

EX

TRA!

EXCHANGE TRADITIONS – EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROJECT COORDINATED BY THE EUROPEAN MUSIC COUNCIL

In the year 2006, not only the Annual Conference of the EMC is dedicated to migrant cultures and their inclusion in the European societies. The EMC has initiated a cooperation project focusing on living music traditions that are present in today's multicultural Europe.

'Cultural diversity', 'European cultural identity' and 'inclusion of minority cultures' are nowadays top priorities for many music organisations in Europe. Cultural operators and political decision makers are conducting a significant discussion on how European cultural identity can be defined and how diversity – including influences from outside Europe – contributes to it. The European Music Council takes part actively in this debate and offers concrete activities to promote cultural diversity integrating minorities in a sensitive and respectful way.

In many parts of Europe, traditional music belongs to a living, everyday culture. It is a crucial factor for the cultural identity of the individual citizen. The project 'ExTra! – Exchange Traditions' will enhance the understanding of the culture of each other's neighbours. The aim of 'ExTra!' is to stimulate exchange between different music traditions present in today's multicultural Europe. The project focuses on musical traditions of migrants in Europe and their interaction with cultures already existing in the European countries.

In order to achieve these aims, the EMC has gathered cooperation partners* from different European countries for the

'ExTra!' project, focusing on various aspects in the field of music such as education, production, musicology, socio-culture and new media. With this multifaceted consortium of partners, a broad approach from different perspectives can be guaranteed. The project offers a wide range of activities: a research study will identify music traditions that are part of the day-to-day life of people in Europe. The production of traditional music in concerts and recordings will contribute to the promotion of different musical traditions; a download platform will enable worldwide dissemination of sheet music, recordings and relevant publications in the field. Tools for music education will be developed in order to integrate traditional music in the curricula for amateur musicians as well as in the professional training programmes; workshops and summer academies for musicians on all levels will offer the opportunity to meet with other musicians and to learn (more) about different musical traditions. Encounters for cultural operators will provide possibilities to exchange information, to share knowledge and to develop ongoing cooperation projects.

With the 'ExTra!' project, the EMC intends to contribute to the present debate. How can we bridge the seemingly unbridgeable contradiction between a common European identity and cultural diversity in Europe? Maybe we have to accept that cultural diversity is incompatible with globalisation and standardisation and that nevertheless both have their own legitimacy. Maybe this dilemma is more productive than obliterating obvious polarities. Let us use this productivity to keep an important discussion alive.

* En Chordais, Greece; Music Information Centre Austria (MICA); Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica, Italy; International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (IYMF), Belgium; Association Nationale Cultures et Traditions (ANCT), France; Cité de la Musique, France.