



# Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity

Proclamations 2001, 2003 and 2005



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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# Preface



On the 20 April 2006 a new chapter commenced in the story of UNESCO's work for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, and therefore also for the protection of cultural diversity and human creativity, with the coming into force of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Indeed, this Convention for the first time places at the disposal of the Member States mechanisms to help with the identification, transmission and valorization of expressions of

intangible heritage, while at the same time stimulating international co-operation and assistance.

As soon as I arrived at UNESCO in 1999, I made the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage one of the priorities of the Organization. Indeed, I felt it was urgent to act to preserve a fragile heritage that was often under threat of extinction and which had not, until then, enjoyed sufficient sustained attention from our Organization. Drawing on the example of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, it had seemed to me that a mechanism needed to be put in place to support this living heritage, a heritage that was crucial for the cultural identity of communities and peoples.

It is within this context that a two-fold strategy was initiated. The Programme of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity established a new international distinction, which was conceived as an immediate initial measure aimed at raising awareness about intangible heritage and enhancing it throughout the world. In addition, and in order to ensure lasting and concerted protection world-wide, the Member States requested that UNESCO draft a normative instrument – the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – which was adopted by the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference of the Organization in October 2003.

Over the course of the three Proclamations – 2001, 2003 and 2005 – 90 forms of cultural expression and cultural spaces from 70 countries received the distinction. More than one hundred countries participated in the programme and more than 150 candidature files were submitted. The First

Proclamation took place in May 2001 and inscribed the first 19 Masterpieces in the List of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, enhanced in November 2003 by 28 additional cultural expressions and spaces. All were selected for their artistic, historical or anthropological value and for their importance for the cultural identity and sense of continuity of the custodian communities as well as for the cultural diversity of humanity.

In November 2005, the proclamation of 43 new Masterpieces was cause for further celebration of the wealth and diversity of the world's intangible cultural heritage. The success of the Third Proclamation and the extraordinary speed with which the Convention came into force a few months later demonstrate the timeliness of UNESCO's intervention in this field.

The scale of the impact of the Proclamation has been considerable. The governments involved have undertaken a number of initiatives such as the setting up of institutions for the safeguarding of intangible heritage, the creation of inventories and the adoption of national legislation.

But the key point was the development of specific plans to safeguard the Masterpieces that were proclaimed. To date, almost 30 of the 47 Masterpieces proclaimed in 2001 and 2003 from developing countries have benefited from UNESCO support to set up and implement the projects, thanks to the generosity of the Japanese Government. This support should also benefit around twenty new projects from amongst those Masterpieces proclaimed in 2005.

The 2003 Convention marks a new stage. The Masterpieces which have already been proclaimed from countries that

have ratified the Convention will be incorporated into the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity set out in article 16 of the Convention, according to terms to be defined by the Intergovernmental Committee created as part of the Convention.

The programme of the Proclamation adopted an innovative approach assigning a major role to the local communities and to the custodians of the tradition in the safeguarding of their intangible heritage, the stress being placed on transmission to future generations. The involvement of the practitioner-guarantors of the tradition is thus also essential for the success of the safeguarding projects.

With the coming into force of the Convention, the Proclamation programme has achieved its objectives. It has raised awareness among the international community as to the value of intangible cultural heritage and the urgent need to act to ensure its transmission. Through representative examples it has illustrated the diversity of the cultural expressions that are part of this heritage and of the factors that threaten it. It has also explored methods of protecting it. The experience acquired since 2001 has enabled concepts to be tested in the field and effective safeguarding activities to be launched. This represents an invaluable foundation on which to build the future Intergovernmental Committee that will be charged with the implementation of the Convention.



Koïchiro Matsuura  
Director-General of UNESCO

# Introduction

## The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity

The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage marks a crucial step in UNESCO's strategy for the safeguarding of our living heritage. The Proclamations of 2001, 2003 and 2005 resulted in a list of 90 outstanding examples of the world's intangible cultural heritage (ICH). The experience acquired through this programme, especially through related safeguarding activities, will be invaluable in preparing for the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which entered into force on 20 April 2006. The entry into force of the Convention concludes the series of Proclamations, paving the way for a new system for listing and promoting the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

The Proclamation programme was created by UNESCO's General Conference in 1997, and the following year the Executive Board approved its Regulations. The Proclamation's main objectives were:

- to raise awareness on the importance of the oral and intangible heritage and the need to safeguard it;
- to evaluate and list the world's oral and intangible heritage;
- to encourage countries to establish national inventories and to take legal and administrative measures for the protection of their oral and intangible heritage;
- to promote the participation of traditional artists and local practitioners in identifying and revitalizing their ICH.

The programme honoured two categories of intangible cultural heritage: 1) forms of popular or traditional expression

and 2) cultural spaces, the latter being defined as "places in which popular and traditional activities are concentrated".

The Masterpieces were selected on the basis of six criteria specified in the Proclamation's Regulations. The candidature files were required to demonstrate that the proposed cultural expressions or cultural spaces (i) possess outstanding value as a Masterpiece of the human creative genius, (ii) are rooted in the cultural tradition or cultural history of the community concerned, (iii) play a role as a means of affirming the cultural identity of the community concerned, (iv) are distinguished by excellence in the application of skills and technical qualities displayed, (v) constitute a unique testimony of a living cultural tradition, and (vi) are threatened with disappearance due to insufficient means for safeguarding or to processes of rapid change. Furthermore, candidature files had to include a solid action plan for the safeguarding and promotion of the proposed expression or cultural space.

According to the Regulations, each Member State could submit one candidature every two years. Cultural spaces or forms of traditional expressions, shared by several states could be presented as multinational candidatures in addition to the national quota. The scientific and technical aspects of the files were first evaluated by specialized NGOs and subsequently examined by the International Jury (see pages 100-105), composed of 18 members nominated by the Director-General of UNESCO.

In May 2001, Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura proclaimed 19 Masterpieces, chosen from 32 proposals. At the second Proclamation, held in November 2003, 28 of the 56 candidature files were added to the list of Masterpieces. Out of 64

files submitted for the third and last Proclamation, held in November 2005, 43 were inscribed on the list, bringing the total number of Masterpieces to 90. The proclaimed cultural expressions and spaces are located in more than 70 countries from all regions of the world: 14 from Africa, 8 from the Arab States, 30 from the Asia-Pacific region, 21 from Europe and 17 from Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Proclamation programme has honoured such diverse expressions as popular carnivals in Bolivia or Belgium, sand drawings from Vanuatu, classical forms of Japanese, Indian and Korean theatre, a medieval mystery play in Spain, and polyphonic singing traditions of Central Africa, Georgia and Albania, to name but a few. The list of Masterpieces also includes a number of cultural spaces, including the Jemaa el-Fna Square in the Moroccan city of Marrakesh, the island of Kihnu in Estonia, the Cultural Space of Sosso-Bala in Guinea and Uzbekistan's Boysun District.

Special attention was devoted to cultural expressions and spaces considered endangered due to factors such as migration, the uncontrolled influx of mass media, inadequate financial means, standardization policies or general disesteem. These factors can erode the functions and value of expressions and spaces and alienate younger generations from their intangible heritage.

A key component of the Proclamation programme was the so-called preparatory assistance, which provided financial support for the compilation of candidature files by Member States with developing economies. This aid could be used for different types of activities: fieldwork, research, inventories, census taking, seminars and workshops with communities and institutions, and the preparation of audiovisual documentation. By institut-

ing this financial support UNESCO hoped to prompt concerned communities to take a direct role in the elaboration of action plans. Such preparatory assistance enabled some countries to start national inventories, to create committees in charge of coordinating safeguarding activities and to launch awareness-raising campaigns. Thanks to UNESCO's Regular Budget and the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, 120 institutions in developing countries received assistance in the framework of the Proclamation programme.

The Proclamation of a cultural expression or space is more than an internationally recognized distinction, for it also imposes specific obligations. Indeed, the Member States concerned must ensure the Masterpiece's revitalization, safeguarding and promotion through the implementation of the action plan presented in the candidature file. To this effect, the Proclamation programme provided for financial assistance, funded in large part by the Japanese Government, towards the implementation of these action plans, primarily in developing countries. In addition, special prizes awarded by the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Korea, Uzbekistan and Bolivia contributed significantly to the funding of action plans. Thirty out of the 47 Masterpieces proclaimed in 2001 and 2003 benefited from this support, and some 21 Masterpieces included in the 2005 Proclamation are expected to receive similar financial assistance.

The action plans covered, inter alia:

- identification and inventorying;
- research and documentation;
- enhancing the transmission of knowledge and know-how to younger generations;

- awareness-raising at the local and national level through information campaigns, festivals, workshops, conferences and other means;
- the adoption of legal protective measures;
- the creation of specialized curricula in schools and universities.

As a general rule, these safeguarding measures were established in consultation with the communities concerned.

### The Proclamation programme and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Inspired by the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Proclamation programme is considered an essential link in the series of legal instruments and programmes that culminated in the adoption of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

From the outset, the Proclamation programme employed a definition of “oral and intangible heritage” that was consistent with the 1989 Recommendation. However, a series of expert meetings and worldwide discussions and the experience acquired through the Programme led to a revised definition of ICH, laying the groundwork for the 2003 Convention. The Proclamation Programme furthermore played an important role in the elaboration of fresh approaches to safeguarding and a new list of domains, as incorporated in the 2003 Convention.

The Convention recognizes the following non-restrictive list of domains:

- oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;*
- performing arts;*
- social practices, rituals and festive events;*
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;*
- traditional craftsmanship.*

Furthermore, in order to ensure greater visibility for ICH, the Convention provides for a dual listing system: (1) a Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, conceived as a counterpart to the renowned World Heritage List; and (2) the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, which will set the priorities for action.

The 2003 Convention has not adopted the concept of “outstanding value” mentioned in the first of the six criteria for selecting Masterpieces under the Proclamation programme, (*“its outstanding value as a masterpiece of the human creative genius”*). Instead, the Convention emphasizes representativity by establishing a “Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”.

The question of *“outstanding value vs. representativity”* was discussed at length by the governmental experts who elaborated the Convention. They felt that since the Convention protects elements of the ICH that are relevant for the identity and continuity of groups and communities, the instrument should not attempt to create a hierarchy among such elements, or among cultures.

During various expert meetings organized after the adoption of the Convention in October 2003, the concept of “representativity” was interpreted, on the one hand, as “representative for the creativity of humanity”, and, on the other hand, as “representative for the cultural heritage of communities, groups or – if appropriate – states”.

The central role attributed to individuals, communities and groups of tradition bearers by the Proclamation programme represented a crucial new approach towards the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, particularly in relation to the 1989 Recommendation and the World Heritage Convention of 1972. The programme not only acknowledged the importance of ICH for the sense of identity and the well-being of communities, but specifically stipulated that only those candidature files submitted with the agreement of the communities of tradition bearers concerned could be accepted by UNESCO. Moreover, among the criteria used to evaluate the action plans were the role accorded to the communities concerned and the potential benefits that could be gained by them.

The 2003 Convention also attributes an essential role to individuals, communities and groups in the identification and the safeguarding of their intangible heritage. For the purposes of the Convention, ICH cannot be defined and identified without the participation of the communities, groups and/or individuals, who create, maintain and transmit this heritage. They should also be involved in the management and safeguarding of their ICH, and customary practices governing the access to their heritage must be respected.

The first meeting of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention will take place from 27 to 29 June 2006. The Intergovernmental Committee, which will be elected at that meeting, is responsible for preparing the Operational Directives that will guide the implementation of the Convention after their approval by the General Assembly. Following the election of its members by the General Assembly, the Intergovernmental Committee will convene for the first time in September 2006.

The Operational Directives will include a new set of criteria for the lists of the Convention and will determine the way in which Masterpieces located on the territory of States Parties to the Convention, will be incorporated into the Representative List. At present, more than half of the Masterpieces are located in the territory of one or more of the States Parties to the Convention.



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2005

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# Albanian Folk Iso-Polyphony

ALBANIA



Albanian iso-polyphony is characterized by songs consisting of two solo parts, a melody and a countermelody with a choral drone. The structure of the solo parts varies according to the different ways of performing the drone, which has a great variety of structures, especially in the popular style adopted by all groups performing this music.

Over the last few decades, the modest rise of cultural tourism

Traditional Albanian polyphonic music can be divided into two major stylistic groups as performed by the Ghegs of northern Albania and the Tosks and Labs living in the southern part of the country. The term *iso* is related to the *ison* of Byzantine church music and refers to the drone accompanying polyphonic singing. The drone is performed in two ways: among the Tosks, it is always continuous and sung on the syllable 'e', using staggered breathing, while among the Labs, the drone is sometimes sung as a rhythmic tone, performed to the text of the song. Rendered mainly by male singers, the music traditionally accompanies a wide range of social events, such as weddings, funerals, harvest feasts, religious celebrations and festivals such as the well-known Albanian folk festival in Gjirokastra.

and the growing interest of the research community in this unique folk tradition have contributed to the revival of Albanian iso-polyphony. However, the tradition is adversely affected by poverty, the absence of legal protection and the lack of financial support for practitioners, threatening the transmission of the vast repertoire of songs and techniques. The rural exodus of young people to the bigger cities and abroad in search of jobs compounds this danger. Given these conditions, at the present time, the transmission of this tradition is maintained through professional folk artists, rather than within the family structure.

# The Ahellil of Gourara

2005

## ALGERIA

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Performed during collective ceremonies, the Ahellil is a poetic and musical genre emblematic of the Zenete population of Gourara. This region in southwest Algeria includes some one hundred oases populated by over 50,000 inhabitants of Berber, Arab and Sudanese origin. The Ahellil, which is specific to the Berber-speaking part of Gourara, is regularly rendered at religious festivities and pilgrimages as well as secular celebrations, such as weddings and community events. The Ahellil is closely linked to the Zenete way of life and its oasis agriculture, symbolizing the cohesion of the community living in a harsh environment and, at the same time, transmitting the values and the history of the Zenete population in a language that is at risk of disappearing.



Simultaneously interpreted as poetry, polyphonic chant, music and dance, this genre is performed by a *bengri* (flute) player, a singer and a chorus of up to a hundred people. Standing shoulder to shoulder in a circle surrounding the singer, they slowly move around him while clapping their hands. An Ahellil performance consists of a series of chants in an order decided by the instrumentalist or singer and follows an age-old pattern. The first part, the *lemserreh*, includes everyone and encompasses short, well-known chants that are sung late into the night. The second, the *aougrou*, concerns only the experienced performers who continue until dawn. The *tra* finishes with daybreak and involves only the most accomplished per-

formers. This threefold structure is also reflected in the chant performance, which begins with a prelude by the instrumentalist, followed by the chorus picking up certain verses, and ending with it chanting in a whisper and slowly building up into a powerful, harmonious whole.

This tradition is threatened due to the dwindling number of occasions on which it is performed. This decline is linked to the rarity of traditional festivities. The migration of young people to the cities and the prevailing preference to listen to widely available Ahellil recordings rather than actively participating in live performances.

# The Duduk and its Music

## ARMENIA



The duduk, the Armenian oboe, is a double-reed wind instrument characterized by a warm, soft, slightly nasal timbre. It belongs to the category of aerophones, which also includes the *balaban* played in Azerbaijan and Iran, the *duduki* common in Georgia and the *ney* in Turkey. The soft wood of the apricot tree is the ideal material for the body of the instrument. The reed, called *ghamish* or *yegheg*, is a local plant growing alongside the Arax River.

The roots of Armenian duduk music go back to the times of the Armenian king Tigran the Great (95-55 BC). It accompanies popular Armenian traditional songs and dances of the various regions and is played at events, such as weddings and funerals. Although there are also famous duduk soloists, among them Gevorg Dabaghyan and Vache Sharafyan, the duduk is usually played by two musicians. One player creates the musical environment for the lead melody by playing a continual drone held by circular breathing, while the other player develops complex melodies and improvisations.

There are four major types of duduk, varying in length from 28 to 40 cm. This variety allows the sound of the duduk to express various moods depending on the content of the piece and the playing context. The 40-cm long duduk, for example, is regarded as most appropriate for love songs, whereas the smaller one usually accompanies dances. Today, duduk craftsmen continue to create and experiment with different forms of duduks. Many Armenians consider the duduk as the instrument that most eloquently expresses warmth, joy and their history.

Over the last few decades, the popularity of Armenian duduk music has faded, in particular in the rural areas where it originated. The duduk instrument is played less and less in popular festivities, but more often as a staged performance by professionals, risking to threaten the music's viability and traditional character.



# The Azerbaijani Mugham

2003

## AZERBAIJAN

4

The Azerbaijani Mugham is a traditional musical form, characterized by a large degree of improvisation. The Mugham, though a classical and academic art, draws upon popular bard melodies, rhythms and performance techniques and is performed in many venues throughout the country.

Contemporary representations of the Azerbaijani Mugham reflect different periods of Azerbaijan's history and its contacts with Persians, Armenians, Georgians and with other Turkic peoples. This musical genre shares artistic characteristics with the Iraqi Maqam, the Persian Radif and the Turkish Makams. In the past, Mugham was primarily performed on two secular occasions: the *toy*, the traditional wedding feast and the *majles*, a gathering of connoisseurs in private settings. It was also cultivated by members of the Sufi orders and by performers of religious dramas known as *ta'zie* or *shabih*. Official competitions and informal contests served to establish the reputation of accomplished musicians.



This modal genre features a male or female singer accompanied by musicians playing traditional instruments, such as the *tar* (a long-neck lute), the *kamancha* (a four-string spiked fiddle) and the *daf* (a type of large tambourine). Since Mugham cannot be transcribed in a fixed form, multiple versions are transmitted by masters who train students in the fine art of interpretation to ensure the variety of this artistic expression.

The Mugham has lost some of its aesthetic and expressive characteristics largely due to European influences, which are particularly apparent in the manner in which contemporary musicians perform and transmit their skills to the younger generations.



2005

# Baul Songs

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BANGLADESH

The Bauls are mystic minstrels living in rural Bangladesh and West Bengal, India. The Baul movement, at its peak in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has now regained popularity among the rural population of Bangladesh. Their music and way of life have influenced a large segment of Bengali culture, and particularly the compositions of Nobel Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

Bauls live either near a village or travel from place to place and earn their living from singing to the accompaniment of the *ektara*, the lute *dotara*, a simple one-stringed instrument, and a drum called *dubki*. Bauls belong to an unorthodox devotional tradition, influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism, Bengali, Vasinavism and Sufi Islam, yet distinctly different from them. Bauls neither identify with any organized religion nor with the caste system, special deities, temples or sacred places. Their emphasis lies on the importance of a person's physical body as the place where God resides. Bauls are admired for this freedom from convention as well as their



music and poetry. Baul poetry, music, song and dance are devoted to finding humankind's relationship to God, and to achieving spiritual liberation. Their devotional songs can be traced back to the fifteenth century when they first appeared in Bengali literature.

Baul music represents a particular type of folk song, carrying influences of Hindu *bhakti* movements as well as the *shuphi*, a form of Sufi song. Songs are also used by the spiritual leader to instruct disciples in Baul philosophy, and are transmitted orally. The language of the songs is continuously

modernized thus endowing it with contemporary relevance.

The preservation of the Baul songs and the general context in which they are performed depend mainly on the social and economic situation of their practitioners, the Bauls, who have always been a relatively marginalized group. Moreover, their situation has worsened in recent decades due to the general impoverishment of rural Bangladesh.

# The Carnival of Binche

BELGIUM

2003

6

The town of Binche is situated south of Brussels in Belgium's Hainaut province. Each year, during the three days preceding Lent, it is host to carnival festivities that mobilize the historic centre and attract throngs of foreign visitors. With roots dating back to the Middle Ages, Binche's famed celebration ranks as one of Europe's oldest surviving street carnivals.

An atmosphere of merry industriousness pervades the town as thousands of Binchois produce lavish costumes and participate in drum rehearsals and themed balls. On Shrove Sunday, which marks the official beginning of the carnival, Binche's streets and cafés come alive with roving hordes of masqueraded merrymakers. The *Mam'selles*, men dressed in extravagant female attire, are particularly prominent on this day. The carnival culminates on Mardi Gras, when the legendary Gille characters make their appearance. After an elaborate ceremonial dressing rite, several hundred Gilles sporting red, yellow and black costumes, replete with ostrich-feather hats, wooden clogs, bells and wax masks with small spectacles, parade through the town to the beat of the drum. Pierrots, harlequins and peasants follow the processions, intermingling with costumed revellers and local brass and clarinet bands. Dancers, stirred by traditional tunes played on the viola and drum, perform an assortment of steps including



the perennial favourite, fittingly called the *pas de Gille*. The day's events reach a climax with the Gilles' dancing in the *Grand Place* under fireworks.

The carnival of Binche is a genuinely popular festival renowned for its spontaneity and the substantial financial commitment of its participants. The townspeople take great pride in the celebration and strive to preserve the precious craftsmanship and know-how associated with the carnival's traditional costumes, accessories, dances and music.



# Processional Giants and Dragons in Belgium and France

2005

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## BELGIUM AND FRANCE



Traditional processions of huge effigies of giants, animals or dragons encompass an original ensemble of festive popular manifestations and ritual representations. These effigies first appeared in urban religious processions at the end of the fourteenth century in many European towns and continue to serve as emblems of identity for certain Belgian (Ath, Brussels, Dendermonde, Mechelen and Mons) and French towns (Cassel, Douai, Pézenas and Tarascon), where they remain living traditions.

The giants and dragons are large-scale models measuring up to nine metres in height and weighing as much as 350 kilos. They represent mythical heroes or animals, contemporary local figures, historical, biblical or legendary characters or trades. St. George fighting the dragon is staged in Mons; Bayard, the horse from the Charlemagne legend, parades in Dendermonde; and Reuze Papa and Reuze Maman, popular family characters, parade at Cassel. The performances, often mixing secular procession and religious ceremony, vary from town to town, but always follow a precise ritual in which the giants relate to the history, legend or life of the town.

Giants and dragons enliven popular festivals where they are the main actors at least once a year; as each effigy has its specific feast day. They act out historical scenes and dance in the streets to the accompaniment of fanfares and costumed people. The crowd follows the procession, and many participants help in the preparations at different stages of the festival. The construction of a giant and its ongoing maintenance require months of work and know-how in many techniques given the range of materials used. Although these expressions are not threatened with immediate disappearance, they do suffer from a number of pressures, such as major changes to town centres and increasing tourism, leading to the detriment of the popular, spontaneous nature of the festival.

# Language, Dance and Music of the Garifuna

2001

BELIZE, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA

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A population of mixed origin incorporating cultural elements of indigenous Caribbean and African groups, the Garifuna settled along the Atlantic coast of Central America after being forced to flee from the Caribbean island of Saint Vincent in the eighteenth century. Today, Garifuna communities mainly live in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Belize.

The Garifuna language belongs to the Arawakan group of languages and has survived centuries of discrimination and linguistic domination. It is rich in tales (*úruga*) originally recited during wakes or large gatherings. The melodies bring together African and Amerindian elements, and the texts are a veritable repository of the history and traditional knowledge of the Garifuna, such as cassava-growing, fishing, canoe-building and the construction of baked mud houses. There is also a considerable amount of satire in these songs, which are accompanied by various drums and dances, which the spectators may join in.



These traditions are still very important to the life and survival of the Garifuna people. The elders are the ones who maintain many of the ceremonies, festivals and oral traditions. However, economic migration, discrimination and the complete absence of the Garifuna language from the school system are endangering its survival. Although the language is still widely spoken, it is now taught in only one village.

# The Oral Heritage of Gelede

## BENIN, NIGERIA AND TOGO



The Gelede is performed by the Yoruba-Nago community that is spread over Benin, Nigeria and Togo. For more than a century, this ceremony has been performed to pay tribute to the primordial mother *Iyà Nlà* and to the role women play in the process of social organization and development of Yoruba society. The Gelede takes place every year after the harvests, at important events and during drought or epidemics and is characterized by carved masks, dances and chants, sung in the Yoruba language and retracing the history and myths of the Yoruba-Nago people.

The ceremony usually takes place at night on a public square and the dancers prepare in a nearby house. The singers and the drummers are the first to appear. They are accompanied by an orchestra and followed by the masked dancers wearing splendid costumes. There is a great deal of preparatory craft-work involved, especially mask carving and costume making. The performances convey an oral heritage that blends epic and lyric verses, which employ a good deal of irony and mockery, supported by satirical masks. Figures of animals are often used, such as the serpent, a symbol of power; or the bird, the messenger of the “mothers”. The community is divided into groups of men and women led by a male and a female head. It is the only known masked society, which is also governed by women. Although the Gelede has nowadays adapted to a more patriarchal society, the oral heritage and dances can be considered as a testimony of the former matriarchal order.

Technical development is resulting in a gradual loss of traditional know-how, and tourism is jeopardizing the Gelede by turning it into a folklore product. Nevertheless, the Gelede community shows great awareness of the value of their intangible heritage, which is reflected in the efforts put into the preparation work and in the growing number of participants.



# The Mask Dance of the Drums from Drametse

2005

## BHUTAN

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The mask dance of the Drametse community is a sacred dance performed during the Drametse festival in honour of Padmasambhava, a Buddhist guru. The festival, which takes place in this eastern Bhutanese village twice a year, is organized by the Ogyen Tegchok Namdroel Choeling Monastery. The dance features sixteen masked male dancers wearing colourful costumes and ten other men making up the orchestra. The dance has a calm and contemplative part that represents the peaceful deities and a rapid and athletic part where the dancers embody wrathful deities.

Dancers dressed in monastic robes and wearing wooden masks with features of real and mythical animals perform a prayer dance in the *soeldep cham*, the main shrine, before appearing one by one in the main courtyard. The orchestra consists of cymbals, trumpets and drums, including the *bang nga*, a large cylindrical drum, the *lag nga*, a small hand-held circular flat drum and the *nga chen*, a drum beaten with a bent drumstick.

The Drametse Ngacham has been performed in the same monastery for centuries. Its form has both religious and cultural significance, because it is believed to have originally been performed by the heroes and heroines of the celestial world. In the nineteenth century, versions of the Drametse Ngacham were introduced in other parts of Bhutan. For the audience, the dance is a source of spiritual empowerment and is attended by people from Drametse as well as neighbouring villages and districts to obtain blessings. Today, the dance has evolved from a local event centred on a particular community into an art form, representing the identity of the Bhutanese nation as a whole.



Although the dance is highly appreciated among all generations, the number of practitioners is dwindling due to lack of rehearsal time, the absence of a system for training and the gradual waning of interest among young people.

# The Carnival of Oruro

BOLIVIA



The town of Oruro, situated at an altitude of 3,700 metres in the mountains of western Bolivia and once a pre-Columbian ceremonial site, was an important mining area in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Resettled by the Spanish in 1606, it continued to be a sacred site for the Uru people, who would often travel long distances to perform their

rituals, especially for the principal *Ito* festival. The Spanish banned these ceremonies in the seventeenth century, but they continued under the guise of Christian liturgy: the Andean gods were concealed behind Christian icons and the Andean divinities became the Saints. The *Ito* festival was transformed into a Christian ritual, celebrated on *Candlemas* (2 February). The traditional *llama llama* or *diablada* in worship of the Uru god *Tiw* became the main dance at the Carnival of Oruro.

The Carnival, which takes place every year, lasts ten days and gives rise to a panoply of popular arts expressed in masks, textiles and embroidery. The main event in the Carnival is the procession or *entrada*. During the ceremony, the dancers walk the four kilometres of the processional route and repeat the journey for a full twenty hours without interruption. More than 28,000 dancers and 10,000 musicians organized in about 50 groups take part in the procession which still shows many features dating back to medieval mystery plays.

The decline of traditional mining and agriculture is threatening the Oruro population, as is the desertification of the Andean high plateau, which is leading to massive emigration. Urbanization has given rise to acculturation as well as a growing generation gap. There is also uncontrolled financial exploitation of this Carnival.

# The Andean Cosmovision of the Kallawaya

2003

BOLIVIA

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The Kallawaya ethnic group, based in the mountainous Bautista Saavedra region north of La Paz, traces its roots to the pre-Inca period. Like many aspects of Andean culture, the Kallawaya's practices and values have evolved through the fusion of native and Christian religions.

The principal activity of the Kallawaya involves the practice of ancestral medical techniques. The various rites and ceremonies related to these techniques form the basis of their local economy. The Andean Cosmovision of the Kallawaya culture consists of a coherent body of myths, rituals, values and artistic expressions. Widely recognized not only in Bolivia but also in many other South American countries where Kallawaya priest doctors practise, the medical techniques are based on the belief systems of indigenous peoples of the Andean area.

This healing art derives from a deep understanding of animal, mineral and botanical pharmacopoeia and a body of ritual knowledge intimately linked to religious beliefs. The exclusively male itinerant healers treat patients using medical and pharmaceutical knowledge that revolves around a complex system of transmission and apprenticeship in which the journey plays an essential role. By travelling through widely varying ecosystems, Kallawaya healers expand their knowledge of medicinal plants. With some 980 species, their botanical pharmacopoeia rates as one of the richest in the world.



Kallawaya women participate in a number of rites, care for pregnant women and children, and weave textiles with motifs and decoration relating to the Kallawaya cosmovision. Musical groups called *kantus* play the drum and pan flute during ritual ceremonies in order to establish contact with the world of the spirits.

In recent times, the traditional Kallawaya way of life has come under threat from acculturation, which may lead to the disappearance of this extraordinary body of medical knowledge. The tradition is also affected by the lack of sufficient legal protection for indigenous communities, particularly in regard to policies pursued by major pharmaceutical companies.

# Oral and Graphic Expressions of the Wajapi

2003

13

BRAZIL

The Wajapi of the Tupi-guarani cultural-linguistic group are indigenous to the northern Amazonian region. Some 580 Wajapi live in 40 small villages on a specially designated territory in the state of Amapá. The Wajapi have a long history of using vegetable dyes to adorn their bodies and objects with geometric motifs. Over the centuries, they have developed a unique communication system – a rich blend of graphic and verbal components – that reflects their world-view and enables them to hand down knowledge about community life.



humankind and come alive through a rich corpus of myths. This body art, closely linked to Amerindian oral traditions, possesses multiple meanings on socio-cultural, aesthetic, religious and metaphysical levels. Indeed, kusiwa constitutes the very framework of Wajapi society and is endowed with significance extending far beyond its role as a graphic art form. This coded repertory of traditional knowledge is perpetually evolving as indigenous artists are constantly reconfiguring the motifs and inventing new patterns.

This graphic art is known as *kusiwa* and its designs are applied with red vegetable dyes extracted from the *roucou* plant mixed with scented resins. The Wajapi consider that the technical and artistic proficiency required to master the drawing technique and the preparation of the dye cannot be attained before the age of forty. Commonly recurring motifs include the jaguar; anaconda, butterfly and fish. Kusiwa designs refer to the creation of

Although the Wajapi live on their protected territory, their traditional lifestyle, including the practice of kusiwa, is in danger of losing its symbolic significance and may even disappear altogether. Such a loss would drastically alter the community's social and cosmological reference points. The principal threats stem from disinterest on the part of the younger generation and the decreasing number of Wajapi proficient in the kusiwa repertory.



# The Samba de Roda of Recôncavo of Bahia

2005

BRAZIL

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The Samba de Roda, which involves music, dance and poetry, is a popular festive event that developed in the State of Bahia, in the region of Recôncavo during the seventeenth century. It drew heavily on the dances and cultural traditions of the region's African slaves. The performance also included elements of Portuguese culture, such as language, poetry, and certain musical instruments. At first a major component of regional popular culture among Brazilians of African descent, the Samba de Roda was eventually taken by migrants to Rio de Janeiro, where it influenced the evolution of the urban samba that became a symbol of Brazilian national identity in the twentieth century.

The dance is performed on various occasions, such as popular Catholic festivities or Afro-Brazilian religious ceremonies, but is also executed in more spontaneous settings. All present, including beginners, are invited to join the dance and learn through observation and imitation. One of the defining characteristics of the Samba of Roda is the gathering of participants in a circle, referred to as *roda*. It is generally performed only by women, each one taking her turn in the centre of the ring surrounded by others dancing in the circle while clapping their hands and singing. The choreography is often improvised and based on the movements of the feet, legs and hips. One of the most typical movements is the famous belly push, the *umbigada*, a testimony of Bantu influence, used by



the dancer to invite her successor into the centre of the circle. The Samba de Roda is also distinguished by specific dance steps like the *miudinho*, the use of the *viola machete* - a small lute with plucked strings from Portugal, as well as scraped instruments, and responsorial songs.

The influence of mass media and competition from contemporary popular music have contributed to undervaluing this Samba in the eyes of the young. The ageing of practitioners and the dwindling number of artisans capable of making some of the instruments pose a further threat to the transmission of the tradition.



# The Bistritsa Babi - Archaic Polyphony, Dances and Rituals from the Shoplouk Region

2005

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BULGARIA



The traditional dances and polyphonic singing found in the Shoplouk region of Bulgaria are still performed by a group of elderly women, the *Bistritsa Babi*. This tradition includes diaphony, or what is known as *shoppe* polyphony, ancient forms of the horo chain dance and the ritual practice of *lazarouva-ne*, an initiation ceremony for young women.

Diaphony is a specific type of polyphonic singing in which one or two voices build the melody consisting of *izvikva*

meaning “to shout out” and *bouchi krivo* meaning “crooked rumbled roars”, while other singers hold a monotone drone that is doubled or trebled to produce a more sonorous sound that accompanies the lead singers. The dancers, dressed in traditional costumes, hold each other by the waist or belt and dance in a circle, stepping lightly and moving counter-clockwise. A number of variations are performed within this structure, depending on the song and ancient ritual purposes.

Although the social function of the polyphonic singing has changed over the twentieth century, as it is now primarily performed on stage, the Bistritsa Babi are regarded as an important component of the region’s cultural life, promoting traditional expressions among the younger generations. The women are among the few remaining representatives of traditional polyphony and the village of Bistritsa is one of the last areas in Bulgaria in which this cultural expression has been maintained over the centuries.

Due to its location near the capital Sofia, which offers a range of cultural attractions, young people’s interest in community-based traditions is declining. Over the years, the rich repertoire of songs and dances has been reduced to include only the most popular highlights to be performed on stage.

# The Royal Ballet of Cambodia

## CAMBODIA

2003

16

Renowned for its graceful hand gestures and stunning costumes, the Royal Ballet of Cambodia, also known as Khmer Classical Dance, has been closely associated with the Khmer court for over one thousand years. Performances would traditionally accompany royal ceremonies and observances such as coronations, marriages, funerals or Khmer holidays. This art form, which narrowly escaped annihilation in the 1970s, is cherished by many Cambodians.

Infused with a sacred and symbolic role, the dance embodies the traditional values of refinement, respect and spirituality. Its repertory perpetuates the legends associated with the origins of the Khmer people. Consequently, Cambodians have long esteemed this tradition as the emblem of Khmer culture. Four distinct character types exist in the classical repertory: *Neang* the woman, *Neayrong* the man, *Yeak* the giant, and *Sva* the monkey. Each possesses distinctive colours, costumes, makeup and masks. The gestures and poses, mastered by the dancers only after years of intensive training, evoke the gamut of human emotions, from fear and rage to love and joy. An orchestra accompanies the dance, and a female chorus provides a running commentary on the plot, highlighting the emotions mimed by the dancers, who were considered the kings' messengers to the gods and to the ancestors.



The Royal Ballet practically ceased to exist under the repressive rule of the Khmer Rouge, who eliminated almost all master dancers and musicians. Immediately after Pol Pot's defeat in 1979, dance troupes re-emerged and performances of the ancient repertory resumed. The ballet has regained much of its former splendour but still faces numerous difficulties, such as a lack of funding and suitable performance spaces, competition from modern media and the risk of becoming a mere tourist attraction.

2005

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# Sbek Thom, Khmer Shadow Theatre

CAMBODIA



The Sbek Thom is a Khmer shadow theatre featuring two-metre high, non-articulated puppets made of leather open-work. Dating from before the Angkorian period, the Sbek Thom, along with the Royal Ballet and mask theatre, is considered sacred. Dedicated to the divinities, performances could only take place on specific occasions three or four times a year, such as the Khmer New Year, the King's birthday or the veneration of famous people. After the fall of Angkor in the fifteenth century, the shadow theatre evolved beyond a ritualistic activity to become an artistic form, while retaining its ceremonial dimension.

The puppets are made from a single piece of leather in a special ceremony for each character representing gods and deities. The hides are dyed with a solution made from the bark of the Kandaol tree. The artisan draws the desired figure on the tanned hide, then cuts it out and paints it before attaching it to two bamboo sticks enabling the dancer to control the puppet.

The performances traditionally take place at night outdoors beside a rice-field or pagoda. A large white backdrop is held between two tall bamboo screens in front of a large fire or, nowadays, projectors. The shadows of the puppet's silhouettes are projected onto the white screen. The animators bring the puppets to life with precise and specific dance steps. The performance is accompanied by an orchestra and two narrators. Inspired from the Reamker, the Khmer version of the Ramayana, the performances stage scenes of this epic, which may last several nights and require up to 160 puppets for a single presentation. Many of them were destroyed under the repressive Khmer Rouge regime, which almost annihilated this sacred art. Since 1979, Sbek Thom has been gradually revitalized thanks to the few surviving artists. So far, three shadow theatres have managed to rise from their ashes, ensuring the transmission of the knowledge and skills, including those relating to puppet making.

# The Polyphonic Singing of the Aka Pygmies of Central Africa

2003

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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The Aka Pygmies living in the south-west region of the Central African Republic have developed a distinctive vocal musical tradition, which involves a complex type of contrapuntal polyphony based on four voices, mastered by all members of the Aka community.



Music and dance form an integral part of Aka rituals including ceremonies related to the inauguration of new encampments, hunting and funerals. Unlike polyphonic systems that are written down in notation, the vocal tradition of the Aka Pygmies allows for spontaneous expression and improvisation. During performances, each singer can change his or her voice to produce a multitude of variations, creating the impression that the music is continuously evolving. The songs are generally accompanied by various percussion and string instruments, each one played for a specific occasion. Among the most common instruments are a local type of drum (*enzeko*), a harp-like instrument known as the *geedale-bagongo*, and the single-string bow

(*mbela*). The songs perpetuate essential knowledge for the cohesion of the group and the preservation of community values. The dances are performed to the accompaniment of vibrant hand-clapping. Depending on the ritual, some dances feature men only, while others may be

executed by couples or by male and female solo dancers. Relying entirely on oral transmission, the Aka Pygmies have succeeded in preserving their musical knowledge within the community by including children in rituals from an early age.

The lifestyle of the Aka Pygmies has been drastically disrupted due to the changes currently taking place in the Central African Republic. The scarcity of game resulting from deforestation, the rural exodus and the folklorization of their heritage for the tourist industry are the principal factors contributing to the gradual disappearance of many of their traditional customs, rituals and skills.



2001

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# Kun Qu Opera

CHINA



Kun Qu Opera developed under the Ming dynasty (fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) in the city of Kunshan, situated in the region of Suzhou in southeast China. With its roots in popular theatre, the repertory of songs evolved into a major theatrical form. Kun Qu is one of the oldest forms of Chinese opera still performed today.

It is characterized by its dynamic structure and melody (*kun-qiang*) and classic pieces such as the Peony Pavilion and the Hall of Longevity. It combines song and recital as well as a complex system of choreographic techniques, acrobatics and symbolic gestures. The opera features a young male lead, a female lead, an old man and various comic roles, all dressed in traditional costumes. Kun Qu songs are accompanied by a bamboo flute, a small drum, wooden clappers, gongs and cymbals, all used to punctuate actions and emotions on stage. Renowned for the virtuosity of its rhythmic patterns (*chang-qiang*), Kun Qu opera has had a considerable influence on more recent forms of Chinese opera, such as the Sichuan or Beijing opera.

The opera has suffered a gradual decline since the eighteenth century because of the high-level technical knowledge it also requires from its audience. Of the 400 arias regularly sung in opera performances in the mid-twentieth century, only a few dozen continue to be performed. The Kun Qu opera survived through the efforts of dedicated connoisseurs and various supporters who seek to attract the interest of a new generation of performers.

# The Guqin and its Music

CHINA

2003

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The Chinese zither, called *guqin*, has existed for over 3,000 years and represents China's foremost solo musical instrument tradition. Described in early literary sources and corroborated by archaeological finds, this ancient instrument is inseparable from Chinese intellectual history. Guqin playing developed as an elite art form, practised by noblemen and scholars in intimate settings, and was therefore never intended for public performance. Furthermore, the guqin was one of the four arts – along with calligraphy, painting and an ancient form of chess – that Chinese scholars were expected to master. According to tradition, twenty years of training were required to attain proficiency.

The guqin has seven strings and thirteen marked pitch positions. By attaching the strings in ten different ways, players can obtain a range of four octaves. The three basic playing techniques are known as *san* (open string), *an* (stopped string) and *fan* (harmonics). *San* is played with the right hand and involves plucking open strings individually or in groups to produce strong and clear sounds for important notes. To play *fan*, the



fingers of the left hand touch the string lightly at positions determined by the inlaid markers, and the right hand plucks, producing a light floating overtone. *An* is also played with both hands: while the right hand plucks, a left-hand finger presses the string firmly and may slide to other notes or create a variety of ornaments and vibratos.

Nowadays, there are fewer than one thousand well-trained guqin players and perhaps no more than fifty surviving masters. The original repertory of several thousand compositions has drastically dwindled to a mere hundred works that are regularly performed today.



# The Uyghur Muqam of Xinjiang

2005

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CHINA



The Xinjiang Uyghur Muqam is the general term for a variety of Muqam practices widespread among the Uyghur communities, which form one of the largest ethnic minorities of the People's Republic of China. Throughout its history, the Xinjiang region has been marked by a high degree of cultural exchange between East and West, due in particular to its central location along the Silk Road.

Xinjiang Uyghur Muqam includes songs, dances, folk and classical music and is characterized by diversity of content, choreography, musical styles and instruments used. The songs vary in rhyme and meter and are performed solo as well as

by groups. The lyrics contain not only folk ballads but also poems written by classical Uyghur masters. Thus, the songs reflect a wide range of styles such as poetry, proverbs, and folk narrative, bearing witness to the history and contemporary life of the Uyghur society.

In Muqam ensembles, the lead instruments are made from local materials and vary in form (they may be bowed-stringed, plucked or wind instruments). The dancing skills involve unique steps, rhythms and formations as well as figures such as flower-picking-by-mouth, bowl-carrying-on-head and imitation

of animals in solo dances. The Xinjiang Uyghur Muqam has developed four main regional styles, namely the Twelve Muqam, Dolan Muqam, Turpan Muqam and Hami Muqam. Today, community festivities, such as *meshrep* and *bezme* in which everybody would participate in the Muqam, are held less frequently. The responsibility for passing on the tradition to new generations of practitioners has fallen on the shoulders of folk artists, but the interest of young people in Muqam is gradually declining. Several Muqam pieces are no longer performed, in particular elements of the "Twelve Muqam", which in all consists of more than 300 pieces and runs over 20 hours in twelve instrumental and vocal suites.

# The Carnival of Barranquilla

COLOMBIA

2003

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Every year during the four days before Lent, the Carnival de Barranquilla offers a repertory of dances and musical expressions originating from different Colombian sub-cultures. Because of its geographical location situated on the Caribbean coast and the commercial development during the colonial period, the city of Barranquilla became one of the country's busiest trading centres and a place where European, African, and indigenous peoples and cultures converged.

The blending of various local traditions permeates numerous aspects of the carnival, particularly dances (as exemplified by the *mico y micas* from the Americas, the African *congo* and the *paloteo* of Spanish origin), musical genres (the predominant *cumbia* and variants such as the *puya* and *porro*) and folk instruments (*tambora* and *allegre* drums, *maraca*, *claves*, etc.). Carnival music is generally performed by drum ensembles or by groups playing a variety of wind instruments. The profuse material culture of handcrafted objects includes floats, costumes, head ornaments and animal masks. Groups of masqueraded dancers, actors, singers and instrumentalists delight crowds with theatrical and musical performances based on historical as well as current events. Contemporary political life and figures are satirized through mocking speeches and song lyrics that lend a burlesque atmosphere to the carnival.



With its growing success in the twentieth century, Barranquilla's carnival took on the trappings of a professional event, receiving wide media coverage. This development generates economic benefits for many low-income families, but the growing commercialisation may at the same time constitute a threat to the many traditional expressions.



2005

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# The Cultural Space of Palenque de San Basilio

COLOMBIA



The village of Palenque de San Basilio, with a population of about 3,500 inhabitants, is located in the foothills of the Montes de María, southeast of the regional capital, Cartagena. Palenque de San Basilio was one of the walled communities called *palenques*, which were founded by escaped slaves as a refuge in the seventeenth century. Of the many palenques that existed in former times, only San Basilio has survived until the present day. It developed into a unique cultural space.

The Cultural Space of Palenque de San Basilio encompasses social, medical and religious practices as well as musical and oral traditions, many of which have African roots. The social

organization of the community is based on family networks and age groups called *ma kuagro*. The kuagro membership comes with a set of rights and duties towards other group members and entails strong internal solidarity. Daily work and special events are jointly undertaken by all kuagro members.

The complex funeral rituals and medical practices are evidence of the distinct spiritual and cultural systems framing life and death in the Palenque community. Musical expressions such as the *Bullernege sentado*, *Son palenquero* or *Son de negro* accompany collective celebrations, such as baptisms, weddings and religious festivities as well as leisure activities.

Central to the cultural space of Palenque de San Basilio is the *palenquero* language, the only creole language in Latin America with a lexical Spanish basis and grammatical characteristics of Bantu languages. The language constitutes a vital factor in reinforcing social cohesion among community members.

The cultural space of Palenque is not only threatened by economic changes that affect local modes of production, but also by the armed conflict between Colombian paramilitary and local guerrilla groups. Outside Palenque, inhabitants are commonly subjected to discrimination and ethnic stereotyping leading to a denial of their cultural values.

# Oxherding and Oxcart Traditions in Costa Rica

2005

## COSTA RICA

24

The traditional oxcart, or *carreta*, is the product of Costa Rica's most famous craft. Dating from the mid-nineteenth century, oxcarts were used to transport coffee beans from Costa Rica's central valley over the mountains to Puntarenas on the Pacific coast, a journey requiring ten to fifteen days. The oxcarts used spokeless wheels, a hybrid between the disc used by the Aztec and the spoked wheel introduced by the Spaniards, to cut through the mud without getting stuck. In many cases, oxcarts were a family's only means of transport; they often served as a symbol of social status.

The tradition of painting and decorating oxcarts started in the early twentieth century. Originally, each region of Costa Rica had its own particular design, enabling the identification of the driver's origin by the painted patterns on the wheels. By the beginning of the twentieth century, flowers, faces and miniature landscapes began to appear beside patterns of pointed stars, and to this day annual contests reward the most creative artists in this tradition.

Each oxcart is designed to make its own 'song', a unique chime produced by a metal ring striking the hubnut of the wheel as the cart bumped along. Once the oxcart had become a source of individual pride, greater care was taken in their construction, and the highest-quality woods were selected to make the best sounds.



Today's colourful and richly decorated *carretas* bear little resemblance to the original rough-hewn, rectangular, cane-framed vehicles covered by rawhide tarps. While in most regions of Costa Rica trucks and trains replaced oxcarts as the main means of transport, the *carretas* remain strong symbols of Costa Rica's rural past, and still feature prominently in parades and in religious and secular celebrations.

Since oxcarts have become obsolete as means of transport, there is a decreasing demand for them, which means that the number of artisans who possess the training to manufacture and decorate oxcarts has strongly declined over the past decades.

# The Gbofe of Afoukaha - the Music of the Transverse Trumps of the Tagbana Community

2001

25

CÔTE D'IVOIRE



The Gbofe is mainly performed in the village of Afoukaha in the Tagbana community. The term *Gbofe* is used both for the transverse horns and for the performance as a whole, which encompasses music, song and dance. The Gbofe horns are made of roots covered by cowhide. Six of these horns are used together, ranging in length from 50 to 70 centimetres.

They emit a range of sounds “reproducing” the words of the Tagbana language. These words are then “translated” by female choirs. The music of the horns and the singing are accompanied by drummers who beat time and give the Gbofe its structure. The Gbofe is played at rituals and traditional ceremonies, and the messages conveyed vary according to the circumstances: praise, love, satire, mourning, moral or educational messages. The Gbofe played an important role by conferring respect towards the holders of the tradition, and by conveying a sense of identity on the communities. The various Gbofe performers follow an apprenticeship. While the know-how is most often passed down from father to son, young talents can also join in the training sessions.

The practice of Gbofe has ceased to exist in various regions of Côte d'Ivoire due to war, rural exodus and industrialization. Although it has been reintroduced in some communities, it is today in danger of disappearing. The young are less and less aware of this tradition. This is leading to a considerable reduction in the number of people who possess the knowledge of the rituals and the skills to make the instruments, along with a similar decline in the number of those mastering the art and techniques of the dance, songs and music.

# La Tumba Francesa

2003

CUBA

26

The dance, song and drumming style known as Tumba Francesa (French Drum) was brought to Cuba by Haitian slaves who were resettled in the island's eastern regions following the unrest in Haiti during the 1790s. It embodies one of the oldest and most tangible links to the Afro-Haitian heritage of Cuba's Oriente province and developed from an eighteenth-century fusion of music from Dahomey in West Africa and traditional French dances. After Cuba's abolition of slavery in 1886 and the resulting migration of former slaves to urban areas in search of work, Tumba Francesa societies emerged in several cities.



Tumba Francesa performances generally open with a solo in Spanish or French patois by a lead singer, the *composé*. Following the *composé*'s cue, the *catá*, a large wooden idiophone, bursts into a pulsating beat enhanced by three drums known as *tumbas*. These hand-played instruments, similar to modern conga drums, are crafted from a single piece of hollowed wood and decorated with carved and painted motifs. The dances are performed under the direction of the *Mayor de Plaza*. The predominately female chorus singers and dancers wear long colonial-era dresses with West African kerchiefs and brandish colourful scarves. The singers keep rhythm with metal rattles or *chachás*. Performances consisting of a series of 30-minute songs and dances generally last well into the night.

Today, only two of the many dance styles associated with Tumba Francesa are still regularly performed: the *masón*, a light parody of French ballroom dances; and the *yubá*, an improvised dance accompanied by rousing drum rhythms. The popularity of Tumba Francesa reached its peak at the end of the nineteenth century. Nowadays, three community ensembles continue to keep the traditions of the Tumba Francesa alive.

2005

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# Slovácko Verbuňk, Recruit Dances

CZECH REPUBLIC



The Slovácko verbuňk is an improvised dance performed by boys and men living in the South Moravia and Zlín districts of the Czech Republic. The name of the dance is derived from the German term *Werbung* (changed into verbuňk), meaning “recruitment”, reflecting its historical origins in the recruitment of dancers and soldiers for the military in the eighteenth century. Today, it is performed by folk dance groups in most towns and villages of the Slovácko region, mostly in connection with festivities, such as the annual Hody community celebration.

The Slovácko verbuňk is danced to music called New Hungarian songs and usually consists of three parts. At the beginning, a song is performed, followed first by slow movements and then by faster dancing parts. The dancing is not bound to a precise choreography, but is marked instead by spontaneity, improvisation, and individual expression, including jumping contests. It is usually performed by groups, with each dancer interpreting the music in his own way.

There are six different regional types

of Slovácko verbuňk, which account for the great variety of figures and dance rhythms. These types evolved in the early twentieth century and continue to change. The dances are an essential component of local customs, ceremonies and celebrations and are performed at the annual contest of the best dancer at the International Folklore Festival in Strážnice.

The migration of young and middle-aged people to the country's urban centres is considered the greatest threat to the viability of the different regional types of Slovácko verbuňk. Another risk is the dance's reliance on financial support since the traditional costumes and musical instruments are made by hand and require regular maintenance.



# The Cultural Space of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos of Villa Mella

2001

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

28

The Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos of Villa Mella is distinguished in the fields of music, dance and popular festivities. The Brotherhood musicians play instruments called *congos*. These *congos*, the origin of which is attributed to the Holy Spirit, are hand-drums. The Brotherhood, which is nowadays open to all without distinction of sex or origin, was founded in the sixteenth century by African slaves and people of mixed origin. For historical reasons, the Brotherhood is an important part of the cultural identity of its members and of the region as a whole.

The Festival of the Holy Spirit, celebrated at Pentecost, features prayers, dances and singing, accompanied by the music of the *congos* and a procession carrying the dove representing the Holy Spirit. This occurs at the wake, during the procession to the cemetery and on the ninth day of mourning, when prayers are recited in front of a three-tiered catafalque carrying a doll representing the dead. At the *Banko* ceremony, three years after the death, the same catafalque is prepared and the living take leave of the deceased, who then becomes an ancestor. On this occasion, all the guests dance to the music of the *congos*.



The permanence of the Brotherhood has been threatened by the lack of interest shown by the elite in cultures of African and mixed origin. Today, the acceleration of urban growth, migration, unemployment and the standardization of values is reinforcing prejudices and the lack of understanding of the Brotherhood.

2005

# The Cocolo Dance Drama Tradition

29

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



mances, themes from various worlds are creatively united. Music and dance genres of African origin blend with dramatic plots, legends and figures derived from biblical and medieval European literature. These include Christmas carolling, performances of string and scratch bands, the so-called *Niega business*, involving masquerades and the staging of theatrical scenes such as 'David and Goliath', 'Moko-Yombi' and 'Cowboys and Indians'. Only one ageing troupe now remains.

The Cocolo dancing drama tradition developed among descendants of British Caribbean slaves who had come to the Dominican Republic in the mid-nineteenth century to work in the sugar fields. This linguistically and culturally distinct community set up their own churches, schools, benevolent societies and mutual assistance lodges. Their most distinctive expressions, however, were annual dancing drama performances. Originally pejorative, the term "Cocolo", which refers to the migrants working on the British sugar plantation of the island, is now used proudly.

Various Cocolo drama troupes used to perform at Christmas, on St Peter's day and at carnival festivities. In their perfor-

This fusion of African and British cultural themes, and their adaptation to a Spanish Catholic milieu, is a salient expression of creativity. But although older members of the Cocolo community still speak Caribbean English at home, most have lost their ancient mother tongue and are monolingual in Spanish. Today, the Cocolo community is scattered in different regions of the Dominican Republic, and most have assimilated into broader Dominican society. This development has made it more difficult for the older Cocolo to transmit their knowledge to younger generations, to retain their specific institutions and to keep the dancing drama tradition alive.

# The Oral Heritage and Cultural Manifestations of the Zápara People

ECUADOR AND PERU

2001

30

The Zápara people live in a part of the Amazon jungle straddling Ecuador and Peru. The Zápara developed in what is one of the most bio-diverse areas in the world and are the last representatives of an ethno-linguistic group that included many other populations before the Spanish conquest. In the heart of Amazonia, they have elaborated an oral culture that is particularly rich as regards their understanding of the natural environment. This is demonstrated by the abundance of their vocabulary for the flora and fauna and by their medicinal practices and knowledge of the medicinal plants of the forest. This cultural heritage is expressed through their myths, rituals, artistic practices and language. Their language is the depository of traditional knowledge and of oral tradition and constitutes the memory of the people and the region.

Four centuries of history, marked by the Spanish conquest, slavery, epidemics, forced conversions, wars and deforestation, have driven the Zápara people to near extinction. Despite these numerous threats, they have managed to preserve their ancestral knowledge. Inter-marriage with Mestizos and other indigenous peoples (*Quechua*) has been especially instrumental in enabling the people to survive. But this dispersion has also resulted in a partial loss of their identity.



The current situation of the Zápara people is critical, and today they are in very serious danger of disappearing altogether: In 2001, their population numbered no more than 300 (200 in Ecuador and 100 in Peru), of whom only five, all aged over 70, still speak the Zápara language.



# The Al-Sirah Al-Hilaliyyah Epic

2003

31

EGYPT



This oral poem, also known as the Hilali epic, recounts the saga of the Bani Hilal Bedouin tribe and its migration from the Arabian Peninsula to North Africa in the tenth century. This tribe held sway over a vast territory in central North Africa for more than a century before being annihilated by Moroccan rivals. As one of the major epic poems that developed within the Arabic folk tradition, the Hilali is the only epic still performed in its integral musical form. Moreover, once widespread throughout the Middle East, it has disappeared from everywhere except Egypt.

Since the fourteenth century, the Hilali epic has been performed by poets who sing the verses while playing a percussion instrument or a two-string spike fiddle (*rabab*). Performances take place at weddings, circumcision ceremonies and private gatherings, and may last for days. In the past, practitioners were trained within family circles and performed the epic as their only means of income. These professional poets began their ten-year apprenticeships at the age of five. To this day, students undergo special training to develop memory skills and to master their instruments. Nowadays, they must also learn to inject improvisational commentary in order to render plots more relevant to contemporary audiences.

The number of performers of the Hilali Epic is dwindling due to competition from contemporary media and to the decreasing number of young people able to commit to the rigorous training process. Pressured by the lucrative Egyptian tourist industry, poets tend to forsake the full Hilali repertory in favour of brief passages performed as part of folklore shows.

# The Kihnu Cultural Space

ESTONIA

2003

32

Lying off Estonia's Baltic coast, the small islands of Kihnu and Manija are home to a community of 600 people whose cultural expressions and agricultural traditions have been kept alive over the centuries largely through the island's female population. The men of the Kihnu community have taken to sea to hunt seals and fish, while the women have remained on the islands to farm and to maintain the household. Kihnu women thus have become the principal custodians of the cultural traditions embodied in numerous songs, games, dances, wedding ceremonies and handicrafts. Singing is an integral part of collective handicraft activities and of religious celebrations. Particularly noteworthy among the musical repertory of the islanders is an oral tradition of pre-Christian origin, known as *runic* or Kalevala-metre songs.

The most visible emblem of Kihnu culture remains the woollen handicrafts worn by the women of the community. Working in their homes using traditional looms and local wool, the women weave and knit mittens, stockings, skirts and blouses, which often feature bright colours, vivid stripes and intricate embroidery. Many of the symbolic forms and colours adorning these striking garments are rooted in ancient legends. The Kihnu cul-



tural space is also distinguished by the interrelation of its rich cultural and natural heritage. On both islands, the characteristic landscape of grassland, pine groves and coastal sands has remained relatively intact up to the present day.

Their geographic isolation, their strong sense of community spirit and their steadfast attachment to the customs of their ancestors have enabled the Kihnu people to preserve their crafts and customs. Today, Kihnu culture is threatened by economic hardship, uncontrolled housing development and the intrusion of tourists insensitive to the islands' traditions and natural environment.



# Georgian Polyphonic Singing

## GEORGIA



Popular singing has a highly valued place in Georgian culture. Polyphonic singing, in the Georgian language, is a secular tradition in a country whose language and culture have often been oppressed by invaders. There are three types of polyphony in Georgia: complex polyphony, which is common in Svaneti; polyphonic dialogue over a bass background, prevalent in the Kakheti region in Eastern Georgia; and contrasted polyphony with three partially improvised sung parts, characteristic of

western Georgia. The Chakrulo song, which is sung at ceremonies and festivals and belongs to the first category, is distinguished by its use of metaphor and its yodel, the *krimanchuli* and a “cockrel’s crow”, performed by a male falsetto singer. Some of these songs are linked to the cult of the grapevine and many date back to the eighth century. The songs traditionally pervaded all areas of everyday life, ranging from work in the fields (the *Naduri*, which incorporates the sounds of physical effort into the music) to songs to curing of illnesses and to Christmas Carols (*Alilo*). Byzantine liturgical hymns also incorporated the Georgian polyphonic tradition to such an extent that they became a significant expression of it.

Having previously suffered the drawbacks of socialist cultural policies, traditional Georgian music is now threatened by rural exodus as well as by the increasing success of pop music. In many archives one finds recordings of polyphonic songs from the beginning of the twentieth century; these recordings are, however, not secure enough to guarantee the long-term preservation.

# The Rabinal Achí Dance Drama Tradition

2005

GUATEMALA

34

The Rabinal Achí is a dynastic Maya drama, which developed in the fifteenth century and a rare example of preserved pre-Hispanic traditions. It comprises myths of origin and addresses popular and political subjects concerning the inhabitants of the region of Rabinal, expressed through masked dance, theatre and music.

The oral and written narrative is presented by a group of characters, who appear on a stage representing Maya villages, such as Kajjub', the regional capital of the Rabinaleb' in the fourteenth century. The narrative, divided into four acts, centres on a conflict between two major political entities in the region. The main characters are two princes, the Rabinal Achí and the K'iche Achí. The other characters are the king of Rabinaleb', Job'Toj, and his servant, Achij Mun Achij Mun Ixoq Mun, who has both male and female traits, the green-feathered mother, Uchuch Q'uq' Uchuch Raxon, and thirteen eagles and thirteen jaguars who represent the warriors of the fortress of Kajjub'. K'iche' Achí is captured and put on trial for attempting to steal Rabinaleb' children, a grave violation of Maya law.

Since colonization in the sixteenth century, the Rabinal Achí dance has been performed on Saint Paul's day on 25 January. The festival is coordinated by members of *cofradías*, local brotherhoods responsible for running the community. By taking part in the dance, the living enter into "contact" with



the dead, the *rajawales*, represented by masks. Recalling their ancestors is not simply a means of perpetuating the heritage of the past. It is also a vision of the future, since one day the living will join their ancestors.

The impact of armed conflict especially in the *departamentos* of Rabinal and K'iche has almost led to the disappearance of this dance. Today, it is especially threatened by the precarious economic state of the custodians and the community as a whole. It is also confronted with folklorization and trivialization, which seriously threaten the transmission of knowledge and values associated to the performance of this drama tradition.



# The Cultural Space of Sosso-Bala

## GUINEA

The sacred balafon instrument, known as the Sosso-Bala, has been perceived as the symbol of the freedom and cohesion of the Mandingue community, which is spread across a territory that once belonged to the Empire of Mali. Originally owned and played by King Sumaoro Kanté, who succeeded to the Sosso throne in the early thirteenth century, the balafon has transmitted epic poems down through the centuries, principally the Sunjata epic that comprises hymns to the glory of the builder of the Mali Empire.

The instrument is a type of xylophone of about 1.5 metres in length, made of 20 slats carefully cut into different lengths and under each of which are fixed several calabashes. According to written and oral histories, the balafon was either manufactured by the king himself or given to him by a *jinni* (genie). The original Sosso-Bala is preserved in a round mud hut with other sacred and historical objects in the village of Nyagassola in



northern Guinea, an area occupied by the Dökala family, the Kouyaté griots of Nyagassola. The *Balatigui*, the patriarch of the Dökala family, is the guardian of the instrument. He is the only one who is allowed to play the Sosso-Bala on important occasions, such as the festival of the Muslim New Year and at burials. It is also the *Balatigui* who is responsible for teaching the balafon to children from the age of seven upwards.

The progressive reduction in the number of pupils due to rural exodus is regarded as one of the main threats to the continuity of this musical tradition. Additional factors include the fragility of the infrastructure and the difficult living conditions in Nyagassola. However, the *Balatigui* and other members of Dökala family, who still hold an important position in Mandingue society, have committed themselves to transmitting their knowledge and skills to future practitioners.



# Kutiyattam, Sanskrit Theatre

2001

INDIA

36

Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, which is practised in the province of Kerala, is one of India's oldest living theatrical traditions. Originating more than 2,000 years ago, Kutiyattam represents a synthesis of Sanskrit classicism and reflects the local traditions of Kerala. In its stylized and codified theatrical language, *neta abhinaya* (eye expression) and *hasta abhinaya* (the language of gestures) are prominent. They focus on the thoughts and feelings of the main character. Actors undergo ten to fifteen years of rigorous training to become fully-fledged performers with sophisticated breathing control and subtle muscle shifts of the face and body. The actor's art lies in elaborating a situation or episode in all its detail. Therefore, a single act may take days to perform and a complete performance may last up to 40 days.



Kutiyattam is traditionally performed in theatres called *Kuttampalams*, which are located in Hindu temples. Access to performances was originally restricted owing to their sacred nature, but the plays have progressively opened up to larger audiences. Yet the actor's role retains a sacred dimension, as attested by purification rituals and the placing of an oil lamp on stage during the performance symbolizing a divine presence. The male actors hand down to their trainees detailed performance manuals, which, until recent times, remained the exclusive and secret property of selected families.

With the collapse of patronage along with the feudal order in the nineteenth century, the families who held the secrets to the acting techniques experienced serious difficulties. After a revival in the early twentieth century, Kutiyattam is once again facing a lack of funding, leading to a severe crisis in the profession. In the face of this situation, the different bodies responsible for handing down the tradition have come together to join efforts in order to ensure the continuity of this Sanskrit theatre.

# The Tradition of Vedic Chanting

2003

37

INDIA



The Vedas comprise a vast corpus of Sanskrit poetry, philosophical dialogue, myth, and ritual incantations developed and composed by Aryans over 3,500 years ago. Regarded by Hindus as the primary source of knowledge and the sacred foundation of their religion, the Vedas embody one of the world's oldest surviving cultural traditions.

The Vedic heritage embraces a multitude of texts and interpretations collected in four Vedas, commonly referred to as "books of knowledge" even though they have been transmitted orally. The *Rig Veda* is an anthology of sacred hymns; the *Sama Veda* features musical arrangements of hymns from the

*Rig Veda* and other sources; the *Yajur Veda* abounds in prayers and sacrificial formulae used by priests; and the *Atharva Veda* includes incantations and spells. The Vedas also offer insight into the history of Hinduism and the early development of several artistic, scientific and philosophical concepts, such as the concept of zero.

Expressed in the Vedic language, which is derived from classical Sanskrit, the verses of the Vedas were traditionally chanted during sacred rituals and recited daily in Vedic communities. The value of this tradition lies not only in the rich content of its oral literature but also in the ingenious techniques employed by the Brahmin priests in preserving the texts intact over thousands of years. To ensure that the sound of each word remains unaltered, practitioners are taught from childhood complex recitation techniques that are based on tonal accents, a unique manner of pronouncing each letter and specific speech combinations.

Although the Vedas continue to play an important role in contemporary Indian life, only thirteen of the over one thousand Vedic recitation branches have survived. Moreover, four noted schools – in Maharashtra (central India), Kerala and Karnataka (southern India) and Orissa (eastern India) – are considered under imminent threat.

# Ramlila - the Traditional Performance of the Ramayana

2005

INDIA

38



Ramlila, literally "Rama's play", is a performance of the Ramayana epic in a series of scenes that include song, narration, recital and dialogue. It is performed across northern India during the festival of Dussehra, held each year according to the ritual calendar in autumn. The most representative Ramlilas are those of Ayodhya, Ramnagar and Benares, Vrindavan, Almora, Sattna and Madhubani.

This staging of the Ramayana is based on the *Ramacharitmanas*, one of the most popular storytelling forms in the north of the country. This sacred text devoted to the glory of Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, was composed by Tulsidas in the sixteenth century in a form of Hindi in order to make the Sanskrit epic available to all. The majority of the Ramlilas recount episodes from the *Ramacharitmanas* through a series of performances lasting ten to twelve days, but some, such as Ramnagar's, may last an entire month. Festivals are organized in hundreds of settlements, towns and villages during the Dussehra festival season celebrating Rama's return from exile. Ramlila recalls the battle between Rama and Ravana and consists of a series of dialogues between gods, sages and the faithful. Ramlila's dramatic force stems from the succession of icons representing the climax of each scene. The audience is invited to sing and take part in the narration. The Ramlila brings the whole population together, without distinction of caste, religion or age. All the villagers participate spontaneously, playing roles or taking part in a variety of related activities, such as mask- and costume making, and preparing make-up, effigies and lights. However, the development of mass media, particularly television soap operas, is leading to a reduction in the audience of the Ramlila plays, which are therefore losing their principal role of bringing people and communities together.

2003

39

# The Wayang Puppet Theatre

## INDONESIA



Renowned for its elaborate puppets and complex musical styles, this ancient form of storytelling originated on the Indonesian island of Java. For ten centuries *wayang* flourished at the royal courts of Java and Bali as well as in rural areas. *Wayang* has spread to other islands (Lombok, Madura, Sumatra and Borneo) where various local performance styles and musical accompaniments have developed.

While these carefully handcrafted puppets vary in size, shape and style, two principal types prevail: the three-dimensional wooden puppet (*wayang klitik* or *golèk*) and the flat leather shadow puppet (*wayang kulit*) projected in front of a screen lit from behind. Both types are characterized by costumes, facial features and articulated body parts. The master puppeteer (*dalang*) manipulates the swivelling arms by means of slender sticks attached to the puppets. Singers and musicians play complex melodies on bronze instruments and *gamelan* drums. In the past, puppeteers were regarded as cultivated literary experts who transmitted moral and aesthetic values through their art. The words and actions of comic characters representing the “ordinary person” have provided a vehicle for criticizing sensitive social and political issues, and it is believed that this special role may have contributed to *wayang*’s survival over the centuries. *Wayang* stories borrow characters from indigenous myths, Indian epics and heroes from Persian tales. The repertory and performance techniques were transmitted orally within the families of puppeteers, musicians and puppet-makers. Master puppeteers are expected to memorize a vast repertory of stories and to recite ancient narrative passages and poetic songs in a witty and creative manner.



The *Wayang* Puppet Theatre still enjoys great popularity. However, to compete successfully with modern forms of pastimes such as video, television or karaoke, performers tend to accentuate comic scenes at the expense of the story line and to replace musical accompaniment with pop tunes, leading to the loss of some characteristic features.



# The Indonesian Kris

2005

## INDONESIA

40

The kris or keris is a distinctive, asymmetrical dagger from Indonesia. Both weapon and spiritual object, the kris is considered to possess magical powers. The earliest known kris go back to the tenth century and most probably spread from the island of Java throughout South-East Asia.

Kris blades are usually narrow with a wide, asymmetrical base. The sheath is often made from wood, though examples from ivory, even gold, abound. A kris' aesthetic value covers the *dhapur* (the form and design of the blade, with some 40 variants), the *pamor* (the pattern of metal alloy decoration on the blade, with approximately 120 variants), and *tangguh* referring to the age and origin of a kris. A bladesmith, or *empu*, makes the blade in layers of different iron ores and meteorite nickel. In high quality kris blades, the metal is folded dozens or hundreds of times and handled with the utmost precision. Empus are highly respected craftsmen with additional knowledge in literature, history and occult sciences.

Kris were worn everyday and at special ceremonies, and heirloom blades are handed down through successive generations. Both men and women wear them. A rich spirituality and mythology developed around this dagger. Kris are used for display, as talismans with magical powers, weapons, sanctified heirlooms, auxiliary equipment for court soldiers, accessories for ceremonial dress, an indicator of social status, a symbol of heroism, etc.



Over the past three decades, kris have lost some of their prominent social and spiritual meaning in society. Although active and honoured empus who produce high-quality kris in the traditional way can still be found on many islands, their number is dramatically decreasing, and it is more difficult for them to find people to whom they can transmit their skills.



2003

41

# The Iraqi Maqam

IRAQ



Widely recognized as Iraq's predominant classical music tradition, the Maqam encompasses a vast repertory of songs, accompanied by traditional instruments. Moreover, this popular genre provides a wealth of information on the musical history of the region and the Arab influences that have held sway over the centuries.

The Iraqi Maqam is closely linked, in structure and instrumentation, to the family of traditional musical forms practised in Iran, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. The Iraqi Maqam embraces numerous genres and primary melodic modes. It features improvisational vocal segments that sometimes use metric accompaniment and often lead to a medley of strophic songs. The skilful improvisation of the lead vocalist (*qari*) creates an intricate interplay with the orchestra (*tshalghi*) that provides

accompaniment throughout the performance. Typical instruments include the board cither *santur*, a four-string spike fiddle (*jawzah*), a low-pitched hand-drum (*dumbak*) and a small tambourine (*daff*). Maqam performances generally take place at private gatherings and in coffee-houses and theatres. With a repertory rooted in classical and colloquial Arabic poetry, the Maqam is highly revered by musicians and scholars, but also by the Iraqi population at large.

While many Arab musical styles in the region have either disappeared or become westernized, the Iraqi Maqam has remained largely intact, in particular retaining its ornate vocal technique and improvisational character.

Due to the current political situation, Maqam concerts are less frequently held in front of large audiences and more often limited to performances in private settings. However, the numerous live concerts and recordings of Iraqi Maqam abroad bear witness to its continuing success and popularity.



# Opera dei Pupi, Sicilian Puppet Theatre

ITALY

2001

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The puppet theatre known as the Opera dei Pupi emerged in Sicily at the beginning of the nineteenth century and enjoyed great success among the island's working classes. The puppeteers told stories based on medieval chivalric literature and other sources, such as Italian poems of the Renaissance, the lives of saints and tales of notorious bandits. The dialogues in these performances were largely improvised by the puppeteers. The two main Sicilian puppet schools in Palermo and Catania were distinguished principally by the size and shape of the puppets, the operating techniques and the variety of colourful stage backdrops.

These theatres were often family-run businesses; the carving, painting and construction of the puppets, renowned for their intense expressions, were carried out by craftspeople employing traditional methods. The puppeteers constantly endeavoured to outdo each other with their shows, and they exerted great influence over their audience. In the past, these performances took place over several evenings and provided opportunities for social gatherings.



The economic and social upheavals caused by the extraordinary economic boom of the 1950s had a considerable effect on the tradition, threatening its very foundations. At that time, similar forms of theatre in other parts of Italy disappeared, some of them to re-emerge some twenty years later. The Opera dei Pupi is the only example of an uninterrupted tradition of this kind of theatre. Owing to current economic difficulties puppeteers can no longer make a living from their art, prompting them to turn to more lucrative professions. Tourism has contributed to reducing the quality of performances, which were previously aimed at a local audience only.

2005

43

# Canto a tenore, Sardinian Pastoral Songs

ITALY



Canto a tenore has developed within the pastoral culture of Sardinia. It represents a form of polyphonic singing performed by a group of four men using four different voices called *bassu*, *contra*, *boche* and *mesu boche*. One of its characteristics is the deep and guttural timbre of the *bassu* and *contra* voices. It is performed standing in a close circle. The solo singer chants a piece of prose or a poem while the other voices

form an accompanying chorus. Most practitioners live in the region of Barbagia and other parts of central Sardinia. Their art of singing is very much embedded in the daily life of local communities. Often it is performed spontaneously in local bars called *su zilleri*, but also at more formal occasions, such as weddings, sheepshearings, religious festivities or the Barbaricino carnival.

The Canto a tenore encompasses a vast repertoire that varies within Sardinia. The most common melodies are the serenade *boche 'e notte* ('the voice of the night') and dance songs such as the *mutos*, *gosos* and *ballos*. The lyrics are either ancient or contemporary poems on present-day issues, such as emigration, unemployment and politics. In this sense, the songs can be regarded as both traditional and contemporary cultural expressions.

The canto a tenore is especially vulnerable to socio-economic changes, such as the decline of the pastoral culture and the increase of tourism in Sardinia. Performances on stage for tourists tend to affect the diversity of the repertoire and the intimate manner this music was performed in its original context.

# The Maroon Heritage of Moore Town

2003

## JAMAICA

44

Situated in the highlands of eastern Jamaica, Moore Town is home to the descendants of independent communities of former runaway slaves known as Maroons. The African ancestors of the Moore Town Maroons were forcibly removed from their native lands to the Caribbean

by Spanish slave traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The term Maroon, derived from the Spanish word *cimarrón* (wild), refers to those slaves who fled the plantations in the early 1600s and established their own settlements in the Blue and Johncrow Mountains of eastern Jamaica. By the early eighteenth century, the Maroon communities controlled much of the eastern part of the island. In opposition to the expanding plantation system of the British, they formed well-organized and efficient underground military units. After decades of warfare, the British finally yielded to the communities' demands for recognition of their autonomy by signing a treaty with the Maroons in 1739.

Hailing from West and Central African regions with diverse languages and cultural practices, the Moore Town Maroons elaborated new collective religious ceremonies that incorporated various spiritual traditions. These expressions and prac-



tices, which were then named Kromanti Play, continue to represent the very foundation of Maroon identity. During Kromanti ceremonies, dances, songs and specific drumming styles are performed to invoke ancestral spirits. These ceremonies also feature a language of African derivation, likewise named Kromanti, and rare medicinal preparations. As part of their heritage, the inhabitants of Moore Town also possess a unique system of communally-held "treaty lands", a local political structure and the use of the *abeng*, a side-blown "talking" horn of Jamaican origin which serves as a means of long-distance communication.

Several decades of missionary opposition to Kromanti Play have driven this tradition partially underground and have led to serious schisms within the communities. Moreover, deteriorating economic conditions have forced many Maroons to migrate to other parts of Jamaica and abroad.



# Nôgaku Theatre

JAPAN



Nôgaku theatre had its heyday in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but actually originated in the eighth century when the Sangaku was transmitted from China to Japan. At the time, the term Sangaku referred to various types of performance featuring acrobats, song and dance as well as comic sketches. Its subsequent adaption to Japanese society led to its assimilation of other traditional art forms. Today, Nôgaku is the principal form of Japanese theatre and has influenced the puppet theatre as well as Kabuki.

Often based on tales from traditional literature, Nôgaku theatre integrates masks, costumes and various props in a

dance-based performance. Moreover, this theatre requires highly trained actors and musicians. Nôgaku encompasses two types of theatre: *Noh* and *Kyôgen*, which are performed in the same space. The stage projects into the audience and is linked by a walkway to a "hall of mirrors" backstage. In *Noh*, emotions are represented by stylised conventional gestures. The hero is often a supernatural being who takes on human form to narrate a story. The distinctive masks for which *Noh* is renowned are used for the roles of ghosts, women, children and old

people. *Kyôgen*, on the other hand, relies less on the use of masks and is derived from the humorous plays of the Sangaku, as reflected in its comic dialogue. The text is written in ancient language and vividly describes the ordinary people of the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.

In 1957 the Japanese Government designated Nôgaku as an Important Intangible Cultural Property, which affords a degree of legal protection to the tradition as well as its most accomplished practitioners. The National *Noh* Theatre was founded in 1983 and stages regular performances. It also organizes courses to train actors in the leading roles of the Nôgaku.



# Ningyo Johruri Bunraku Puppet Theatre

2003

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JAPAN

Ranking with Nô and Kabuki as one of Japan's foremost stage arts, the Ningyo Johruri Bunraku puppet theatre is a blend of sung narrative, instrumental accompaniment and puppet drama. This theatrical form emerged during the early Edo period (ca. 1600) when puppetry was coupled with *Johruri*, a popular fifteenth-century narrative genre. The plots related in this new form of puppet theatre derived from two principal sources: historical plays set in feudal times (*Jidaimono*) and contemporary dramas exploring the conflict between affairs of the heart and social obligation (*Sewamono*).



Ningyo Johruri had adopted its characteristic staging style by the mid eighteenth century. Three puppeteers, visible to the audience, manipulate large articulated puppets on the stage behind a waist-high screen. From a projecting elevated platform (*yuka*), the narrator (*tayu*) recounts the action while a musician provides musical accompaniment on the three-stringed spike lute (*shamisen*). The *tayu* plays all the characters, both male and female, and uses different voices and intonations to suit each role and situation. Although the *tayu* "reads"

from a scripted text, there is ample room for improvisation. The three puppeteers must carefully co-ordinate their movements to ensure that the puppet's gestures and attitudes appear realistic. The puppets, replete with elaborate costumes and individualized facial expressions, are handcrafted by master puppet makers. The genre acquired its present full name – Ningyo Johruri Bunraku – in the late nineteenth century, a period in which the *Bunrakuza* was a leading theatre.

Today, the pre-eminent venue is the National Bunraku Theatre in Osaka, but its highly

reputed troupe also performs in Tokyo and regional theatres. Approximately 160 works out of the 700 plays written during the Edo period have remained in today's repertory. Performances, once lasting the entire day, have been shortened from the original six to two or three acts. Ningyo Johruri Bunraku was designated Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1955. Nowadays, it attracts numerous young performers, and the aesthetic qualities and dramatic content of the plays continue to appeal to modern audiences.

2005

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# Kabuki Theatre

JAPAN



Kabuki is a Japanese traditional theatre form, which originated in the Edo period at the beginning of the seventeenth century and was particularly popular among townspeople. Originally, both men and women acted in Kabuki plays, but eventually only male actors performed the plays: a tradition that has remained to the present day. Male actors specialized in women's roles are called *onnagata*. Two other major role types are *aragoto* (rough style) and *wagoto* (soft style).

Kabuki plays are about historical events and moral conflict in relationships of the heart. The actors speak in a monotone

voice and are accompanied by traditional instruments. The Kabuki stage is equipped with several gadgets, such as revolving stages and trapdoors through which the actors can appear and disappear. Another speciality of the Kabuki stage is a footbridge (*hanamichi*) that extends into the audience.

Important characteristics of Kabuki theatre include its particular music, costumes, stage devices and props as well as specific plays, language and acting styles, such as the *mie*, in which the actor holds a characteristic pose to establish his character. *Keshiy*, the particular make-up, provides an element of style easily recognizable even by those unfamiliar with the art form.

After 1868, when Japan opened to Western influence, actors strove to heighten the reputation of Kabuki among the upper classes and to adapt the traditional styles to modern tastes. Today, Kabuki is the most popular of the traditional styles of Japanese drama.



# The Cultural Space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum

2005

JORDAN

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The Bedu are settled and nomadic communities living in the southern part of Jordan, particularly near Petra and Wadi Rum, within a region of semi-arid highlands and deserts. These conditions have allowed for the development and existence in complementary relationship of both types of communities.

Several Bedu tribes, namely the Bdul, the Ammarin and the Sa'idiyyin, continue to use the Nabatean water-collecting cisterns and caves near Petra. The Bedu communities inhabiting

this area keep alive a traditional pastoral culture and related skills. The Bedu of Petra and Wadi Rum have preserved specific knowledge related to the flora and fauna of the area, traditional medicine, camel husbandry, tent-making craftsmanship, and tracking and climbing skills. The Bedu have developed an extensive knowledge of their environment and complex moral and social code, all of which is expressed and transmitted orally. Their rich mythology is manifested in various forms of oral expression, comprising poetry, folktales and songs that are closely linked to particular places and the history of these communities.

Over the last fifty years, more and more Bedu groups have settled down. The provision of education, housing, health care and sanitation has made a sedentary existence more attractive for many of them, leading, however, to the erosion of skills developed by the Bedu over generations. The increase of desert tourism and its demand for "authentic Bedu culture" should not be allowed to further degrade the intangible heritage of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum.

2003

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# The Art of Akyns, Kyrgyz Epic Tellers

KYRGYZSTAN



The predominant form of cultural expression among the Kyrgyz nomads is the narration of epics. The art of the Akyns, the Kyrgyz epic tellers, combines singing, improvisation and musical composition. The epics are performed at religious and private festivities, seasonal ceremonies and national holidays and have survived over the centuries by oral transmission.

The value of the Kyrgyz epics lies largely in their dramatic plots and philosophical underpinnings. They represent an oral encyclopaedia of Kyrgyz social values, cultural knowledge and history. The pre-eminent Kyrgyz epic is the 1000-year-old *Manas* trilogy, which is noteworthy not only for its great length (sixteen times longer than Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), but also for its rich content. Blending fact and legend, the *Manas* immortalizes important events in Kyrgyz's history since the ninth century. The Kyrgyzs have also preserved over forty "smaller" epics. While the *Manas* is a solo narration, these shorter works are generally performed to the accompaniment of the *komuz*, the three-stringed Kyrgyz lute. Each epic possesses a distinctive theme, melody and narrative style. Akyns were once highly respected figures who toured from region to region and frequently participated in storytelling contests. They were appreciated for their proficiency in narration, expressive gestures, intonation and lively mimicry, so well suited to the epics' emotionally charged content.

During the 1920s, the first part of the *Manas* trilogy was recorded in written form based on the oral interpretation of the great epic singer, Sagynbay. The epics remain an essential component of Kyrgyz identity and continue to inspire contemporary writers, poets, and composers; even today, the traditional performances are still linked to sacred cultural spaces. Although there are fewer practitioners nowadays, master akyns continue to train young apprentices and are helped by recent revitalization initiatives supported by the Kyrgyz government.



# The Baltic Song and Dance Celebrations

## ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

2003

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Both a repository and a showcase for the region's tradition of performing folk art, this cultural expression culminates in large-scale festivals every fifth year in Estonia and Latvia and every fourth year in Lithuania. These grand events, held over several days, assemble as many as 40,000 singers and dancers. For the most part, the participants belong to amateur choirs and dance groups. Their repertoires reflect the wide range of musical traditions in the Baltic States, from the most ancient folk songs to contemporary compositions. Directed by professional choir conductors, bandleaders and dance instructors, many singers and dancers practise throughout the year in community centres and local cultural institutions.

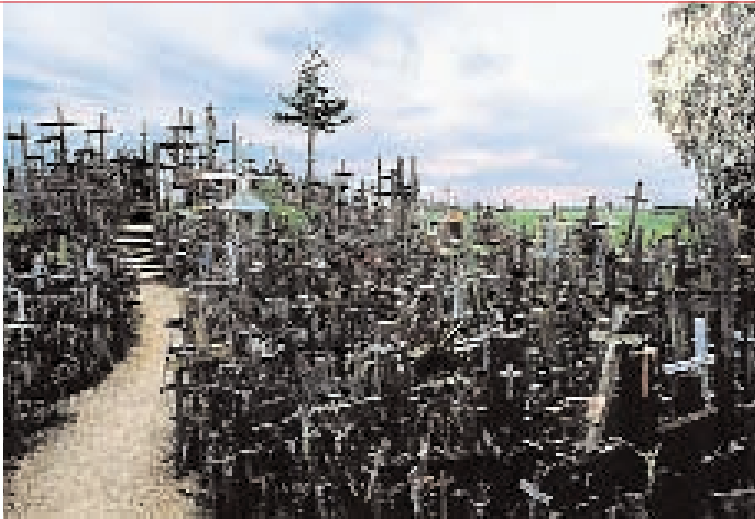
Choirs and musical ensembles first became institutionalized in Estonia during the eighteenth century. Subsequently, choir singing spread throughout rural and urban areas, spurred by the growing popularity of choral music, singing societies and song festivals in Western Europe. With the participation of the most active choirs from various regions of these States, the Baltic Song and Dance Celebrations were initially organized in Estonia in 1869 and in Latvia in 1873. Lithuania hosted its first celebration in 1924. Once the Baltic States gained independence from Russia after the First World War, the celebrations acquired widespread popularity as a means of asserting Baltic cultural identity. In the three countries, special venues and festival sites were constructed to host the events. After the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War, the celebrations adapted to the prevailing communist ideology.



Since regaining independence in 1991, the Baltic States have undertaken various measures to ensure the protection of this tradition, yet the major economic and social changes taking place in the region raise serious concerns for the future. Today's principal threats stem from the rural exodus and the resulting break-up of local amateur groups.



# Cross-crafting and its Symbolism



Cross-crafting refers to a widespread tradition of making crosses and altars, as well as the consecration of these crosses and the rituals associated with them. The carved oak crosses are linked to Catholic ceremonies and harvest celebrations. Once the cross is consecrated by a priest, it acquires an inalienable sacred significance. They became the symbol of national and religious identity with its incorporation into the orthodox Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. Their symbolic role was reinforced under the Soviet regime, despite the fact that the crosses were officially banned.

The crosses measure between one and five metres high and are often adorned with a small roof, floral or geometric decorations, and occasionally bear small statues. Statues of the Virgin Mary and various saints are often called upon to aid people in distress. The crosses are placed on roadsides, at the entrance to villages, near monuments and in cemeteries. A range of types of offerings are made, especially items of food, rosaries, money or coloured scarves (for a wedding, for example) or aprons, asking for fertility. The crosses are also an important meeting place in a village and a symbol of the unity of the community.

Today, as in the past, cross crafting is not taught in any school but is handed down through non-formal education. The most serious threat to cross-crafting is rural exodus and the uniformity brought about by the influence of mass media. Although the upkeep of the crosses is ensured by the parishes, more support is needed.



# The Woodcrafting Knowledge of the Zafimaniry

2003

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## MADAGASCAR

The Zafimaniry community is the sole remaining repository of a unique woodcraft culture previously widespread on the island. In the eighteenth century, the Zafimaniry settled in the remote wooded region of south-east Madagascar, seeking refuge from the deforestation that was ravaging much of Madagascar at that time. Today, approximately 25,000 Zafimaniry live in some one hundred villages and hamlets scattered in the highlands of this region.

For generations, Zafimaniry foresters, carpenters and craftworkers have developed a body of practical knowledge and skills revolving around wood. This craft tradition bears witness to the central role of this material in all aspects of life and death. Zafimaniry proficiency in forestry and wood sculpting can be seen in constructions and everyday objects. Practically all wooden surfaces – walls, window frames, posts, beams, stools, chests, tools – display elaborate ornamentation. The Zafimaniry use twenty different endemic species of tree, each adapted to a specific type of construction or decorative function. Houses and tombs are assembled entirely with traditional mortise and tenon joints, without the



use of nails, hinges or other metal hardware. The traditional granaries, perched on round piles, are a distinctive feature of the mountain landscape. The geometric patterns are highly codified and reflect not only the community's austronesian origins but also the Arab influences in Malagasy culture. Although the number of motifs is limited, the creativity of the craftworkers means that no two pieces are identical. These motifs carry rich symbolic significance related to Zafimaniry beliefs and values. For example, the *tanamparoratra* (spider's web) symbolizes family ties, while the *papin-*

*tantely* (honeycomb) represents community life. The ornamentation also informs about roles and social standing within the community.

For several decades, the Zafimaniry have sold statuettes, decorative pieces and everyday objects in nearby towns to ensure their survival. However, this fragile community risks becoming relegated to the role of mere suppliers of handicrafts to the tourist industry. Moreover, the process of deforestation threatens the Zafimaniry's principal source of income.

# The Vimbuza Healing Dance

MALAWI

Vimbuza is a healing dance popular among the Tumbuka people living in northern Malawi. It is an important manifestation of the *ng'oma*, a healing tradition found throughout Bantu-speaking Africa. *Ng'oma*, meaning “drums of affliction”, carries considerable historical depth and, despite various attempts over the years to suppress it, remains a fundamental part of indigenous healthcare systems.

Most patients are women who suffer from various forms of mental illness. They are treated for some weeks or months by renowned healers who run a *temphiri*, a village house where patients are accommodated. After being diagnosed, patients undergo a healing ritual. For this purpose, women and children of the village form a circle around the patient, who slowly enters into a trance, and sing songs to call helping spirits. The only men taking part are those who beat spirit-specific drum rhythms and, in some cases, a male healer. Singing and drumming combine to create a powerful experience, providing a space for patients to “dance their disease”. Its continually expanding repertoire of songs and complex drumming, and the virtuosity of the dancing are all part of the rich cultural heritage of the Tumbuka people.



The Vimbuza healing ritual goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, when it developed as a means of overcoming traumatic experiences of oppression, and it further developed as a healing dance under British occupation, although it was forbidden by Christian missionaries. By becoming possessed by Vimbuza spirits, people could express these mental problems in a way that was accepted and understood by the surrounding society. For the Tumbuka, Vimbuza has artistic value and a therapeutic function that complements other forms of medical treatment. Vimbuza is still practised in rural areas where the Tumbuku live, but it continues to face oppression by Christian churches and modern medicine.



# The Gule Wamkulu

## MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA

2005

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Gule Wamkulu was a secret cult, involving a ritual dance practised among the Chewa in Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique. It was performed by members of the Nyau brotherhood, a secret society of initiated men. Within the Chewa's traditional matrilineal society, where married men played a rather marginal role, the Nyau offered a means to establish a counterweight and solidarity among men of various villages. Nyau members still are responsible for the initiation of young men into adulthood, and for the performance of the Gule Wamkulu at the end of the initiation procedure, celebrating the young men's integration into adult society.

Gule Wamkulu is performed in the season following the July harvest, but it can also be seen at weddings, funerals, and the installation or the death of a chief. On these occasions, the Nyau dancers wear costumes and masks made of wood and straw, representing a great variety of characters, such as wild animals, spirits of the dead, slave traders as well as more recent figures such as the *honda* or the helicopter. Each of these figures plays a particular, often evil, character expressing a form of misbehavior, teaching the audience moral and social values. These figures perform dances with extraordinary energy, entertaining and scaring the audience as representatives of the world of the spirits and the dead.

Gule Wamkulu dates back to the great Chewa Empire of the seventeenth century. Despite the efforts of Christian missionaries to ban this practice, it managed to survive under British colonial rule by adopting some aspects of Christianity. As a



consequence, Chewa men tend to be members of a Christian church as well as a Nyau society. However, Gule Wamkulu performances are gradually losing their original function and meaning by being reduced to entertainment for tourists and for political purpose.



# Mak Yong Theatre

MALAYSIA



This ancient theatre form created by Malaysia's Malay communities combines acting, vocal and instrumental music, gestures and elaborate costumes. Specific to the villages of Kelantan in northwest Malaysia, where the tradition originated, Mak Yong is performed mainly as entertainment or for ritual purposes related to healing practices.

Experts believe that Mak Yong appeared well before the Islamization of the country. It was performed as a royal theatre under the direct patronage of the Kelantan Sultanate until the 1920s. Hence, the tradition was perpetuated in a rural context without forsaking the numerous refinements acquired at court, such as sophisticated costume design.

A typical Mak Yong performance opens with an offering followed by dances, acting and music as well as improvised monologues and dialogues. A single story can be presented over several consecutive nights in a series of three-hour performances. In the traditional village setting, the performances are held on a temporary open stage built of wood and palm leaves. The audience sits on three sides of the stage, the fourth side being reserved for the orchestra consisting of a three-stringed spiked fiddle (rebab), a pair of double-headed barrel drums (gendang) and hanging knobbed gongs (tetawak).

Most roles are performed by women, and the stories are based on ancient Malay folk tales peopled with royal characters, divinities and clowns. Mak Yong is also associated with rituals in which shamans attempt to heal through song, trance-dance and spirit possession.

Mak Yong, which requires long years of training, has been preserved until the present largely through oral transmission. In today's society, few young people are willing to commit to such rigorous apprenticeships. As a result, this important tradition is undergoing steady decline, as attested by reduced dramatic and musical repertoires and a shortage of seasoned performers.

# The Cultural Space of the Yaaral and Degal

2005

MALI

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The cultural space of the Yaaral and the Degal encompasses the vast pastoral lands of the Peul of the inner Niger Delta. The Yaaral and the Degal festivities mark the crossing of the river at the time of the transhumance. Twice a year, herds of cattle cross the arid land of the Sahel and the flood plains of the inner Niger River. The festivities always take place on a Saturday, an auspicious day in popular Peul belief, and their exact date is determined according to the state of the pasture and the river level.

These festivities give rise to varied cultural expressions. Competitions for the most beautifully decorated herd are organized. Herdsmen recite pastoral poems relating their adventures during the long months of trekking. Young women put on their finest clothes and jewellery to acclaim the herdsmen in song.

These two events, dating back to the settlement of Peuls in the region around the fourteenth century, are the linchpins of the way of life of these people. The management of the pasturelands, the marking out of transhumance routes and the gathering of herds at specific points have improved the organization of the event and have resulted in larger crowds,



turning these pastoral festivals into major events. Because they bring together representatives of all the ethnic and occupational groups in the Delta – Peul cattle-breeders, Marka or Nono rice-growers, Bambara millet-growers and Bozo fishermen – the Yaaral and the Degal continue to renew inter-community pacts and reinforce social cohesion. The strong attachment of the communities in the region to these festivities ensures their continuity, although they may be weakened by the rural exodus of the young and recurring droughts affecting the pastureland and the herds.

# The Indigenous Festivity dedicated to the Dead

2003

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MEXICO



As practised by the indigenous communities of Mexico, *el Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) commemorates the transitory return to Earth of deceased relatives and loved ones. The festivities take place each year at the end of October to the beginning of November. This period also marks the completion of the annual cycle of cultivation of maize, the country's predominant food crop.

Families facilitate the return of the souls to Earth by laying flower petals, candles and offerings along the path leading from the cemetery to their homes. The deceased's favourite dishes are prepared and placed around the home shrine and the tomb alongside flowers and typical handicrafts, such as paper cut-outs. Great care is taken with all aspects of the preparations, for it is believed that the dead are capable of bringing prosperity (e.g. an abundant maize harvest) or misfortune (e.g. illness, accidents, financial difficulties) upon their families depending on how satisfactorily the rituals are executed. The dead are divided into several categories according to cause of death, age, sex and, in some cases, profession. A specific day of worship, determined by these categories, is designated for each deceased person. This encounter between the living and the dead affirms the role of the individual within society and contributes to reinforcing the political and social status of Mexico's indigenous communities.

The Day of the Dead celebration holds great significance in the life of Mexico's indigenous communities. The fusion of pre-Hispanic religious rites and Catholic feasts brings together two universes, one marked by indigenous belief systems, the other by worldviews introduced by the Europeans in the sixteenth century.

# The Traditional Music of the Morin Khuur

2003

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## MONGOLIA

The two-stringed fiddle morin khuur has figured prominently in Mongolia's nomad culture. String instruments adorned with horse heads are attested to by written sources dating from the Mongol empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The fiddle's significance extends beyond its function as a musical instrument, for it was traditionally an integral part of rituals and everyday activities of the Mongolian nomads.

The design of the morin khuur is closely linked to the all-important cult of the horse. The instrument's hollow trapezoid-shaped body is attached to a long fretless neck bearing a carved horse head at its extremity. Just below the head, two tuning pegs jut out like ears from either side of the neck. The soundboard is covered with animal skin, and the strings and bow are made of horsehair. The instrument's characteristic sound is produced by sliding or stroking the bow against the two strings. Common techniques include multiple stroking by the right hand and a variety of left-hand fingering. It



is mainly played in solo fashion but sometimes accompanies dances, long songs (*urtiin duu*), mythical tales, ceremonies and everyday tasks related to horses. To this day, the morin khuur repertory has retained some tunes (*tatlaga*) specifically intended to tame animals. Owing to the simultaneous presence of a main tone and overtones, morin khuur music has always been difficult to transcribe using standard notation. It has been transmitted orally from master to apprentice for many generations.

Over the past forty years, most Mongolians have settled in urban centres, far

from the morin khuur's historical and spiritual context. Moreover, the tuning of the instrument is often adapted to the technical requirements of stage performance, resulting in higher and louder sounds that erase many timbral subtleties. Fortunately, surviving herding communities in southern Mongolia have managed to preserve many aspects of morin khuur playing along with related rituals and customs.



# Urtiin Duu - Traditional Folk Long Song

## MONGOLIA AND CHINA



The Urtiin duu or “long song” is one of the two major forms of Mongolian songs, the other being the short song” (*bogino duu*). As a ritual form of expression associated with important celebrations and festivities, Urtiin duu plays a distinct and honoured role in Mongolian society. It is performed at weddings, the inauguration of a new home, the birth of a child, the branding of foals and other social events celebrated by Mongolia’s nomadic communities. The Urtiin duu can also be heard at the *naadam*, a festivity featuring wrestling, archery and horseracing competitions.

The Urtiin duu is a lyrical chant, which is characterized by an abundance of ornamentation, falsetto, an extremely wide

vocal range and a free compositional form. The rising melody is slow and steady while the falling melody is often intercepted with a lively rhythm. Performances and compositions of Urtiin duu are closely linked to the pastoral way of life of the Mongolian nomads on their ancestral grasslands.

Widely believed to have originated 2,000 years ago, the Urtiin duu has been recorded in literary works since the thirteenth century. A rich variety of regional styles has been preserved until today, and performances as

well as contemporary compositions still play a major role in the social and cultural life of nomads living in Mongolia and in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Republic, located in the northern part of the People’s Republic of China.

Since the 1950s, urbanization and industrialization have increasingly superseded traditional nomadic lifestyles, leading to the loss of many traditional practices and expressions. Parts of the grasslands where tradition-bearers used to live as nomads have fallen victim to desertification, causing many families to shift to a sedentary way of life where many classical themes of Urtiin duu, such as the praise of typical nomads’ virtues and experiences, lose their relevance.

# The Cultural Space of Jemaa el-Fna Square

MOROCCO

2001

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The Jemaa el-Fna Square is one of the main cultural spaces in Marrakesh and has become one of the symbols of the city since its foundation in the eleventh century. It represents a unique concentration of popular Moroccan cultural traditions performed through musical, religious and artistic expressions.

Located at the entrance of the Medina, this triangular square, which is surrounded by restaurants, stands and public buildings, provides everyday commercial activities and various forms of entertainment. It is a meeting point for both the local population and people from elsewhere. All through the day, and well into the night, a variety of services are offered, such as dental care, traditional medicine, fortune-telling, preaching, and henna tattooing; water-carrying, fruit and traditional food may be bought. In addition, one can enjoy many performances by storytellers, poets, snake-charmers, Berber musicians (*mazighen*), Gnaoua dancers and *senthir* (*hajouj*) players. The oral expressions would be continually renewed by bards (*imayazen*), who used to travel through Berber territories. They continue to combine speech and gesture to teach, entertain and charm the



audience. Adapting their art to contemporary contexts, they now improvise on an outline of an ancient text, making their recital accessible to a wider audience.

The Jemaa el-Fna Square is a major place of cultural exchange and has enjoyed protection as part of Morocco's artistic heritage since 1922. However, urbanization, in particular real estate speculation and the development of the road infrastructure, are seen as serious threats to the cultural space itself. While Jemaa el-Fna Square enjoys great popularity, the cultural practices may suffer acculturation, also caused by widespread tourism.

2005

# The Moussem of Tan-Tan

61

MOROCCO



The Moussem of Tan-Tan in southwest Morocco is an annual gathering of nomadic peoples of the Sahara that brings together more than thirty tribes from southern Morocco and other parts of northwest Africa. Originally this was an annual event around the month of May. Part of the agricultural and herding calendar of the nomads, these gatherings were an opportunity to group together, buy, sell and exchange food-stuffs and other products, organize camel and horse-breeding competitions, celebrate weddings and consult herbalists. The Moussem also included a range of cultural expressions such as musical performances, popular chanting, games, poetry contests and other Hassanie oral traditions.

These gatherings took the form of a Moussem (a type of annual fair with economic, cultural and social functions) in 1963 when the first Moussem of Tan-Tan was organized to promote local traditions and provide a place for exchange, meeting and celebration. The Moussem is said to have been initially associated with Mohamed Laghdaf, who resisted the Franco-Spanish occupation. He died in 1960, and his tomb lies near the town. However, between 1979 and 2004 it was not possible to hold the Moussem because of security problems in the region.

Today, the nomadic populations are particularly concerned to protect their way of life. Economic and technical upheavals in the region have profoundly altered the lifestyle of the nomadic Bedouin communities, forcing many of them to settle. Moreover, urbanization and rural exodus have contributed to the loss of many aspects of the traditional culture of these populations, such as crafts and poetry. Because of these risks, Bedouin communities rely strongly on the renewed Moussem of Tan-Tan to assist them in ensuring the survival of their know-how and traditions.

# The Chopi Timbila

## MOZAMBIQUE

2005

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The Chopi communities live mainly in the southern part of Inhambane province in southern Mozambique and are famous for their orchestra music. Their orchestras consist of five to thirty wooden xylophones, called timbila, of varying sizes and ranges of pitch. The timbila are finely manufactured and tuned wooden instruments made from the highly resonant wood of the slow-growing *mwenje* (sneezewort) tree. Under each wooden slat, a resonator made out of calabashes is fastened, tightly sealed with beeswax, and tempered with the oil of the *nkuso* fruit, giving the timbila their rich nasal sound and characteristic vibrations. The orchestras are composed of timbila masters and apprentices of all age groups, with children playing next to their grandfathers. Each year, several new pieces are composed and performed at weddings and other community events. The rhythms within each theme are complex, so that the player's left hand is often executing a different rhythm from that of the right hand. Lasting about one hour, performances feature solo and orchestra themes, using varying tempi. Closely connected with the music are particular timbila dances that are performed by two to twelve dancers in front of the orchestra.



Each timbila performance includes the solemn *m'zeno* song, performed by dancers, while musicians play softly and slowly. These texts, full of humour and sarcasm, reflect contemporary social issues and serve to chronicle community events.

Most experienced timbila performers are old. Although several timbila masters have started to train young musicians and have also included girls in their orchestras and dance groups, young people are increasingly losing contact with this cultural heritage. In addition, deforestation has led to the scarcity of the wood needed to produce the particular sonority of the timbila instruments.



2005

# El Güegüense

63

NICARAGUA



A forceful expression of protest against colonial rule, El Güegüense is a satirical drama well known throughout Nicaragua. It is performed during the feast of San Sebastián, patron saint of the city of Diriamba in Nicaragua's Carazo province. El Güegüense, a synthesis of Spanish and indigenous cultures combining theatre, dance and music, is considered one of Latin America's most distinctive colonial-era expressions.

The earliest texts were probably composed in the early eighteenth century. The story revolves around encounters between the Spanish colonial authorities and native Americans, represented particularly by the central character. A powerful elder figure in pre-Hispanic Nicaragua, El Güegüense, countered charges levelled against him by the colonial officials through a series of clever verbal manoeuvres. Rather than directly confronting or challenging an authority, he attempts to appear consistently cooperative and compliant, while utilizing subterfuge to undermine Spanish authority. Interspersed in street processions, the plays are generally performed by eight main characters supported by dancers. Violins, guitars and drums provide the musical accompaniment. Costumes, wooden masks, hats and other attributes differentiate the various characters. The tradition is familiar to most of Nicaragua's predominantly Spanish-speaking population owing to the nationwide television coverage of the annual Saint's Day procession. In fact, it is so well known that Nicaraguans have coined the expression "to put on the Güegüense's face" to refer to someone who outwardly appears to comply with the rules while working subtly to undermine them.

Despite its popularity, El Güegüense is in danger of declining in popularity, and possibly disappearing, due to the country's difficult economic situation, insufficient support for performers and a diminishing interest among young people.

# The Ifa Divination System

2005

## NIGERIA

64

The Ifa divination system, which makes use of an extensive corpus of texts and mathematical formulas, is practised among Yoruba communities and by the African diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean. The word Ifa refers to the mystical figure Ifa or Orunmila, regarded by the Yoruba as the deity of wisdom and intellectual development.

In contrast to other forms of divination in the region that employ spirit mediumship, Ifa divination does not rely on a person having oracular powers but rather on a system of signs that are interpreted by a diviner, the Ifa priest or *babalawo*, literally “the priest’s father”. The Ifa divination system is applied whenever an important individual or collective decision has to be made.

The Ifa literary corpus, called *odu*, consists of 256 parts subdivided into verses called *ese*, whose exact number is unknown as they are constantly increasing (there are around 800 *ese* per *odu*). Each of the 256 *odu* has its specific divination signature, which is determined by the *babalawo* using sacred palm-nuts and a divination chain. The *ese*, considered the most important part of Ifa divination, are chanted by the priests in poetic language. The *ese* reflect Yoruba history, language, beliefs, cosmology and contemporary social issues. The knowledge of Ifa has been preserved within Yoruba communities and transmitted among Ifa priests.



Under the influence of colonial rule and religious pressures, traditional beliefs and practices were discriminated against. The Ifa priests, most of whom are quite old, have only modest means to maintain the tradition, transmit their complex knowledge and train future practitioners. As a result, the youth and the Yoruba people are losing interest in practising and consulting Ifa divination, which goes hand-in-hand with growing intolerance towards traditional divination systems in general.

2005

# The Palestinian Hikaye

65

PALESTINE



The Palestinian Hikaye is a narrative expression practised by women. The fictitious tales, which have evolved over the centuries, deal with current concerns of Middle Eastern Arab society and family issues. The Hikaye offers a critique of society from the women's perspective and draws a portrait of the social structure that directly pertains to the lives of women. Many tales describe women torn between duty and desire.

The Hikaye is usually narrated at home during winter evenings, at spontaneous and convivial events attended by small groups of women and children. Men rarely attend, as this is

considered inappropriate. The expressive power of the narration lies in the use of language, emphasis, speech rhythms and vocal inflections as well as in the ability to capture the attention of the listeners and successfully transport them into a world of imagination and fantasy. The technique and style of narration follows linguistic and literary conventions that set it apart from other folk narrative genres. The tales are narrated in Palestinian dialect, either in rural *fallahi* or in urban *madani*. Almost every Palestinian woman over the age of 70 is a Hikaye teller, and the

tradition is primarily carried on by elderly women. It is not unusual for girls and young boys to tell tales to one another for practice or pleasure.

However, the Hikaye is in decline due to the influence of mass media, which often induce people to regard their native customs as backward and inferior. As a consequence, the elder women tend to change form and content of the narrations. The continued disruption of the social life due to the current political situation in the Palestine territories is another threat to the continuation of the Hikaye.

# Taquile and its Textile Art

PERU

2005

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The island of Taquile located in Lake Titicaca on the Peruvian High Andean Plateau, is known for its textile art, which is produced as an everyday activity by both men and women, regardless of their age, and worn by all community members.

The people of Taquile were relatively isolated from the mainland until the 1950s, and the notion of community is still very

strong among them. This is reflected in the organization of community life and in collective decision-making. The weaving tradition on the island goes back to the ancient Inca, Pukara and Colla civilizations, thus keeping alive aspects of pre-Hispanic Andean cultures.

Fabrics are either knitted or woven on pre-Hispanic four-stake ground looms. The most characteristic garments are the so-called *chullo*, a knitted hat with an earflap, and the calendar waistband, a wide woven belt depicting the annual cycles connected to ritual and agricultural activities. The calendar waistband has attracted the interest of many researchers as it depicts elements of the oral tradition of the community and its history. Although new, contemporary symbols and images have been introduced into Taquile textile art, the traditional style and techniques have been maintained.

Taquile has a specialized school for learning Taquile handicrafts, ensuring the viability and continuity of the tradition. Tourism has contributed to the development of communal economy, which mainly consists of the textile and tourist trade. While tourism is regarded as an effective way of ensuring the continuity of the textile tradition, rising demand has led to significant changes in material, production and meaning. The Taquile population has grown considerably over recent decades, leading to resource shortages and the need to import more and more goods from the mainland.



# The Hudhud Chants of the Ifugao

PHILIPPINES



The Hudhud consists of narrative chants traditionally performed by the Ifugao community, which is well known for its rice terraces extending over the highlands of the northern island of the Philippine archipelago. It is practised during the rice sowing season, at harvest time and at funeral wakes and rituals. Thought to have originated before the seventh century, the Hudhud comprises more than 200 chants, each divided into 40 episodes. A complete recitation may last several days.

Since the Ifugao's culture is matrilineal, the wife generally takes the main part in the chants, and her brother occupies a higher position than her husband. The language of the stories abounds in figurative expressions and repetitions and employs metonymy, metaphor and onomatopoeia, rendering

transcription very difficult. Thus, there are very few written expressions of this tradition. The chant tells about ancestral heroes, customary law, religious beliefs and traditional practices, and reflects the importance of rice cultivation. The narrators, mainly elderly women, hold a key position in the community, both as historians and preachers. The Hudhud epic

is chanted alternately by the first narrator and a choir, employing a single melody for all the verses.

The conversion of the Ifugao to Catholicism has weakened their traditional culture. Furthermore, the Hudhud is linked to the manual harvesting of rice, which is now mechanized. Although the rice terraces are listed as a World Heritage Site, the number of growers has been in constant decline. The few remaining narrators, who are already very old, need to be supported in their efforts to transmit their knowledge and to raise awareness among young people.

# The Darangen Epic of the Maranao People of Lake Lanao

2005

## PHILIPPINES

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The Darangen is an ancient epic song that encompasses a wealth of knowledge of the Maranao people who live in the Lake Lanao region of Mindanao. This southernmost island of the Philippine archipelago is the traditional homeland of the Maranao, one of the country's three main Muslim groups.

Comprising 17 cycles and a total of 72,000 lines, the Darangen celebrates episodes from Maranao history and the tribulations of mythical heroes. In addition to having a compelling narrative content, the epic explores the underlying themes of life and death, courtship, love and politics through symbol, metaphor, irony and satire. The Darangen also encodes customary law, standards of social and ethical behaviour, notions of aesthetic beauty, and social values specific to the Maranao. To this day, elders refer to this time-honoured text in the administration of customary law.

Meaning literally "to narrate in song", the Darangen existed before the Islamization of the Philippines in the fourteenth century and is part of a wider epic culture connected to early Sanskrit traditions extending through most of Mindanao. Though the Darangen has been largely transmitted orally, parts of the epic have been recorded in manuscripts using an ancient writing system based on the Arabic script. Specialized



female and male performers sing the Darangen during wedding celebrations that typically last several nights. Performers must possess a prodigious memory, improvisational skills, poetic imagination, knowledge of customary law and genealogy, a flawless and elegant vocal technique, and the ability to engage an audience during long hours of performance. Music and dance sometimes accompany the chanting.

Nowadays, the Darangen is less frequently performed owing in part to its rich vocabulary and archaic linguistic forms, which can only be understood by practitioners, elders and scholars. Indeed, the growing tendency to embrace mainstream Filipino lifestyles may represent a threat to the survival of this ancient epic.

# The Royal Ancestral Ritual in the Jongmyo Shrine and its Music

2001

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA



The Jongmyo Shrine in Seoul is the setting for a Confucian ritual dedicated to the ancestors of the Joseon dynasty (14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century) that encompasses song, dance and music. The ritual is practised once a year on the first Sunday in May and is

organized by the descendants of the royal family. It offers a unique example of a Confucian ritual, which is no longer celebrated in China. The tradition is inspired by classical Chinese texts concerning the cult of ancestors and the notion of filial piety. It also includes a prayer for the eternal peace of the ancestors' spirits in a shrine conceived as their spiritual resting place.

The order of the ceremony was defined in the fifteenth century and most elements have remained unchanged until today. During the rite, the priests, dressed in ritual costume with a crown for the king and diadems for the others, make offerings of food and wine in ritual vessels. The *Jongmyo Jerye* is music played to accompany the rituals and is performed on traditional instruments, such as gongs, bells, lutes, zithers and flutes. The dances are performed by 64 dancers in 8 lines representing the opposing yet complementary forces of Yin and Yang as set out in the Confucian texts. The Munmu dance, accompanied by the harmonious and soothing Botaepyong music, is characterized by a first step to the left. While the Munmu dance symbolizes the force of the Yang, the Mumu dance, accompanied by Jeongdaeop music and characterized by a movement to the right, represents the force of the Yin.

The ancestral ritual is nowadays often considered to be devoid of meaning, especially in the context of the growing importance of Christianity. However, the ritual and its music are protected through the National List of Intangible Heritage and the 1982 Law for the Protection of Cultural Property.

# The Pansori Epic Chant

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

2003

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Pansori is a genre of musical storytelling performed by a vocalist and a drummer. This popular tradition, characterized by expressive singing, stylized speech, a repertory of narratives and gesture, embraces both elite and folk culture. During performances lasting up to eight hours, a male or female singer, accompanied by a single barrel drum, improvises on texts that combine rural and erudite literary expressions.

The term Pansori is derived from the Korean words *pan*, meaning "a place where many people gather", and *sori* meaning "song". Pansori originated in south-west Korea in the seventeenth century, probably as a new expression of the narrative songs of shamans. It remained an oral tradition among the common people until the late nineteenth century, by which time it acquired more sophisticated literary content and enjoyed considerable popularity among the urban elite. The settings, characters and situations that make up the Pansori universe are rooted in the Korea of the Joseon period (1392-1910). Pansori singers undergo long and rigorous training to master the wide range of distinct vocal timbres and to memorize the complex repertoires. Many virtuosos have developed personal interpretive styles and are renowned for their particular manner of performing specific episodes.



Threatened by Korea's rapid modernization, Pansori was designated a National Intangible Cultural Property in 1964. This measure spurred generous institutional support, which in turn fostered the revival of this tradition. Although Pansori remains one of the most prominent genres among traditional stage arts, it has lost much of its original spontaneous character. Ironically, this recent evolution is a direct result of the preservation process itself, for improvisation is tending to be stifled by the increasing number of written texts. Indeed, few singers nowadays can successfully improvise, and contemporary audiences are less receptive to the impromptu creativity and language of traditional Pansori.



# The Gangneung Danoje Festival

2005

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA



The annual Gangneung Danoje Festival takes place in the town of Gangneung and its surroundings, situated east of the Taebaek Mountain Range on the Korean peninsula. The festival includes a shamanistic ritual on the Daegwallyeong Ridge, which pays tribute to the mountain deity and male and female tutelary deities. It encompasses traditional music and *Odokddegi* folk songs, the *Gwanno* mask drama, oral narrative poetry, and various popular pastimes. The Nanjang market, Korea's largest outdoor marketplace, is today a major element of the festival, where local products and handicrafts are sold and contests, games and circus performances take place.

The four-week long festival begins with the brewing of a sacred liquor and the Dano shamanistic rituals, in which a central role is played by a sacred tree, the *sinmok*, and the *hwagae*, a ritual object made of feathers, bells and bamboo wood. One of the specific features of the festival is the co-existence of Confucian, shamanistic and Buddhist rituals. Through the rituals devoted to the deities, the region is believed to remain unaffected by natural disasters, allowing all its residents to live in peace and prosperity. Every year, a large number of visitors attend the various ritual performances and actively participate in events such as making Danoje festival fans, brewing the sacred liquor, drawing masks for the *Gwanno* Mask Drama, preparing and eating *Surichiwi* rice crackers and washing their hair in Iris water.

The Gangneung Danoje Festival enjoys immense popularity. However, cultural standardization and increased media coverage over the years have resulted in the loss of some traditional elements of the festival. In the traditional context of the festival, one of the functions has been to transcend social differences by allowing people of all social classes to participate.

# The Căluș Ritual

ROMANIA

2005

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Performed in the Olt region of southern Romania, the Căluș ritual dance also formed part of the cultural heritage of the Vlachs of Bulgaria and Serbia. Although the oldest documented music used in this dance dates from the seventeenth century, the ritual probably derived from pre-Christian purification and fertility rites using the symbol of the horse, which was worshipped as an embodiment of the sun. The ritual's name derives from the Căluș, the wooden part of the horse's bridle.

The Căluș ritual features a series of games, skits, songs and dances, and is enacted by all-male Călușari dancers to the accompaniment of two violins and an accordion. Young men used to be initiated into the ritual by a *vataf* (master) who had inherited the knowledge of *descânțe* (magic charms) and the dance steps from his predecessor. Groups of Călușari dancers, sporting colour-



ful hats, embroidered shirts and trousers adorned with small jingling bells, perform complex dances, which combine stamping, clicking of the heels, leaping and swinging of the legs. According to tradition, groups of dancing and chanting Călușari, who were thought to be endowed with magical healing powers, went from house to house, promising good health and prosperity to villagers.

Until today, Călușari meet to celebrate their dancing and musical prowess on Whit Sunday. Testifying the rich cultural diversity of Romania, the Căluș ritual is also widely promoted at folklore festivals, such as the Caracal festival in the region of Olt, turning it into a veritable national symbol.

# The Cultural Space and Oral Culture of the Semeiskie

2001

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION



The cultural space of the Semeiskie, east of Lake Baikal, represents a remnant of cultural expressions from pre-seventeenth century Russia. The community, totalling around 200,000 persons, speaks a south Russian dialect featuring borrowings from Bielorussian, Ukrainian and Bouryat. The Semeiskie still practised ancient orthodox rituals and perpetuate everyday activities mainly based on the cult of the family - the term Semeiskie refers to "those who live as a family" - and strong moral principles. They are also characterized by their traditional dress, handicrafts, dwellings, paintings, ornaments and food as well as their music. Also noteworthy are their polyphonic choirs, which perform traditional songs at family celebrations and popular festivals.

The Semeiskie communities are formed by a group of so-called "Old Believers", a confessional community originating from the time of the Instigation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century. Their history is marked by repression and exile. During the reign of Catherine the Great, believers in the "old system" from various regions of Russia had to move to the Transbaikal region in Siberia, where they still live today. In this remote area, they have preserved elements of their respective culture, forming a distinct group identity.

These songs are known as "drawl" singing and are rooted in the Russian liturgical music of the Middle Ages.

Marginalized until the end of the Soviet period, the communities have had to adapt to the socio-economic transformation, including pressures from new technologies that are tending to standardize a number of elements of this culture. The population of "Old Believers", regarded as the custodians of the traditions, is in constant decline. However, a real willingness to protect this heritage is shown by various initiatives, in particular the creation of the Semeiskie Cultural Centre in the village of Tarbagatay.

# The Olonkho, Yakut Heroic Epos

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

2005

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One of the oldest epic arts of the Turkic peoples, the term Olonkho refers to the entire Yakut epic tradition as well as its central epic. Today, it is still incidentally performed in the Sakha Republic, situated in the far east of the Russian Federation.

The poetic tales, which vary from 10 to 15,000 verses in length, are performed by the Olonkho singer and story-teller in two parts: a sung part in verse alternates with the prosaic part composed of recitatives. In addition to possessing good acting and singing skills, the narrator must be a master of eloquence and poetic improvisation. The epic consists of numerous legends about ancient warriors, deities, spirits and animals, but also addresses contemporary events, such as the disintegration of nomadic society.

Given that each community had its own narrator with a rich repertoire, numerous versions of Olonkho circulated. The tradition was developed within the family context for entertainment and as a means of education. Reflecting Yakut beliefs, it also bears witness to the way of life of a small nation struggling for survival at times of political unrest and under difficult climatic and geographical conditions.



The political and technological changes in twentieth-century Russia have threatened the existence of the epic tradition in the Sakha Republic. Although there has been a growing interest in Olonkho since the perestroika years, this tradition is endangered in view of the very low number of practitioners, all of old age.



2005

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# The Kankurang, Manding Initiatory Rite

SENEGAL AND GAMBIA



The Kankurang is an initiatory rite practised throughout the Manding provinces of Senegal and Gambia, mainly corresponding to the Casamance, and in the city of Mbour. According to tradition, the origin of the Kankurang is to be found in the *Komo*, a secret society of hunters whose organization and esoteric practices contributed to the emergence of the Manding.

The central character in the Kankurang, is an initiate who wears a mask made of the bark and red fibre of the *faara* tree and is clothed in leaves, his body painted with vegetable dyes. He is associated with circumcision ceremonies and initiatory

rites. His appearance is marked by several ritual stages: the designation of the initiate who will wear the mask and his investiture by the elders, his retreat into the woods with the initiates, the vigils and processions through the hamlet of the new initiates. The whole ritual generally takes place between August and September. The Kankurang always parades surrounded by former initiates and the villagers who respectfully follow his behaviour and gestures, and perform dances and songs. His displays are punctuated with a staccato dance as he wields two machetes and utters piercing cries. His followers, armed with sticks and rhun palm leaves, beat out the rhythm with their choruses and tom-toms.

The Kankurang is the guarantor of order and justice as well as the exorcist of evil spirits. As such, he ensures transmission and teaching of a complex collection of know-how and practices underpinning Manding cultural identity. A ritual that has spread to other communities and groups of the area, it is the occasion for young circumcised boys to learn the rules of behaviour for the ordering their community, the secrets of plants and their medicinal values, and hunting techniques. Their traditional practice is in retreat because of the rapid urbanization of most regions of Senegal and Gambia and the decreasing extent of sacred forests, which are transformed into cultivated land. As a result, the ritual is trivialized and the Kankurang authority is undermined.

# The Fujara and its Music

SLOVAKIA

2005

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The Fujara, an extremely long flute with three finger holes traditionally played by Slovak shepherds, is regarded as an integral part of the traditional culture of Central Slovakia. It is not just a musical instrument, but also an artefact of great artistic value due to its highly elaborate, individual ornamentation.

The main tube of the flute measures 160 to 200 cm in length and is connected to a shorter tube of 50 to 80 cm. The instrument is characterized by deep “mumbling” tones, emitted by its lower register and very high overtones made possible by the length of the instrument. The melancholic and rhapsodic music varies according to the content of the songs, related to the shepherds’ life and work. The musical repertoire is based on melodies determined by the technical features of the instrument and sounds imitating nature, such as the gurgle of a stream or a wellspring.

In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Fujara became known and appreciated beyond the shepherds’ use. Through festivals, the instrument played by musicians from the Podpol’anie region gained recognition and popularity throughout Slovakia. The Fujara is played at various occasions throughout the year, but mainly from spring to autumn, by professional musicians and a few remaining shepherds performing at festivals.



During recent decades the Fujara is increasingly played at special events. The communist era and the political developments in the 1990s have caused significant social, cultural and economic changes and especially young people have become estranged from traditional folk art. Individual initiatives, however, have been trying to safeguard the Fujara and the knowledge and skills related to it.



# The Mystery Play of Elche

SPAIN



The mystery play of Elche is a sacred musical drama of the death, the passage into heaven (known as the Assumption) and the crowning of the Virgin Mary. Since the mid-fifteenth century it has been performed in the Basilica of Santa Maria and in the streets of the old city of Elche, situated in the region of Valencia. It is a living testimony of European religious theatre of the Middle Ages and of the cult of the Virgin.

This theatrical performance, which is entirely sung, comprises two acts, performed on 14 and 15 August. These depict the death and crowning of the Virgin in a series of scenes and related paintings: the death of Mary, the night procession that is followed by hundreds of participants carrying candles, the morning procession, the afternoon funeral procession in the streets of Elche, and the enactment of the burial, Assumption and coronation in the Basilica. The texts are in Valencian, the local form of Catalan, with certain sections in Latin. The stage has two levels: the horizontal "terrestrial" stage and the vertical "celestial" stage, characteristic of the medieval mystery play. Ancient aerial machinery is used to enhance the spectacle by means of special effects.

More than 300 volunteers take part in the performance each year as actors, singers, stage directors, stagehands, tailors and stewards, as well as in the preparations that last throughout the year. This tradition, which attracts the entire population of the town, is closely linked to the cultural and linguistic identity of the inhabitants of the region. The mystery play of Elche was designated a "National Monument" in 1931 and is protected by several laws aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage.

# The Patum of Berga

SPAIN

2005

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The Patum of Berga is a popular festival whose origin can be traced to medieval festivities and parades accompanying the celebration of Corpus Christi. Theatrical performances and parades of a variety of effigies animate the streets of this Catalan town located north of Barcelona. The celebration takes place every year during the week of Corpus Christi, between late May and late June.

An extraordinary meeting of the municipal council, the appearance of the *Tabal* (a large and emblematic festival drum presiding over the festivities) and the *Quatre Fuets* announce the festivities. Over the following days numerous celebrations take place, most important of which are the parades, the ceremonial Patum, the children's Patum and the full Patum. The *Taba* (tambourine), *Cavallets* (papier mâché horses), *Maces* (demons wielding maces and whips), *Guites* (mule dragons), the eagle, giant-headed dwarves, *Plens* (fire demons) and giants dressed as Saracens parade in succession, performing acrobatic tricks, lighting fireworks and spreading music among the joyous audience. All of these characters join to perform the final dance, the *Tirabol*.



The Patum of Berga, which has preserved its mix of profane and religious features through centuries, stands out from the region's other festivals that have come down from the Middle Ages owing to its richness and diversity, the preservation of its medieval street theatre and its ritual component. Although the survival of the celebration seems ensured, it is to be taken care of that strong urban and tourist development do not lead to a loss of value of the Patum.



2003

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# The Lakalaka, Dances and Sung Speeches of Tonga

TONGA



The Tonga archipelago lies in the South Pacific approximately 2,000 kilometres north-east of New Zealand. It is the only constitutional monarchy in the Pacific region. Often considered Tonga's national dance, Lakalaka is a blend of choreography, oratory, and vocal and instrumental polyphony. This cultural expression is practised by communities throughout the islands and features prominently at important celebrations such as the coronation of the monarch and anniversaries of the constitution. The term *lakalaka* means "to step briskly or

carefully" in the Tongan language, and its origins can be traced to a dance known as the *me'elaufola*. The tradition developed in the nineteenth century and, thanks to the continuous transmission and the patronage of the royal family, it underwent a revival in the twentieth century.

Performances last approximately thirty minutes and involve large groups of up to several hundred people. Participants are aligned in rows, men on the right and women on the left. The men dance in rapid and energetic movements, while the women execute graceful dance steps co-ordinated with elegant hand gestures. Both groups clap and sing as they move, and a chorus often provides vocal accompaniment. The polyphonic singing coupled with the synchronized movements of hundreds of dancers offers an impressive spectacle. The creative force behind the performance is the *punake* who is at the same time poet, composer, choreographer and performance director. Punakes are expected to continually renew the Lakalaka repertory, by exploring themes related to Tongan history, legends, values and social structure.

However, over the past few decades, the number of performances has diminished and young composers tend to recycle the existing repertory rather than create new compositions.

# The Arts of the Meddah, Public Storytellers

2003

TURKEY

80

*Meddahlik* was a Turkish theatre form performed by a single storyteller called a *meddah* and practised throughout Turkey and Turkish-speaking countries. Through the ages, similar narrative genres have flourished due to interaction among the peoples of Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East within this wide geographical area.

Historically, *meddahs* were expected to illuminate, educate, and entertain. Performing in caravanserais, markets, coffeehouses, mosques and churches, these storytellers transmitted values and ideas among a predominantly illiterate population. Their social and political criticism regularly provoked lively discussions about contemporary issues. The term *meddah*, borrowed from Arabic *maddah* "to praise", can be translated as "storyteller". The *meddah* selects songs and comic tales from a repertory of popular romances, legends and epics and adapts his material according to the specific venue and



audience. However, the quality of the performance largely depends on the atmosphere created between storyteller and spectators, as well as the *meddah's* ability to integrate imitations, jokes and improvisation often relating to contemporary events. This art, which places great value on the mastery of rhetoric, is highly regarded in Turkey.

Although some *meddahs* still perform at a number of religious and secular celebrations and appear on television shows, the genre has lost much of its original educational and social function due to the development of the mass media and in particular because of the appearance of TV sets in cafés.

# The Mevlevi Sema Ceremony

## TURKEY



The *Mevleviye* is an ascetic Sufi order founded in 1273 in Konya, from where it gradually spread throughout the Ottoman Empire. Today, the *Mevleviye* can be found in many Turkish communities throughout the world, but the most active and famous centres of the order's activity are in Konya and Istanbul.

The *Mevleviye* are renowned for their whirling dances. Following a recommended fast of several hours, the whirlers begin to rotate on their left feet in short twists, using the right foot to drive their bodies around the left foot. The body of

the whirler is meant to be supple, with eyes open but unfocused so that images become blurred and flowing. At their dancing ceremonies, or *Sema*, a particular musical repertoire called *ayın* is played. Based on four sections of both vocal and instrumental compositions, it is performed by at least one singer; a flute-player, called *neyzen*, a kettledrummer and a cymbal player. Dancers used to receive 1,001 days of reclusive training within the *mevlevihane*, where they learned about ethics, codes of behaviour and beliefs by practising prayer, religious music, poetry and dance. After this training, they remained members of the order but returned to their work and families.

As a result of secularization policies, all *mevlevihane* were closed in 1925. The Turkish government began to allow performances again, though only in public, in the 1950s, restrictions were eased in the 1990s. Some private groups are re-establishing the original spiritual and intimate character of the *Sema* ceremony. However, over the thirty years the tradition was practised clandestinely, transmission focused rather on music and songs than on spiritual and religious traditions, which has deprived performances of part of their religious significance. Consequently, many *sema* ceremonies are no longer performed in their traditional context but for tourist audiences, and have been shortened and simplified to meet commercial requirements.

# Barkcloth Making in Uganda

2005

UGANDA

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Barkcloth making is an ancient craft of the Baganda people who live in the Buganda kingdom in southern Uganda. Traditionally, craftsmen of the Ngonge clan, headed by a *kaboggoza*, the hereditary chief craftsman have been manufacturing bark cloth for the Baganda royal family and the rest of the community. Its preparation involves one of humankind's oldest savoir-faire, a prehistoric technique that predates the invention of weaving.

The inner bark of the Mutuba tree (*Ficus natalensis*) is harvested during the wet season and then, in a long and strenuous process, beaten with different types of wooden mallets to give it a soft and fine texture and an even terracotta colour. Craftsmen work in an open shed to protect the bark from drying out too quickly. Barkcloth is worn like a toga by both sexes, but women place a sash around the waist. While common barkcloth is terracotta in colour, barkcloth of kings and chiefs is dyed white or black and worn in a different style to underline their status. The cloth is mainly worn at coronation and healing ceremonies, funerals and cultural gatherings but is also used for curtains, mosquito screens, bedding and storage.



The production of barkcloth, which was widely spread with workshops in almost every village in the Buganda kingdom. With the introduction of cotton cloth by Arab caravan traders in the nineteenth century, production slowed and eventually faded out, limiting the use of barkcloth to cultural and spiritual functions. Nevertheless, barkcloth is still recognized among the Baganda community as a marker of specific social and cultural traditions. In recent years, the production of barkcloth has been greatly encouraged and promoted in the Buganda kingdom.





# The Cultural Space of the Boysun District

UZBEKISTAN



The Boysun District located in south-eastern Uzbekistan on the route from Asia Minor to India, is one of the oldest inhabited areas of Central Asia. With the diminishing importance of the Silk Road and the political changes in Central Asia, the region became quite isolated, which favoured the preservation of ancient traditions that show traces of several religions, including shamanistic beliefs, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Islam. Today the district is home to about 82,000 inhabitants.

Numerous traditional rituals are still alive: on the eve of the spring festival of Navruz, for instance, a sowing ritual is held with offerings of food. Family rites also persist: 40 days after a birth, the evil spirits are chased away with fire and ashes; the circumcision of boys is accompanied by goat fights and various games, such as wrestling and horse races. Ancient practices are still often used to conduct wedding ceremonies, funeral rites and shamanistic rituals to cure the sick. Among other popular traditions are ritual chants linked to annual festivals, epic legends and dances. Wind or string instruments accompany the lyrical chants. The Shalola folk music ensemble has collected popular songs and made an inventory of traditional instruments and costumes. The members of the group have also documented legends, epics and old melodies in the villages.

The policy of the Soviet era imposed a cultural model which left little room for traditional Boysun cultural and artistic expression. Today, there is a clear need for assistance to provide the communities with musical instruments and with technical equipment to document the various cultural expressions.

# Shashmaqom Music

2003

## TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN

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For over ten centuries, the classical music tradition of Shashmaqom has evolved in the urban centres of Central Asia formerly known as Mâwarâ al-nahr, an area which now encompasses present-day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Shashmaqom, meaning “six maqoms”, constitutes a fusion of vocal and instrumental music, melodic and rhythmic idioms and poetry. The genre is performed solo or by a group of singers and an orchestra of lutes, fiddles, frame-drums and flutes. Performances generally open with an instrumental introduction followed by the *nasr*, the main vocal section consisting of two distinct sets of songs.

Dating back to the pre-Islamic era, Shashmaqom was continually influenced by developments in musicology, poetry, mathematics, and Sufism. So popular was the maqom system in the ninth and tenth centuries that numerous music schools were founded, mainly by the Jewish community, in the city of Bukhara, the historical and spiritual centre of Shashmaqom. Shashmaqom genre requires specially trained musicians because the standard notation system can record only the basic framework. Consequently, oral transmission from master to student remains the principal means of preserving the music and its spiritual values.



From the 1970s, many of the best-known Shashmaqom performers emigrated from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to diaspora communities in Israel and the United States. Since Uzbekistan and Tajikistan gained independence in 1991, many measures have been taken to safeguard Shashmaqom. Only a few performers have maintained local performance styles as taught by independent teachers. With the passing of many Shashmaqom masters, the overwhelming majority of present-day performers in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are graduates of the Tashkent Conservatory, which offers training in Shashmaqom composition.

2003

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# Vanuatu Sand Drawings

VANUATU



Situated in the South Pacific, the Vanuatu archipelago has preserved a unique and complex tradition of sand drawing. This multifunctional “writing” is more than an indigenous artistic expression and it occurs in a wide range of ritual, contemplative and communicative contexts.

The drawings are produced directly on the ground, in sand, volcanic ash or clay. Using one finger, the drawer traces a continuous meandering line on an imagined grid to produce

a graceful, often symmetrical, composition of geometric patterns. This rich and dynamic graphic tradition has developed as a means of communication among the members of some 80 different language groups inhabiting the central and northern islands of Vanuatu. The drawings also function as mnemonic devices to record and transmit rituals, mythological lore and a wealth of oral information about local histories, cosmologies, kinship systems, song cycles, farming techniques, architectural and craft design, and choreographic patterns. Most sand drawings possess several functions and layers of meaning: they can be “read” as artistic works, repositories of information, illustration for stories, signatures, or simply messages and objects of contemplation. Sand drawings are not merely “pictures”, but refer to a combination of knowledge, songs, and stories with sacred or profane meanings. A master sand drawer must therefore possess not only a strong knowledge of graphic patterns but also a deep understanding of their significance. In addition, sand drawers should have the ability to interpret the drawings for spectators.

As attractive symbols of Vanuatu identity, the drawings are often showcased as a form of decorative folklore for tourists and other commercial purposes. If left unchecked, this tendency to appreciate sand drawings on a purely aesthetic level may result in the loss of the tradition's deeper symbolic significance and original social function.



# Nha Nhac, Vietnamese Court Music

2003

VIET NAM

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Nha Nhac, meaning “elegant music”, refers to a broad range of musical and dance styles performed at the Vietnamese royal court from the fifteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Nha Nhac was generally featured at the opening and closing of ceremonies associated with anniversaries, religious holidays, coronations, funerals and official receptions. Among the numerous musical genres that developed in Vietnam, only Nha Nhac can claim a nationwide scope and strong links with the traditions of other East Asian countries. Nha Nhac performances formerly featured numerous singers, dancers and musicians dressed in sumptuous costumes. Large-scale orchestras included a prominent drum section and many other types of percussion instruments as well as a variety of wind and string instruments. All performers had to maintain a high level of concentration since they were expected to follow each step of the ritual meticulously.

Nha Nhac developed during the Le dynasty (1427-1788) and became highly institutionalized and codified under the Nguyen monarchs (1802-1945). As a symbol of the dynasty's power and longevity, Nha Nhac became an essential part of the court's many ceremonies. However, the role of Nha Nhac was not limited to musical accompaniment for court rituals: it also provided a means of communicating with and paying tribute to the gods and kings as well as transmitting knowledge about nature and the universe.



The events that shook Vietnam in the twentieth century – especially the fall of the monarchy and the decades of war – seriously threatened the survival of Nha Nhac. Deprived of its court context, this musical tradition lost its original function. Nevertheless, the few surviving former court musicians continue to work to keep the tradition alive. Certain forms of Nha Nhac have been maintained in popular rituals and religious ceremonies and serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary Vietnamese music.



# The Space of Gong Culture

## VIETNAM

The cultural space of the gongs in the central highlands of Vietnam covers several provinces and seventeen Austro-Asian and Austronesian ethno-linguistic communities. Closely linked to daily life and the cycle of the seasons, their belief systems form a mystical world where the gongs produce a privileged language between men, divinities and the supernatural world. Behind every gong hides a god or goddess who is all the more powerful when the gong is older. Every family possesses at least one gong, which indicates the family's wealth, authority and prestige, and also ensures its protection. While a range of brass instruments is used in the various ceremonies, the gong alone is present in all the rituals of community life and is the main ceremonial instrument.

The manner in which the gongs of Vietnam are played varies according to the village. Each instrumentalist carries a different gong measuring between 25 and 80 cm in diameter. From



three to twelve gongs are played by the village ensembles, which are made up of men or women. Different arrangements and rhythms are adapted to the context of the ceremony, for example, the ritual sacrifice of the bullocks, the blessing of the rice or mourning rites. The gongs of this region are bought in neighbouring countries, and then tuned to the desired tone for their own use.

Economic and social transformations have drastically affected the traditional way of life of these communities and no longer provide the original context for the Gong culture. Transmission of this way of life, knowledge and know-how was severely disrupted during the decades of war during the last century. Today, this phenomenon is aggravated by the disappearance of old craftsmen and young people's growing interest in Western culture. Stripped of their sacred significance, the gongs are sometimes sold for recycling or exchanged for other products.

# The Song of Sana'a

YEMEN

2003

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The Song of Sana'a, also known as *al-Ghina al-San'ani*, designates a group of songs that belongs to a rich musical tradition practised throughout Yemen. Derived from various poetic traditions dating from the fourteenth century, this genre constitutes an integral part of social events, such as the *samra* marriage evenings and the *magyal*, the daily afternoon gathering of friends and colleagues.

The songs are interpreted by a solo singer accompanied by two ancient instruments: the *qanbus* (the Yemeni lute), and the *sahn nuhasi*, a copper tray which is balanced upon the player's thumbs and lightly struck with the other eight fingers. There are a large number of melodic types. Modulation from one to another within a single performance is rare, but the artistry of a performer is judged by his ability to embellish a melody in order to highlight the meaning of the text and to move the listeners. The poetic repertory, written in both Yemeni dialect and classical Arabic, abounds in wordplay and is renowned for its emotional content. The texts of the songs constitute the most revered and frequently quoted body of poems in Yemen. Although the songs are directly associated with Yemen's historical capital, Sana'a, they can be heard in many towns and rural areas throughout Yemen. In fact, the poetic repertory often draws on dialects from different parts of the country. In addition, traditional melodies are regularly borrowed by performers of other genres, including rural dances and contemporary music.



Although Yemenis remain very proud of the Song of Sana'a tradition, attendance has dwindled and today's musicians – despite their growing numbers – know only a handful of old songs, which they interject in their performances before moving on to lighter contemporary pieces. It is just a few elderly musicians who have preserved the breadth of the Song of Sana'a tradition and the subtleties of its interpretation.



# The Makishi Masquerade

## ZAMBIA

The Makishi masquerade is performed at the end of the *mukanda*, an annual initiation ritual for boys between the ages of eight and twelve. This ritual is celebrated by the Vaka Chiyama Cha Mukwamayi communities, which include the Luvale, Chokwe, Luchazi and Mbunda peoples, who live in the northwestern and western provinces of Zambia.

Usually at the beginning of the dry season, the young boys leave their homes and live for one to three months in an isolated bush camp. This separation from the outside world marks their symbolic death as children. The *mukanda* involves the circumcision of the initiates, tests of courage and lessons on their future role as men and husbands. Each initiate is assigned a specific masked character, which remains with him throughout the entire process. The *Chisaluke* represents a powerful and wealthy man with spiritual influence; the *Mupala* is the "lord" of the *mukanda* and protective spirit with supernatural abilities; *Pwevo* is a female character representing the ideal woman and is responsible for the musical accompaniment of the rituals and dances. The *Makishi* is another masked character, representing the spirit of a deceased ancestor who returns to the world of the living to assist the boys. The completion of the *mukanda* is celebrated with a graduation ceremony. The entire village attends the Makishi dance and pantomime-like performance until the graduates re-emerge from the camp to reintegrate with their communities as adult men.



The *mukanda* has an educational function of transmitting practical survival-skills as well as knowledge about nature, sexuality, religious beliefs and the social values of the community. In former times, it took place over a period of several months and represented the *raison d'être* of the Makishi masquerade. Today, it is often reduced to one month in order to adapt to the school calendar. This adjustment together with the increasing demand for *makishi* dancers at social gatherings and party rallies, might affect the ritual's original character.

# The Mbende Jerusarema Dance

ZIMBABWE

2005

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The Mbende Jerusarema Dance is a popular dance style practised by the Zezuru Shona people living in eastern Zimbabwe, especially in the Murewa and Uzumba-Maramba-Pfungwe districts.

The dance is characterized by acrobatic and sensual movements by women and men, driven by a polyrhythmic drummer accompanied by men playing woodblock clappers and by women handclapping, yodelling and blowing whistles. Unlike other drum-based East African dance styles, the Mbende Jerusarema does not rely on intricate foot stamping or a large number of drummers. Instead, the music is performed by one master drummer, and no songs or lyrics are involved.

In the course of the dance, men often crouch while jerking both arms and vigorously kicking the ground with the right leg in imitation of a burrowing mole. The dance's curious name reveals much about its vicissitudes over the centuries. Before colonial rule, this ancient fertility dance was called Mbende, the Shona word for "mole", which was regarded as a symbol of fertility, sexuality and family. Under the influence of Christian missionaries, who strongly disapproved of this sexually explicit dance, the dance's name was changed to Jerusarema, deriving from the Shona adaptation of the name of the city of Jerusalem, to endow it with a religious connotation. Both names are commonly used today. In spite of its condemnation by the missionaries, the dance remained popular and became a source of pride and identity in the struggle against colonial rule.



The dance is changing its character and meaning as its enactment as an exotic animation for tourist audiences becomes more widespread. It is also increasingly used at political party rallies, where it is removed from all its original intentions. The *mitumba* drum, rattles and whistles, which used to accompany the dance, have successively been replaced by instruments of poor quality, contributing to the loss of the uniqueness of the Mbende music.



# Members of the International Jury

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The International Jury, composed of 18 members nominated by the Director-General, met in 2001, 2003 and 2005. Half of the Jury was renewed between the Second and Third Proclamation after the termination of their mandate.

## Hassan M. Al-Naboodah

(United Arab Emirates)

### Professor at the University of the United Arab Emirates

Following his studies in Arab history and culture, Hassan Al-Naboodah held several positions within the University of the United Arab Emirates, in the Council of Research and the Ministry of Education. A specialist of medieval Islamic history, he is currently director of the Zayed Centre for Heritage and History.

## Antonio Augusto Arantes

(Brazil)

### President of the Brazilian National Institute for Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN)

As a social anthropologist specialized in popular and folk culture, urban landscape and cultural heritage preservation, Antonio Arantes has taught at the State University of Campinas since 1968. He has headed several anthropological associations and has contributed to the development of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

## Egil Bakka

(Norway)

### Director of the Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance

As a specialist in various domains of intangible cultural heritage, most notably in traditional dance, Egil Bakka has undertaken extensive fieldwork in Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland. He holds a professorship in Dance Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and is chair of the Committee for Traditional and Folk Costumes.

## Aziza Bennani

(Morocco)

### **University Professor, Ambassador of Morocco to UNESCO**

Aziza Bennani was a professor at the Faculty of Literature and Humanities at the Hassan II University of Mohammedia, where she taught, among others, Hispano-Moroccan and Hispano-American literature and civilization. She has published several books and has held the position of High Commissioner for the Disabled and of Moroccan Secretary of State for Culture.

## HRH Basma Bint Talal

(Jordan)

### **Princess of Jordan, President of the Jury in 2005**

After studying languages and development studies at Oxford University, Princess Basma has worked on the role of women and the rights of children in the context of development for the Jordanian National Commission for Women and the United Nations, including UNDP, WHO and UNESCO. She founded the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development and is a member of the Council of the United Nations University for Peace.

## Georges Condominas

(France)

### **Cultural Anthropologist**

Specialized in oral culture, Georges Condominas has held the position of vice-president of the Union of Anthropologists and the chair of Ethnology and Sociology of South-East Asia at the École Pratique des Hautes Études. He was also a professor at the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris for years.

## Anzor Erkomaishvili

(Georgia)

### **Folklorist, Choir Director, Professor at the State Institute of Culture**

After studying at the State Conservatory of Tbilisi, Anzor Erkomaishvili founded several Georgian polyphonic singing groups, including the Rustavi choir and the Martve youth choir. He has documented a vast repertoire of traditional songs throughout Georgia and was the initiator of the restoration of the Archives of Georgian Polyphonic Songs.

## Carlos Fuentes

(Mexico)

### **Writer**

Born in Mexico, Carlos Fuentes grew up in the United States, Chile and Argentina. After studying law at the Autonomous University of Mexico, he started writing and became professor of English and Hispanic literature. He published numerous novels among which *Where the Air is Clear* and received the Miguel de Cervantes Prize in 1987.

## Juan Goytisolo

(Spain)

### **Writer, President of the Jury in 2001 and 2003**

Juan Goytisolo left Spain, under Franco's dictatorship, at the end of the 1950s to live in Paris and Marrakech. He is the author of numerous novels. With a passion for traditional Moroccan culture, and as a fervent defender of Marrakech's cultural heritage, he was one of the pioneers of the "Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage" project.

## Yoshikazu Hasegawa

(Japan)

### **Executive Director of the New National Theatre Foundation of Japan**

After completing studies in Liberal Arts at the University of Tokyo, Yoshikazu Hasegawa worked for many years in different divisions of the Japanese Ministry for Education, Science, Sports and Culture. He was appointed director of the Japan Arts Council in 1995 and has led the New National Theatre Foundation in Tokyo since 2001.

## Hideki Hayashida

(Japan)

### **Director General of the National Science Museum of Japan**

After many years at the Japanese Ministry for Education, Science, Sports and Culture where he held different positions, Hideki Hayashida was appointed director of the Cultural Properties Department and Commissioner for Cultural Affairs. He then held the position of director-general of the National Science Museum of Japan.

## Epeli Hau'Ofa

(Fiji)

### **Writer, Professor of Anthropology, Director of the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture**

As a writer and professor of anthropology, he has been Keeper of Palace Records in Tonga and held in turn the positions of head of the Sociology Department and head of the School of Social and Economic Development of the University of the South Pacific. In the late 1990s he founded the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture, which he has since directed.

## Ugnė Karvelis

(Lithuania)

### **Writer, Former Ambassador of Lithuania to UNESCO**

Ugnė Karvelis, who had to leave Lithuania in 1944, studied in Germany, France and the United States. She worked for twenty years with the French publishing house Editions Gallimard. As literary critic, translator and novelist, she has devoted herself to promoting Lithuanian culture. She has been the Lithuanian Ambassador to UNESCO until 2002.

## Alpha Oumar Konaré

(Mali)

### **Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, former President of Mali**

After studying history in Mali and Poland, Alpha Oumar Konaré directed the Division of Historical and Ethnographic Heritage within the Ministry of Culture. In 1990 he founded the Alliance for Democracy in Mali. He was President of Mali from 1992 to 2002 and is currently chairperson of the African Union Commission.

## Elvira Kunina

(Russian Federation)

### **Director of the Russian National House of Folk Art**

As a renowned specialist in the field of Russian traditional artistic culture, Elvira Kunina holds various positions in the field of culture, including director of the Russian National House of Folk Art. She is the author of numerous publications on Russian folklore and organizes festivals promoting traditional art and the recognition of ethnic communities.

## Richard Kurin

(United States of America)

### **Director of the Center for Folk life and Cultural Heritage of the Smithsonian Institution**

Richard Kurin organizes the Smithsonian Festival for Folklore, which is held every summer in Washington. He also runs the Institution's collection of traditional music and several other cultural programmes. As a cultural anthropologist, he teaches in various universities and has published several books, particularly on traditional culture of South Asia.

## Olive Lewin

(Jamaica)

### **Pianist, Ethnomusicologist,**

### **Director of the Jamaica Orchestra for Youth**

Olive Lewin studied music and ethnomusicology in the United Kingdom. She is a Fellow of Trinity College, London, and an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal School of Music. She was director of the Jamaica Institute of Folk Culture, and founded in 1983 the Jamaica Orchestra for Youth, which she has directed since.

## Amandina Lihamba

(Tanzania)

### **Actress, Playwright, Professor at the University of Dar es Salaam**

The actress Amandina Lihamba is professor and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Dar es Salaam. Over the last 30 years she has continuously performed and directed in theatre, written plays and produced films. She has also worked as a consultant to many development agencies and international organizations.

## Ahmed Aly Morsi

(Egypt)

### **Chairperson of the National Library and Archives, Professor at the Faculty of Arts at Cairo University**

Ahmed Aly Morsi heads the Department of Arabic at the Faculty of Arts at Cairo University and is the author of numerous publications in the field of folk traditions, songs, literature and Egyptian civilization. He was cultural counsellor and director of the Egyptian Educational Mission in Rome and in Madrid, and has directed the Egyptian Institute of Islamic Studies.

## HRH Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II

(Uganda)

### **Kabaka of Buganda**

The Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II was in exile from 1966 to 1986 in opposition to the authoritarian regime of Uganda. After the proclamation of a new constitution, he was crowned 37th Kabaka of Buganda in 1993. He created the Kabaka Foundation, which is devoted to the relief of poverty, access to health care and education, and the protection of biodiversity.

## J.H. Kwabena Nketia

(Ghana)

### **President of the African Section of the International Council of Music**

Following his studies in linguistics and music in England and the United States, J.H. Kwabena Nketia has held professorial posts at several universities, including UCLA and the University of Pittsburgh, as well as at the University of Ghana to where he returned in 1992 as Emeritus Professor and director of the International Centre for African Music and Dance.



### Martina Pavlicová

(Czech Republic)

#### **Cultural Anthropologist**

Martina Pavlicová lectures at the Institute of European Ethnology and at Masaryk University on oral folklore, ethnology and social culture. She is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Ethnography and other publications and contributes to the organization of many festivals, among others the Strážnice International Folklore Festival.

### Ralph Regenvanu

(Vanuatu)

#### **Anthropologist, Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre**

Having studied anthropology and archaeology in Australia, Ralph Regenvanu was appointed curator at the National Museum of Vanuatu before becoming director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. He is secretary of the Executive Board of the Pacific Islands Museum Association and director of the Vanuatu National Cultural Council.

### Olabiya Babalola Joseph Yai

(Benin)

#### **University Professor, Ambassador of Benin to UNESCO**

As a specialist in African languages, literature, oral poetry and the culture of African Diasporas, Olabiya Babalola Joseph Yai has held professorships in various countries. He supported the development of UNESCO programmes in the field of African languages and is member of numerous international boards, committees and juries in the field of culture.

### Dawnhee Yim

(Republic of Korea)

#### **Professor of History, Dean of the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Dongguk**

Dawnhee Yim has published several works on folklore, cultural anthropology and the position of women in Korean society. She has presided over the Korean Society for Cultural Anthropology and is a member of several other associations for anthropological studies.

### Zulma Yugar

(Bolivia)

#### **Singer, Honorary President of the Bolivian National Council of Popular and Traditional Culture**

As a singer, Zulma Yugar has received many national and international prizes for her numerous recordings. She has been director for the Promotion of Culture within the Ministry of Culture and president of the Bolivian Association of Artists and Musicians. She also heads the Zulma Yugar Foundation for Traditional Culture.

### Munajat Yulchieva

(Uzbekistan)

#### **Traditional Singer**

A well-known and highly respected artist, she has participated in numerous music festivals throughout Europe as well as in Morocco, Brazil and the United States. Munajat Yulchieva has received several renowned awards, and has recorded many albums, notably in France and Germany.

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## Ana Paula Zacarias

(Portugal)

### **Cultural Anthropologist, Ambassador of Portugal to Estonia**

After studying law and cultural anthropology, Ana Paula Zacarias has held numerous positions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, namely in the field of cultural heritage protection. She was a representative of her country in the meetings that prepared the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

## Zhentao Zhang

(China)

### **Musician, Professor at the Music Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Arts**

Further to his career as a professional musician, Zhentao Zhang has investigated and collected ancient musical instruments, researching and documenting rural Chinese music expressions. He has organized many music festivals and conferences and is a member of the Chinese Traditional Music Society and of the Society of Chinese Musicians.

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