

# *Kommission für Volksdichtung (KfV)*

International Ballad Commission

*Commission internationale pour l'étude de la chanson populaire*

(Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore, S.I.E.F.)

[www.KfVweb.org](http://www.KfVweb.org)

**Electronic Newsletter no. 4 (July 2003)**

## **Minutes of the Business Meeting of the KfV, Austin, Texas, 28 June 2003**

### **1. Present**

Luisa Del Giudice (President), Marjetka Golez Kaučič (Vice-President), David Atkinson (Secretary/Editor), Songul Ata, Jon Bartlett, Mary Ellen Brown, Dace Bula, Stephanie Crouch, Frances Fischer, David Gregory, Rosaleen Gregory, E. Wyn James, W. B. McCarthy, Ruth Perry, Roger Renwick, Rika Ruebsaat, Sandra Baliff Straubhaar, Larry Syndergaard, Sabine Wienker-Piepho.

The conference organizers, Roger Renwick, Stephanie Crouch, and Harris Gregg were heartily thanked and presented with gifts on behalf of all the attendees.

### **2. Greetings from absent friends**

Greetings were read out from members unable to attend this year. They included Larysa Vakhnina, W. F. H. Nicolaisen, Sheila Douglas, Isabelle Peere (Vice-President), Matilda Burden, Barbara Boock (Secretary/Treasurer), Sigrid Rieuwerts, Gerald Porter, Kirstin Kearney, Lene Halskov Hansen, Sabina Ispas.

### **3. Brochure**

A printed KfV brochure is available, although it is in need of updating. It was suggested that the brochure be updated at least every 3 years.

### **4. Memorials**

Roberto Leydi, scholar and professor of folk culture at the Department of Music and Drama (DAMS) which (with Umberto Eco) he helped found at the University of Bologna, passed away on 15 February 2003. He is (along with Diego Carpitella) considered the founder of ethnomusicology in Italy. Among his specific interests were social and political song, narrative song, liturgical music, and musical instruments. He was instrumental in the Italian folk revival movement. I had the pleasure of meeting Leydi in the 1980s (when I contributed sound recordings of Lombard ballads to a series of Italian field recordings which he directed for the Albatros label). I remember enjoying an afternoon in his impressive sound archive, regaled with snatches of rare and wonderful field recordings, and with his infectious enthusiasm for his work. We mourn the loss of this great man and great scholar, and hope that more of this precious archive might reach our ears in the future. (Luisa Del Giudice)

## **5. Publications**

Proceedings of the 1999 Aberdeen conference are to be published by Utah State University Press under the title *The Flowering Thorn: International Ballad Studies*. The manuscript has been copy-edited and many alterations made to make the language register, citation system, and bibliographic entries consistent throughout. Tom McKean, as editor, is incorporating these changes. Proofs and individual contracts should be sent out to authors in July 2003. USU anticipates publication in time for the American Folklore Society meeting in October 2003.

Tom McKean also hopes to have the KfV CD of ballads finished and pressed by the next conference in 2004.

Sigrid Rieuwerts emailed the Austin conference to indicate that WVT publishers are willing to publish a KfV series, beginning with the proceedings of the Leuven conference and continuing with the proceedings from Austin. The KfV will need to make arrangements for distribution of the volumes in order to avoid excessive mailing costs. Sigrid will keep the KfV informed of progress on this matter.

## **6. Website**

Tom McKean expects to be able to give more time to the site in the coming year and will undertake a complete redesign, adding images and maybe a few sound clips. Some other members volunteered assistance and it was hoped that it may be possible to share some of the burden of the webmaster's duties.

## **7. SIEF**

KfV members are urged to attend the SIEF conference 'Among Others: Conflict and Encounter in European and Mediterranean Societies' in Marseille, 26–30 April 2004. Details can be found on the SIEF website, [www.siefhome.org](http://www.siefhome.org)

The KfV will be sponsoring a panel under the title 'Song Cultures in Contact: Oppositions and Affinities' (co-ordinator: Luisa Del Giudice). This panel will consider song cultures in contact in European and European diaspora contexts. Historic and contemporary case studies will present opportunities for examining cultural collision and opposition, as well as cultural alignment and synergy, through song texts and cultural contexts.

## **8. International Congress on Medieval Studies**

Larry Syndergaard reported that the KfV-sponsored session at the International Congress on Medieval Studies held at Western Michigan University, at Kalamazoo, in May 2003 was a success. Entitled 'The Ballad, Medieval and Modern: Ballads and the Graphic Arts', the session included the papers on 'Visualizing Burd Helen: Medieval Fallen Woman as Victorian Heroine' by Deborah Hyland (St. Louis University); 'Arthur Rackham and the Classic Ballads' by John D. Niles (University of Wisconsin-Madison); and 'Song, Print, Translation, Picture: Re-Writings of Scandinavian Traditional Ballads' by Larry Syndergaard (Western Michigan University, retired).

Members are urged to propose papers for the panel on 'The Ballad: Traditions; Texts; Treatments' at the next meeting of the International Congress on Medieval Studies, 6–9 May 2004 (15 September 2003 deadline for proposals to Larry Syndergaard, [larry.syndergaard@wmich.edu](mailto:larry.syndergaard@wmich.edu)). The congress website is at: [www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress](http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress)

Members are also asked to inform the executive of any other associations that might be willing to host panels under the auspices of the KfV, and also to encourage colleagues to attend meetings of the KfV.

## **9. Membership**

Please would members forward any updated contact details, especially email addresses, to Isabelle Peere.

Also please note Isabelle's new email address: [peere@hec.be](mailto:peere@hec.be)

## 10. Future meetings

The next KfV meeting will take place in Riga, Latvia, 20–25 July 2004, at the invitation of the Archives of Latvian Folklore, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia, and the Faculty of Philology, University of Latvia. The conference committee has been formed, consisting of Imants Freibergs, Janina Kursite, Dace Bula, Valdis Muktupavels, Martins Boiko, Sigma Ankrava, and Andris Kapusts, representing the University of Latvia, the Archives of Latvian Folklore, and the National Folk Art Centre. Dace Bula from Riga attended the Austin conference and was able to speak enthusiastically about the arrangements, and Luisa Del Giudice showed a short slide-show from her own visit to Riga at the invitation of Vaira Vike-Freiberga, the President of Latvia, and Imants Freibergs, both long-standing KfV members. It promises to be a memorable meeting and members are encouraged to attend.

Conference themes so far suggested for Riga include: boundaries of narrative and non-narrative songs; oral poetry and nationalism; Baltic/comparative issues; national song catalogues. Members are invited to put forward any further suggestions. On-line registration for the conference will begin in September 2003. The organizers can be contacted at: [daceb@hotmail.com](mailto:daceb@hotmail.com) or [vm@lu.lv](mailto:vm@lu.lv)

In addition, the Européade folk dance festival will be taking place in Riga, 21–25 July 2004.

The conference in 2005 will take place in Kiev, in the Ukraine, at the invitation of the Director of the Rylsky Institute of Arts, Folklore and Ethnology, Prof. Dr Hanny Skrypnyk, in association with the National Academy of Science of the Ukraine. Research into and editing of ballads is an active field in the Ukraine, and the invitation includes the offer of publication of the proceedings in the journal *Arts Populaire et Ethnologies*. A programme of folkloric and cultural events will be arranged.

The 2006 conference will take place in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Germany, hosted by the Deutsche Volksliedarchiv. The year marks the bicentennial of the influential folk song collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano.

Further suggestions for conferences include South Africa or Maine/Halifax, Nova Scotia/St John's, Newfoundland for 2007 (to be investigated by Jamie Moreira), and Cardiff for 2008.

## 11. Ethics/mission statement and KfV name

Attendance by European members at the conference in Austin was reduced compared to previous occasions, largely in consequence of the cost of travel, but a small number of members had expressed their unwillingness to travel to the USA, and especially to Texas, in the light of the current international political situation and the war in Iraq. This was discussed at some length at the business meeting, and a statement of ethics drafted by Isabelle Peere was considered.

The text of the draft statement runs as follows:

*The KfV is concerned about all action carried out in transgression of international law and the fundamental values serving the cause of peace, integrity and security. It considers all forms of provocation, discrimination, hostility and violence contrary to its own values and mission. It deplores the detrimental effect of all such action to life, to natural and cultural heritage as to the progress of knowledge, welfare and intercultural relations.*

It was felt at the meeting that the statement was too closely tied to the particular situation for it to be adopted by the KfV as a general principle. The alternative suggestion was made that the KfV draw up a 'mission statement' that would express aims on which all members could agree (and to be included in the

KfV brochure). Some members felt that this would be too difficult and possibly divisive, while others felt it would give the Kommission a clearer identity and be cohesive. No resolution was reached, in part because the members present were unwilling to reach a decision that would affect those who were not present in Austin. It was agreed that this discussion should remain open, and all members are invited to let the executive have their views on the subject.

Also raised was the subject of the English name 'International Ballad Commission', because the word 'ballad' can appear too restrictive and may discourage participation from international song scholars whose traditions do not give as prominent a place to narrative song. The issue of the dissonance between the organization's name in the three official languages was addressed – that is, that while the English is restrictive, the French is more inclusive, and the German is broadest of all. However, the difficulty of settling on an acceptable alternative, as well as the academic cachet (at least in Anglo-American settings) that attaches to the word 'ballad', meant that no decision was reached. It was reiterated that the official name of the organization is Kommission für Volksdichtung (KfV), not IBC, which arose as its informal name. This issue will be further investigated and discussed in the future. It was emphasized that KfV conferences should remain open to anyone with a scholarly interest in ballads and folk song.

## **12. Archive**

Please send any material relating to the KfV for archiving (conference photos, KfV-related events, etc.) to Barbara Boock:

[barbara.boock@ub.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:barbara.boock@ub.uni-freiburg.de)

## **13. Membership**

Executive elections will become necessary again after the 2004 meeting when Luisa Del Giudice's term as President concludes. Guidelines as to who is considered a voting member, and who may be considered an eligible candidate, will be reiterated in order to facilitate the voting process.

## **14. Treasurer's report**

Prior to the conference in Austin the bank balance stood at € 802. After deduction of bank charges and expenses, and the payment of membership fees in 2003, the current balance is € 917,49.

## **15. Other business**

The question of someone taking responsibility for links with UNESCO was raised, and it was reiterated that this is being monitored through SIEF.

Marjetka Golez Kaucic made the suggestion of conference organizers endeavouring to provide finance in full for at least one delegate who would otherwise not be able to attend because of the economic circumstances of their country of residence. She also suggested that a national institute might be invited to make a special presentation at each meeting.

Larry Syndergaard moved a formal resolution of thanks to the organizers of the Austin conference for their efficiency and unfailing good humour throughout, and this was adopted with enthusiasm.

## **Conference report**

The 33rd International Ballad Conference was hosted by the University of Texas at Austin, 24–28 June 2003, and was organized with exemplary efficiency by Roger Renwick, Stephanie Crouch, and Harris Gregg. The

conference was sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of English, with additional support from other centres and departments of the university, the Benson Latin American Collection, the Center for American History, Texas Folklife Resources, and the University Co-op. The generous support of all these kept costs to a minimum and attendees were very grateful for this. In spite of diminished attendance from Europe because of the cost of travel and the international situation the conference was well attended, with strong representation and new faces from North America in particular. Delegates came from the USA, Canada, Turkey, England, Latvia, Scotland, Wales, Slovenia, and Germany.

Conference themes included cross-fertilizations, innovations, and hybrids; emergent, syncretized, and constructed identities; ballad protagonists as cultural icons; analysis of text and performance; foundational figures of ballad scholarship; song networks and trajectories; data sources; interrogations in ballad scholarship; ballad musics; contexts of song production and reproduction. As in previous years, the standard of scholarly presentation was high and discussion was lively. In addition Dace Bula, who will be organizing the 2004 conference in Latvia, gave an impressively wide-ranging special presentation to a plenary session, under the title 'Disciplinary Identity of Folklore Studies from a Comparative Perspective', on the identity of and current crisis in the academic discipline of folklore. Mary Ellen Brown and Martin Lovelace offered responses, and this proved a challenging and stimulating event, with the feeling that our work on balladry has great value and integrity, and that if this is not always appreciated in an academic context ours is not the only discipline to face such challenges. Another special presentation was given by James Nicolopoulos who demonstrated databases for the study of Mexican *corridos*, liberally illustrated with archive recordings.

Two special exhibitions were arranged: one on the work of the *corrido* scholar Americo Paredes; and the other on that of John Avery Lomax, the pioneer American folk song collector. The first was followed by a stimulating talk by José Limon, Director of the Center for Mexican American Studies, who argued that Paredes' work did not only began the study of the songs of the Mexican-American border but represented a major landmark in the history of ballad scholarship at large. The work of John Lomax was described by John Wheat, music archivist at the Center of American History, who gave a lively talk on the contradictions in the character of John Lomax and sang several songs that Lomax collected.

Our visit to San Antonio took us to the Institute for Texan Cultures and included a tour of their exhibition on the many immigrant groups who contributed to the growth of culture in Texas. The bus driver made a diversion to enable us to see the Alamo. The day in San Antonio included some conference papers, which was just as well in view of the heat outside. In the evening we enjoyed a Mexican meal and visited the San Antonio River Walk. Our final visit, back in Austin, was to the exhibitions of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, which holds a phenomenal collection of cultural artefacts ranging from a Gutenberg Bible to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's golf clubs and Isaac Bashevis Singer's Yiddish typewriter, as well as paintings and photographs.

The conference concert of traditional song and music was kindly hosted by Texas Folklife Resources, an independent organization. Juan and Armando Tejedo explained and played conjunto music and demonstrated the art of the *corrido*. The Gillette Brothers sang cowboy songs, and Judith Cohen sang Sephardic ballads and explored cross-currents from around Europe and beyond. Finally Poor Man's Fortune treated us to traditional Irish and Breton music and some extremely loud bagpipes. In addition, there were several informal song sessions in the first-rate, brand-new San Jacinto hall of residence where we were housed.

As ever, these meetings sustain us in our work and bring friendship and intellectual nourishment as well as singing and fun. As the world's political situation continues to challenge us, and we are challenged too by institutional and disciplinary change, the fellowship of friends and colleagues from across the world united in the study of songs and music that we love as well as study remains more valuable than ever.

Thanks once again to Roger, Stephanie, and Harris for their sterling efforts of organization on our behalf.

(Report and minutes submitted by David Atkinson)

**The following is an extract from Luisa Del Giudice's presidential address, Austin, 2003:**

Of the various sorts of presentations I make, as an academic or as a public sector folklorist, addressing *this* organization is one of the personally most challenging (... as is attempting to convince the general public of the value of what we do). I vacillate between objectivity and subjectivity, between laying before you facts ... and wanting instead to express how I have experienced the evolution of this organization, its members, and our conferences, over the span of two decades ...

This has been a particularly turbulent year for us – as global citizens, as professionals, as individuals concerned with personal and global security. The executive has been grappling with the question of how to respond to global, political issues, as representatives of an academic association; on the boundaries between private and public action and discourse; and on the advisability of meeting at all this year. It should not be a secret that some long-time KfV members chose not to be here today for political reasons. We respect the individual decisions of such colleagues who, despite great affection and loyalty for our organization, felt they would not allow this to outweigh their opposition to US foreign policy and believed their presence might lend legitimacy to this country's actions. Although I personally do not share this view (in fact, I strongly oppose it), I must acknowledge the integrity of thought and action among our members. Further I also note, with pride, that throughout all these – and there were many – our exchanges remained open, measured, and respectful – even over the contentious parts – and led to calm personal choices. I trust we will continue to address such questions with equanimity and affection ...

It is my contention that in such troubled times as these we need *more* (not less) civil, international discourse, and that we must resist the pull toward silence, retreat, and division. I am grateful that Roger did not retreat. We are here as humanists, examining the diversity and universality of folk song. *That*, in the end, is a statement of enduring value in itself. As I pondered how to address this year's gathering, I reviewed our organization's past, but resisted taking refuge in that past. I considered presenting a nostalgic slide show of conferences – beginning for me in Dublin, 1985, remembering the many colleagues who are with us no more (David Buchan, D. K. Wilgus, Edson Richmond, Kevin O'Nolan, Alan Bruford, Kenneth Goldstein, Giovanni Bronzini, and the other great scholars who had been lost to the field more recently: Alan Lomax, Roberto Leydi). More cheerfully, I recalled the conferences attended by so many, since the first congress in Freiburg, Germany, 1966 (you'll find this list in the KfV brochure): Norway, France, Finland, Netherlands, Denmark, Hungary, Scotland, Greece, Belgium, England, Italy, Ireland, Crete, French Canada, Croatia, Sweden, the US, the Faroe Islands, Wales, Slovenia, Romania. I took pride in the international range of its 250-something membership, representing 35 or so countries. I recalled congenial gatherings, excursions, informal song sessions, and the camaraderie that has grown among us. Personally, I have always enjoyed the low-key nature of this group, the conviviality and the loyalty of its members – features I appreciate all the more with the passing of the years. Some of my favourite colleagues belong to this group, and it is largely *this* fact that keeps me coming back to its meetings, year after year, even when the focus of my own research is no longer strictly song ...

We need to renew our momentum and reach forward with verve: face the new global discontents with resolve and optimism, and not be undone by them nor driven into withdrawal. There are new challenges and we must remain focused and know we are at least one of the forces which promotes: peace, international understanding, inclusivity, and freedom of cultural expression. Contrary to what on the surface may appear to be true (scholarship as a retreat from world realities), a return to our humane scholarship and to international gathering, *is* a political act. By doing our work, we enact our politics – in addition to whatever other overt political action we may take in our own private lives. Personally, I have struggled with the urgent question of relevancy for a couple of years: how important is song study in the grand scheme of things, after all? Shouldn't I be engaged in a more direct involvement with the world's malaise (of diseased body and spirit), by joining the peace and justice movement in some more formal way? I am certainly not alone in facing a professional identity crisis in the aftermath of September 11 and the ensuing war. The daily news is enough to shake even the firmest of academic commitments, as one faces the seemingly insurmountable problems of intolerance, fear, and growing instances of globalized inhumanity. But there are many ways we contribute to an environment of global health – at least *spiritual* global health – and help promote stability, continuity, mutual understanding, and humanity.

In Belgium last year, I reflected on how the global turmoil of the previous year would vastly increase challenges of all sorts. Today, those challenges are ever clearer and the world crisis greater still. *We are*

on the *other* side of a watershed, never to return again to ‘the way things were’. We will have to reflect, make peace with ourselves and define the deeper meaning of our work in such a rapidly changing world. I suggested then, and allow me to repeat here, that what we are defending through our work is cultural continuity, collective experience and wisdom, intimate human interaction, and most of all community – song communities as well as a truly international community of song scholars. Let us defend and strengthen those ties.

## NEWS

Larysa Vakhnina has published an article on Jewish traditional culture in the Ukraine in the twentieth century under the auspices of the University in Haifa (December 2002). The majority of the material discussed is in the manuscripts of the M. Rylsky Institute of Arts, Folklore and Ethnology, National Academy of Sciences Ukraine, and was collected after the founding in 1929 of the Ethnographic Commission of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

Larysa Vakhnina has also published *Folk Songs of the Poles in Ukraine* (Kiev, 2002), 286 pp. This comprises a new edition of Polish songs recorded in the 1970–1990s from persons of the Polish nationality or mixed families. Some of the items are accompanied by music notation (notated by Ludmila Yefremova).

Peter Kennedy, now aged eighty and based in Gloucester, England, reports that he has transferred most of his audio recordings (begun in 1950) into digital format and that over 400 are available on CDs ([www.folktrax.org](http://www.folktrax.org)). He has now embarked on a similar task of transferring to DVD all his films and video-tapes. Peter recorded some classic ballads, particularly from travelling people, tinkers and gypsies, in Britain and Ireland in the early 1950s and made a speciality, for example, of both ‘Edward’ and ‘The False Knight upon the Road’, which were favourites of his father, being the first to locate post-war singers of these two ballads previously only encountered in the Appalachians during the First World War.

The James Madison Carpenter Collection online catalogue has been published by the Humanities Research Institute at the University of Sheffield. The James Madison Carpenter Collection is a major collection of traditional song and drama, plus some items of traditional instrumental music, dance, custom, narrative and children’s folklore, from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and the USA, documented in the period 1927–55. The catalogue provides a finding aid for the approximately 14,000 pages of manuscript material, 400 sound recordings and 560 photographs in the collection. The collection is one of the most significant English-language folk song and drama collections to remain unpublished, and it is intended that eventually the catalogue will link to digital images of the material. In the meantime it offers detailed descriptions of the items, which include some 4000 Child ballad versions. The catalogue is at <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/carpenter/>

Andy Rouse’s band Simply English has released a new CD, *Birds of Paradise* (<http://www.alfanet.hu/simply>).

Georgina Boyes reports that she is working with June Tabor on ballads collected by Maud Karpeles.

Katherine Campbell has recorded a CD of *Traditional Scottish Ballads from the Harris Collection* (Springthyme SPRCD 1041, [www.springthyme.co.uk](http://www.springthyme.co.uk)). This is based on a manuscript compiled by Amelia and Jane Harris in the mid-nineteenth century, and includes some rare Scottish ballads. A companion volume, *The Song Repertoire of Amelia and Jane Harris*, edited by Emily Lyle, Kaye McAlpine and Anne Dhu McLucas is published by the Scottish Text Society (ISBN 1 897976 17 8)

Dianne Dugaw has recorded a CD *Dangerous Examples: Fighting & Sailing Women in Song* of songs about

cross-dressing women ([dugaw@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:dugaw@darkwing.uoregon.edu)).

Oxford University Press has announced publication of Mary-Ann Constantine and Gerald Porter's *Fragments and Meaning in Traditional Song* (ISBN 0 19 726288 0; [www.oup.co.uk](http://www.oup.co.uk)).

Jim Carroll reports the issue of a double CD of Irish Travellers recorded by Pat Mackenzie and himself in England between 1973 and 1985. Under the title *From Puck to Appleby*, it is available from Musical Traditions, MTCD325-6: [www.mustrad.org.uk](http://www.mustrad.org.uk)

The Department of Folklore, Memorial University, St John's, Newfoundland, Canada, makes the following announcement:

A tenure-track appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor, to begin 1 July 2004. Completed PhD preferred. Within the context of generalist practice, special consideration will be given to folklorists with expertise in folk song and folk music. The department has well-established undergraduate, MA and PhD programmes and is home, with the School of Music, to the Canada Research Chair in Traditional Music. The successful candidate will be expected to teach introductory classes as well as courses in his or her own fields of expertise, and supervise students at all three levels. Applications (including a curriculum vitae, a teaching dossier, and the names of three persons who can supply a letter of reference) should be directed to Dr Diane Tye, Interim Head, Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, NL A1B 3X8, Canada. Phone: (709) 737-8403; fax: (709) 737-4718; email: [folklore@mun.ca](mailto:folklore@mun.ca) (All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.)

Barbara Boock's paper "Sabinchen war ein Frauenzimmer..." Ein Lied mit Geschichte' is printed in: *Musik und Leben. Freundesgabe für Sabine Giesbrecht zur Emeritierung, hrsg. von Hartmuth Kinzler*. Osnabrück, Universität, 2003. S. 22-27.