



*Urban music workshop in Slovakia by IYMF*

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# EXTRA! FINAL STRAIGHT AND FIRST RESULTS

## EXTRA! EXCHANGE TRADITIONS HAS GIVEN IMPETUS TO CULTURAL DIALOGUE FOR TWO YEARS ALREADY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ARTISTIC MEETINGS ACROSS EUROPE.

**Although it also affects large entities (states or communities), following the example of broad human, social and societal changes, intercultural dialogue can be efficient and perennial only if it is the fruit of interpersonal dialogue.**

In 2006, the ExTra! project was launched and implemented its first activities in France and Italy. The objective of these activities was to stimulate intercultural dialogue through the exchange of what constitutes the daily life of European citizens as well as their ancestral heritage: Musical traditions.

Since then, other activities have followed, in Austria, Finland or Slovakia, and reached several thousands of people through various concerts, workshops, conferences and a summer academy. A publication, theorising these exchanges and presenting innovative projects sharing the objectives of the ExTra! project is in the pipeline.

### **Men shape traditions, and traditions shape men**

On the basis of this premise, ExTra! makes it a point of honour to organise practical activities by going in search of the Europeans, as during the urban music workshop in November 2008 (report available on [www.extra-project.eu](http://www.extra-project.eu)). The International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation invited four Brazilian artists to the city of Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) in order to exchange their traditions – in this case, capoeira and its music – with those of Slovakian and/or Roma participants.

The spontaneous encounter between these populations (with only limited access to music education) provided the opportunity to discover unexpected similarities in artistic practices of everyone.

According to the same principle, the Association Nationale Cultures & Traditions organised an international symposium on how to stage traditions in a show. This one-day conference, organised within the framework of its Festival des Cultures du Monde, studied the difficulties of a musical staging of a show connected to a specific rite that belongs to everyday life. Is tradition respected when a piece of it is 'extracted' to be presented to an audience? Can this element, subjected to the requirements of a show or a concert, retain its authenticity?

Several of these dilemmas have been lively debated. One of them, spontaneously mentioned by the participants and discussed at length, had to do with terminology: What is tradition? The question remained unanswered, and for many people had no real answer. In the words of Jean Pachot, President of the Committee of the Festival des Cultures

du Monde, "tradition is permanent – but it accepts variations. As for the stage, it is a world in its own right, whose ultimate aim is to beat boredom". How then reconcile the preservation of traditions and the expectations of the audience? This was the last question raised and highlighted during the closure of the symposium by Jean Pachot, through the qualification of the term tradition as a "polyphony of concepts", a "waltz of definitions".

### **Interdisciplinarity as source of creation**

In July 2008, ExTra! gathered young Finnish musicians in Kaustinen (Finland) during a green music workshop initiated by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation in the framework of the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival (report available on [www.extra-project.eu](http://www.extra-project.eu)). The discovery of local musical traditions through, among others, the creation of musical instruments from natural elements, brought together two essential components of the Finnish culture: Music and a privileged relationship with nature.

Participants in the workshop, from five different countries, brought their own musical habits as well as a definite openness to cultural mix. During the seminar, diverse original works were born from the exchange of competencies and imagination of everyone. The compositions performed with traditional Finnish instruments, classical western instruments, 'green' instruments and computers were presented to the press and then to the participants of the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival. Some of these works will be made available in the coming months on the ExTra! download platform ([www.manymusics.org/extra](http://www.manymusics.org/extra)). For the closure of the seminar, the guest artists organised an exceptional workshop where children were invited to participate by dancing and playing several 'green' instruments. Then again, traditions have been mingled when one participant in the seminar taught the children a traditional dance from Auvergne accompanied by improvised and computer-assisted music.

In order to investigate the theoretical processes brought into play by these activities as well as to advertise other innovating projects, the European Music Council (EMC) is preparing a publication entitled "Music in Motion. Diversity and Dialogue in Europe," which will be released in spring 2009 and available from the General Secretariat and transcript publishing (details see p. 46). This publication is being carried out thanks to an Editorial Board composed of Bernd Clausen (Hochschule für Musik Würzburg), Eva Saether (University of Malmö) and Ursula Hemetek (University of Vienna), and will



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include sociological, historical or ethnomusicological articles relating to the presence of different types of musical traditions in Europe. One part of this book will be dedicated to the presentation of innovative projects focused on the exchange of musical traditions, and more especially to the role that this exchange can play in education.

### **ExTra! after 2009**

While the activities organised by the ExTra! project partners were specifically created for this project, their success has given an impulse, and a repeat is already scheduled for some of them. Other activities, whose repetition in a similar form will not be possible, will have initiated a reflection that will certainly lead to the implementation of other forms of events stimulating intercultural dialogue through musical practices. The download platform [www.manymusic.org/extra](http://www.manymusic.org/extra) will be maintained after the closure of the project, and the recordings of some ExTra! activities will progressively be made available for download.

### **Athens**

ExTra! Exchange Traditions will be closed in April 2009 by the conference organised by the EMC (project coordinator), and En Chordais (one of the seven project partners). This event will take place within the framework of the EMC Annual Conference (details see p. 8) and will deal with the challenges of the whole project, the outcomes

of these three years of exchange and, of course, the continuity of the project. Experts in ethnomusicology and partners will attend several interactive sessions. The publication “Music in Motion. Diversity and Dialogue in Europe” will be officially announced during the closing conference attended by the Editorial Board and some of the published authors.

#### ► **ExTra! Exchange Traditions project partners:**

Association Nationale Cultures et Traditions, France | Cité de la Musique, Paris, France | En Chordais, Greece | International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, Belgium | Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica, Italy | mica, Music Information Center Austria | European Music Council

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Translation by Juliette Powel