2019, providing funding, space, and administrative support. We particularly thank Folkways Executive Assistant Logan Clark and her assistants, who shone in arranging many aspects of the gathering, making travel, technology, accommodation, and sustenance seem effortless.


Second, we would like to express our gratitude for the people at Oxford University Press, starting with former Editor of Arts and Humanities Suzanne Ryan, who immediately embraced the idea, attended the meeting, and made all the authors feel valued and at ease with the process. Her successor Norman Hirschy, Sean Decker, and Koperundevi Pugazhenthii were highly supportive and responsive as they steered the volume through peer review, edits, and into production. We'd also like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for the support and suggestions for the volume. Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre at Griffith University kindly supported the indexing of the book.

Third, we would like to thank the authors for embarking and staying on this three-year journey with us: from agreeing to prepare a first draft of their chapters before we met, so that we could plunge *in medias res* when we gathered, to refining their papers on the basis of the discussions and reviewer feedback into the final versions presented here. We are also grateful for the frank and open discussions that characterized all our interactions, which makes this volume an important and honest historical document chronicling the rise of music as intangible cultural heritage, with all its intended and unintended consequences.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the thousands of educators, scholars, policy workers, and other music industry professionals, the millions of musicians, and the billions of people who help create, develop, hand down, sound, support, and sustain music as an essential part of their lives and communities, often in challenging circumstances. They are the true heroes of this book; they have kept music strong and will keep it strong, long before and long after these words fade.

Companion Website

www.oup.com/us/musiccommunitiessustainability

Oxford has created a website to accompany *Music, Communities, Sustainability*. Material that cannot be made available in the book is provided here, including two full-length additional chapters, a documentary, videos and photographs. We encourage you to consult this resource in conjunction with the chapters as you read this volume. Examples available online are indicated in the text with Oxford's symbol .

Contributors

Noriko Aikawa-Faure

Noriko Aikawa-Faure is the former Chief and Director of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit of UNESCO. Currently, she serves on the advisory committee of the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (China).

Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco

Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco is Professor Emerita of Ethnomusicology, founder and former director of the Institute of Ethnomusicology—Center for the Study of Music and Dance at the Universidad Nova de Lisboa in Portugal, and a former President of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM).

Naila Ceribašić

Naila Ceribašić is a scholarly advisor at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research and Adjunct Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of Zagreb, who from 2012 to 2021 represented the ICTM in the ICH Convention.

Logan Elizabeth Clark

Logan Elizabeth Clark is an ethnomusicologist with a focus on marimba music in contemporary Mayan migrant communities, and Executive Assistant at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution.

Rebecca Dirksen

Rebecca Dirksen is an ethnomusicologist with a focus on Haiti, and an Associate Professor in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Catherine Grant

Catherine Grant is a music researcher with interest in cultural sustainability, and a Senior Lecturer in Music Literature and Research at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

Richard Kurin

Richard Kurin is the Smithsonian Institution's Distinguished Scholar and Ambassador at Large, having previously served as Smithsonian Undersecretary, 2007–2017, and for the prior two decades as Director of its Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Xiao Mei

Xiao Mei is Professor of Music at Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Director of the Research Institute of Ritual Music in China, Director of Asian-European Music Research Center, and president of the Association for Traditional Music in China.

Olcay Muslu

Olcay Muslu is a former professional dancer and applied ethnomusicologist, currently involved in developing new degrees in traditional Turkish music as Assistant Professor of Music at Antioch State Conservatory, Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Turkey.

Huib Schippers

Huib Schippers is Adjunct Professor at Griffith University, former Director/Curator of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, and freelance consultant to organizations in the arts and academia.

Anthony Seeger

Anthony Seeger is Professor Emeritus at University of California, Los Angeles, and Director/Curator Emeritus of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

Gao Shu

Gao Shu is actively involved in work to preserve the vitality and diversity of Chinese performing arts, and an Associate Professor at the China National Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, Chinese National Academy of Arts, Beijing.

Tan Sooi Beng

Tan Sooi Beng is actively engaged in the practice of community theatre for young people and in the rejuvenation of local heritage in Penang. She is Professor at Universiti Sains Malaysia and a vice president of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM).

Jeff Todd Titon

*Jeff Todd Titon is Professor of Music, Emeritus, at Brown University and author/editor of nine books, including the popular introductory textbook *Worlds of Music*, as well as the *Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*.*

Yang Xiao

Specializing in the music of the Dong people, Yang Xiao is Professor at Sichuan Conservatory of Music, standing director of the Chinese Minority Society, and Council Member of the Association for Traditional Music in China.

Wim van Zanten

*Wim van Zanten is a Cultural Anthropologist Emeritus specialized in Indonesian music at the Universiteit Leiden, the Netherlands, who was involved in developing the *Glossary of Terms for the ICH Convention*.*

1

Introduction

Approaching Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage

Anthony Seeger and Huib Schippers

The support for certain musical practices to ensure their viability, development, transmission, and enduring significance to communities has always been almost exclusively a local, regional, or national concern. In many societies, this has led to intricate systems of support, from philanthropy to government subsidies, from grants for productions to paying living national treasures, from infrastructure for performance to elaborate education systems. Often, these are linked to a sense of identity and/or prestige. That is why the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter ICH Convention) was a revolutionary document for those of us working in music and the performing arts: It was the first *global* effort to “keep our songs strong”—as a group of Australian Aboriginal women expressed it succinctly and eloquently in discussion with Barwick and Turpin (2016).

Whereas the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage had largely focused on the celebration and preservation of buildings, monuments, and landscapes, the ICH Convention targeted the knowledge and enactment of ideas and skills by communities, groups, and individuals, inclusive of many kinds of knowledge and activities, rather than limited to predefined Eurocentric categories such as “music” and “folklore.” In so doing, it courageously confronted a number of conceptual and practical challenges. As the contributions to this volume show, UNESCO’s lofty goals came with many complicated choices. These ranged from defining what constitutes ICH and how it functions in various contexts to how to execute precise rules needed to implement a convention of this level of abstraction and global scope.


While it is unlikely that it will ever be turned into a Hollywood—or Bollywood—script, the story of how the ICH Convention developed and was

implemented is a riveting tale: a story of ideas, ideals, actions, people, and power (e.g., Seeger, 2015, and this volume). After I (Seeger) had attended several regional meetings as president of the International Council for Traditional Music, I was asked by Noriko Aikawa if I thought it would be possible to organize a global meeting in the United States to consider the 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore. Aikawa was brilliant, eloquent, strategic, and convincing, moving through crowds of scholars with a smile on her face and purpose in her step. Although I was concerned about the potential expense, as director of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings I took the suggestion to my supervisor at the Smithsonian, Richard Kurin, who welcomed the idea and threw himself into making it happen. As director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, a dynamic administrator, trained social anthropologist, and folklorist, Kurin became one of the driving forces behind the realization of a conference focusing on a global assessment of the 1989 Recommendation. This meeting was held in Washington, DC, June 27–30, 1999, and produced key recommendations for the 2003 ICH Convention, in which Aikawa played a decisive role as director of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program (Seitel, 2001).

Twenty years after that gathering at the Smithsonian, as the next director of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, I (Schippers) suggested a working conference to critically evaluate the first two decades of approaching music as ICH, featuring some of the people who were at its inception, and others who have worked with various nation-states, institutions, and communities since. At the time of this writing, the ICH Convention has influenced national policies, community arts, and opportunities for enabling people to continue to practice and develop traditions they value in many of the 180 nations that have ratified it, and even in some countries that have not yet done so. Participants of the second meeting, which took place on October 23–25, 2019, again at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, were asked to send their papers beforehand, so we could focus on discussions rather than presentations, which were open, honest, often critical, but ultimately optimistic.

This volume is the outcome of those discussions, divided into three parts: Part I presents a unique inside view of how the ICH Convention came about and operates, told by four people who were present when key aspects of the Convention and its implementation were discussed and decided. Part II offers profound reflections on how the Convention worked (and didn't

work) on four different continents. Part III offers possible pathways to improve or develop new strategies to realize the objectives of the Convention in the ever-changing realities of the twenty-first century.


For reasons of space, two of the papers are summarized in this volume but appear in full on the book's website. Anthony Seeger and Wim van Zanten volunteered to do this since they no longer need to be concerned about institutional evaluations of their scholarly production. For the same reason, media examples have been placed on the website. We encourage readers to consult the website while reading the chapters here .

The Genesis of the ICH Convention

In Chapter 2, Richard Kurin begins by reviewing some of the efforts to preserve what has been variously labeled “traditional,” “folklore,” “folklife,” and “heritage” in different parts of the world during the past 150 years. Next, he discusses the changes from the 1989 UNESCO Recommendation to the 2003 ICH Convention, with special attention to the 1999 global meeting at the Smithsonian Institution. He notes the influence of both previous and contemporary UNESCO instruments on the development of the ICH Convention, among them the UNESCO Universal Recommendation on Cultural Diversity and the Masterpieces program (2001), and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). He writes, “Participants concluded that a new instrument should contain certain additional features lacking in the Recommendation, such as a code of ethics for principles of respect; the inclusion of customary owners of traditional culture and folklore as the principal participants in and beneficiaries of the process of documenting and disseminating their knowledge; recognition of the collaborative role of NGOs and other institutions that could assist in preserving this cultural heritage; and widening the scope of the Recommendation to include the evolving nature of traditional culture and folklore—not ‘freezing’ it in some idealized past form.” Tracing the writing of the Convention, he notes some aspects that make sense within the UNESCO context but subvert the objectives of the document, among them the necessity for ICH to conform to the Declaration on Human Rights, the definition of sustainability (which we will return to later), and the non-binding nature of the obligation

of nations to consult the culture bearers in the safeguarding of their traditions.

Rich in detail and inside perspectives, Noriko Aikawa-Faure's Chapter 3 focuses on one of the core issues of this book: the changing nature of the participation of communities during the writing of the Convention. She describes the very strongly community-based, bottom-up recommendations that emerged from the 1999 Global Evaluation at the Smithsonian, which emphasized the importance of community initiative and control over their ICH and the steps taken to safeguard it. Noting how that strong community-based wording was weakened in the writing of the Convention and particularly in the development of the Operational Directives that transformed the general statements of the Convention into practice (and which can be altered without requiring the complex process of making changes to a Convention), she insists that "empowering communities should be one of the most powerful tools in ensuring an 'endogenous' participatory approach to the safeguarding of the ICH." She documents a steady erosion of the importance of communities and an increasing presence of top-down decisions in ICH policies.

UNESCO conventions are the final result of years of discussions, negotiations, and interventions. Even a single word can be important. The change of a single phrase can have major implications for what is included and excluded and for the implementation of the Convention by the countries that sign it. As anthropologist Wim van Zanten notes in Chapter 4, "conventions are constructions of words, and words are tricky things." He participated in meetings of specialists who endeavored to define essential concepts as the Convention was being written. He and his colleagues prepared a Glossary of Terms, which was eventually not included in the Convention itself. His chapter examines issues surrounding the definitions of two essential words in the Convention that are also the subject matter of this book: "community" and "sustainability." He addresses some of the complexities of the word "community" in relation to the Dutch tradition of Sinterklaas and Black Pete, and then traces the changing nuances of the word "sustainability" from the text of the Convention to its use in the Operational Directives. He concludes with an examination of a related concept referred to in the Convention, "sustainable development" (as distinct from the sustainability of music practices) and whether it can be applied to tourism, referring to his work with the Indigenous Baduy in western Java. The full chapter is available on the book's companion website .

With her characteristic frankness, Naila Ceribašić's Chapter 5 moves from the genesis of the Convention to critiquing the lack of community agency in the nomination process for the Convention lists. She writes "based on my experience, ranging from very local to international levels, I can hardly recall cases of implementation under the 2003 Convention where culture bearers and their communities were truly empowered to have a decisive influence on the nature, representation, and actions relating to their ICH." She reveals how the vagueness of the definitions of the words "communities, groups, and some individuals" in the Convention arises repeatedly in the meetings of the 24 states in both the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Operational Directives. Ceribašić also notes the disconnect between paper statements and on-the-ground realities, and the tendency of UNESCO to increasingly rely on paper statements alone, while excluding contributions by the public. The on-site descriptions are more often made by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ethnomusicologists (for example, Xiao Mei, Olcay Muslu, Tan Sooi Beng, Logan Elizabeth Clark, Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, and Rebecca Dirksen in this volume), and there is no mechanism for incorporating their findings through UNESCO channels. She suggests that one solution might be the creation of an ICH NGO monitoring center to integrate expertise into the process, and to operate more like the World Heritage Convention.

* * *

These four chapters, told from the vantage point of active participants in key discussions, jointly form a unique document of the story behind the ICH Convention: the worldviews, the ideas, the words, the idealism, the pragmatism, the politics, the compromises, the concessions, the individual and joint efforts to turn a mind-bogglingly complex concept and massively diverse realities into a more or less workable global policy. As they illustrate, empowering musicians and communities was at the center of the planning for the ICH Convention. But once approved and operational, that was tested against the harsh realities of institutional and national ways of doing things. That is hardly surprising: UNESCO is a large and complex institution with over 195 member states, hundreds of NGOs as partners (including five in music), about 65 field offices and institutes reporting to headquarters in Paris, and an underfunded and overworked staff of about two thousand. Its officers pursue many initiatives simultaneously in different branches of the organization. What is being developed in one part of the organization can

have an effect on what happens in another part. UNESCO also has National Commissions in most countries, which are expected to act as liaisons between national governments and UNESCO. Because it is an organization composed of nations, UNESCO can formulate recommendations and conventions for ICH, but it has little control over how these are implemented by the States Parties, so what actually happens varies widely.

The ICH Convention in Action

In terms of positive effects, building on the reputation UNESCO had gained with similar instruments for tangible cultural and natural heritage, the ICH Convention powerfully increased awareness of the value of intangible cultural heritage across the world, and sparked a lively intellectual engagement with the concept. The value of this can hardly be overstated, with impact on musical performance, education, scholarship, economy, and tourism, to name but a few. More practically, it led dozens of countries to modify their cultural policies and inventory and celebrate elements of their cultural heritage, imbuing them with prestige (see, for example, Chapter 6 by Xiao Mei and Yang Xiao, Chapter 7 by Muslu, and Chapter 9 by Clark, in this volume), while some nation-states, most strikingly China, dramatically increased their funding for ICH as a result of the 2003 Convention.

On the negative side, there was a considerable amount of political negotiation around which form of which expression would get recognized, both within and between nation-states. And as anywhere with regulations, people tried to manipulate the system, for instance by misrepresenting ICH expressions and their histories to present newly created ICH, to the point that rumors circulated about bribing experts to recognize recently invented traditions as time-honored ones (cf. Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983). Another issue raised by several scholars is the risk that ICH items come to be seen as just that: as objects, rather than parts of living culture (see, for instance, Gao Shu, Chapter 11 in this volume). Perhaps the biggest losers in these battles have been many of the communities themselves, who often found themselves without much agency in selecting, presenting, and planning for the ICH they created and owned (see Ceribašić, Chapter 5 in this volume; and for reflections on contemporary approaches to working with communities Bartleet & Higgins, 2018; Schrag & Van Buren, 2018; and Garcia Corona & Wiens, 2021).

Indigenous communities frequently have less power than other communities in the nation-states of settlers who displaced them from their territories and now surround them. In her critical examination of its provisions for Indigenous peoples, Henrietta Marie argued that the ICH Convention did not serve Indigenous people well because it failed to address issues of intellectual property, consultation, and mechanisms for protection, as well as some other UNESCO and UN instruments (2009, pp. 174–176). Perhaps the clearest statement regarding Indigenous control over their ICH is to be found in the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It gives them far more control over their ICH than the ICH Convention grants to any other communities:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions [. . .]. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. (UNESCO, 2007, p. 23)

Even though specific protection of Indigenous rights was not granted in the ICH Convention, Indigenous peoples in many countries have become increasingly active agents for their own ICH, often using national ICH policies for their own ends (Stobart & Bigenho, 2018). Many nations that ratified the ICH Convention have nominated the ICH of Indigenous peoples within their national borders to the UNESCO lists in recognition of its importance for cultural diversity and national identity. Other nations that did not ratify the Convention for fear it would expose them legally or financially—including Australia, Canada, and the United States—in fact developed programs which could be considered in the spirit of the ICH Convention. For instance, the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia has tried to counter the egregious loss of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music by documenting music practices for future generations (Marett et al., 2005). The chapters by Clark and van Zanten reveal additional ways in which Indigenous communities make use of the ICH Convention and their Indigenous identities to negotiate their status within nation-states.

Other communities that are at peril of being underrepresented in nation-driven ICH exercises are those divided across national (often colonial) borders, diasporic communities, displaced people, refugees and other war victims, as well as censored, discriminated, persecuted, and incarcerated

people. ICH in Africa frequently crosses national boundaries and is often misrepresented—the heritage of colonialism (e.g., Agawu, 2003). Diasporic cultures often present challenges in identifying and prioritizing what needs to be sustained (see, for instance, Dirksen, Chapter 14 in this volume). The culture of refugees and displaced people is supported erratically at best in their new and often temporary homes (Pettan, 2010), and culture is rarely a priority for incarcerated people (Balfour et al., 2019). Rebuilding meaningful engagement with music in post-conflict environments is a major challenge (Howell, 2018), and religious intolerance is a key reason for music actively “being disappeared” (Seeger in QCRC, 2008; see also Tan, Chapter 8 in this volume). There is a growing body of research and literature on many of these groups, but much work remains to be done in this realm.

With over 20 years of planning and implementing, it is fascinating to see the Convention’s intended and unintended effects in specific nation-states, music traditions, and communities. Whereas the authors in Part I all participated in UNESCO committees related to the ICH Convention, the authors in Part II (and in Part III) have all done extensive research in the field, documenting the effects of the Convention and of approaching music as ICH in various settings. With the exception of Logan Clark and Rebecca Dirksen, who live in the United States, they all report on research projects conducted in their own countries, often after decades-long association with a particular genre. Each chapter reveals a different type of complexity in the relationships between musicians, communities, nation-states, and the UNESCO Convention.

In Chapter 6, Xiao Mei and Yang Xiao report on the largest comparative project described in this volume. The study on the impact of what they call the “ICH Movement” in China involved extended research on 11 “certified” practices over a period of 6 years. They write about multiple contexts for many of the traditions recognized as ICH, static state protection versus living state protection, the crystallization of five different forms of transmission, the recognition of inheritors, and the complex position of scholars between government and musicians in a system that is “led by the government, guided by scholars, and participated in by culture bearers.” They conclude that the multiple gazes of government, institutions, academia, artists, the commercial world, and the population at large are a mixed blessing at best in the country that probably invests more in ICH than any other.

In Chapter 7, Olcay Muslu presents contrasting sustainability projects in two parts of Turkey: one both enabled and limited by the new approach

of the government toward ICH since 2018, and the other one controlled by the community. She gives an insightful analysis of challenges in representation, expertise, and mixed motives, also noticing that “better visibility for elements of intangible cultural heritage and heighten[ing] awareness of their significance [. . .] can be a double-edged sword,” as elements become “standardized and turned into stage performances and material for tourism.” At the same time, she points out that “UNESCO-free” projects where the community truly has agency often suffer from lack of resources and visibility.

Tan Sooi Beng describes in Chapter 8 the complex relations between communities, state governments, the Malaysian nation, and the ICH Convention by comparing the treatment of Mak Yong theatre in Kelantan State and a multicultural heritage festival in George Town, in Penang State. Malaysia has its own nationalist cultural policies, but individual provinces have broad discretion over their implementation. The result, she argues, is that “the Convention does not offer protection against the misappropriation and cleansing of cultural forms to suit the requirements of political and religious elites, the suppression or exclusion of women in performance, and the dispossession of the tradition bearers, particularly in conservative Islamic states.” She suggests possible improvements to the Convention, as well as the creation of regional centers for collaboration on ICH.

Logan Elizabeth Clark’s Chapter 9 on the effect of a UNESCO listing on the Indigenous Achí-Mayan dance-drama in Guatemala provides an example of the ability of local communities to take advantage of the opportunities provided by UNESCO recognition. In this case, the participants valued the religious nature of the dance-drama, and the government valued the development of tourism in the rural region. Focusing on systems of value and the attitudes of the performers, Clark concludes, “UNESCO recognition resulted not in the replacement of local values, but rather in the translation of one type of value to another, and, consequentially, greater agency for the dance practitioners.”

Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, in Chapter 10, examines the processes and legacies of heritagization of *Cante Alentejano* over a period of 90 years in southern Portugal. This unaccompanied two-part polyphonic singing was first institutionalized by Portugal’s authoritarian regime (1933–1974), then was given new meanings during the democratic regime beginning in 1974, and in the twenty-first century has been shaped by the impact of the ICH Convention and its implementation in Portugal. In spite of the clear influence of different government policies over many decades, Castelo-Branco


concludes that “the sustainability of *cante* has not depended so much on the politics of heritage, nor on recent attempts to package it as a value-added product for the tourist market, but rather on its central place in practitioners’ lives, and the social intimacy created through the act of collective singing.”

The Future of Music as ICH

Part III moves from illustrating the complex relations of communities, nations, and UNESCO policies to considering some of the implications of these for future policies. No one expected the ICH Convention to be a perfect framework when it was launched (e.g., Kurin, 2004, and most contributors to this volume). A flawless system for safeguarding music practices worldwide may be impossible to devise. However, as with so many approaches to highly complex issues, while the ICH Convention and its implementation have probably raised more questions than the Convention answered, it has enabled more refined thinking and has led to better questions, suggesting ways forward to continue making this important work more effective. That is already evident from the authors in Parts I and II, but even more so in the final Part of this volume.

In Chapter 11, Gao Shu writes about the fascinating concept of experimental cultural ecological zones developed and implemented in China, with the stipulation that they abide by the adage “see people, see items, see life,” protecting “both intangible cultural heritage and the human and natural environment[s] that foster the development of intangible cultural heritage.” To the best of our knowledge, this is the only extensive nation-driven program that takes into account not only a single element of the tradition, but emphatically also the people and their social and natural environments. It also represents an important contrast with the item-focused sustainability efforts in China, which has led to a frequently critiqued system of public performances with high production values, but relatively little attention to cultural context.

Anthony Seeger notes in Chapter 12 that audiovisual archiving has been profoundly transformed in the twenty-first century by emerging technologies. The internet multiplied the number of archives, changed the relationships between archives and communities, and created an “archival multiverse” (Gilliland, 2018). The six basic functions of archives (relation to institutional mission, acquisition, organization, preservation, access, and

dissemination) haven't changed, but the ways they are undertaken have. Many other features of ICH have also been transformed by the internet, which allows distant community members to work together. The isolation of the COVID pandemic forced further innovations in musical performances, human interactions, and creative collaborations: communities, individuals, and the usefulness of archives for serving, safeguarding, and creating music will all benefit from these changes. The full chapter is available on the book's companion website .

In Chapter 13, Catherine Grant convincingly argues for carefully employing comparative approaches to gauge the vitality of specific practices and to assess changes over time, using three approaches that have proven their value in other arenas (cf. Grant, 2014). While cautioning against “applying positivist tools to something as rich, complex, and human as music,” and aware of the “unruly tendency of music genres to mutate, and even migrate without human bearers,” she presents three models that can provide useful references for the vitality of specific music practices, and any changes over time. These can contribute to the ongoing efforts toward monitoring the need for and efficiency of interventions over time.

Finally, Rebecca Dirksen's Chapter 14 addresses the full breadth of topics dealt with in the previous chapters. She begins with a description of Haiti's long history of national cultural policies. She notes that the activities of UNESCO have been marred by its insistence on the use of French in projects in Haiti, where most inhabitants speak only Kreyòl, by the reliance on geographic regions that placed Haiti with the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean, and by a tendency to reproduce earlier colonial rhetoric about development. These have limited the participation of community activists and culture bearers. Contrasting two case studies—Haitian classical music and Vodou drums—she argues that Haiti is a place where the study of patrimony should be influenced by calls for restorative justice. The final third of her chapter is a critical reflection on the concepts of musical ecologies, sustainability, and the need to rectify pressing social problems. With its call for the study of what she calls the “frictions” between different parts of society and with international organizations, Dirksen provides a fitting coda to this collection.

* * *

There are three more important and related critical issues we feel this Introduction should address in order to optimally frame the contributions