

## **ethnomusiKa International Conference**

Musée du Quai Branly –Paris, France

*13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2013*

### ***Bodies and Voices***

### ***Rethinking Politics through Musical and Choreographic Practices***

#### **Call for Proposals**

The relationships between music, dance and politics constitute a fundamental to anthropology. Music and dance are types of performance which generate specific, emotional experiences for their producers as well as for their receptors. Acting in the social world to generate new types of relations, music and dance are also able to generate new categories of thought. The dismantling of predominant structuralist paradigms left space for a relational micro-anthropology and has led to the development of studies that focus on the agency of music and dance. Meanwhile, it kept in the shadow wider questions of power, power relations and institutions, which are central in politics. The aim of this international conference is to investigate the political significance of music and dance in their aesthetic dimensions as well as in their impact on the social world.

Plato warns that it is not possible to change musical modes without changing the fundamental laws of the State. Music and dance are means through which dominant categories can be asserted as well as contested and renegotiated. Hence, they are manipulated as privileged political spaces, either through coercive State apparatuses, dominant groups or by subaltern groups who mobilise them as activities of resistance or emancipation. If voices, sounds and gestures represent privileged means of embodying the hierarchies of values produced by dominants, they can also be at the core of techniques of subversion and misappropriation of power relations. The complex semiology of practices such as music and dance invites us to interrogate the multiple layers of meanings they raise. We will be particularly sensitive to public as well as hidden or internal significations which bear inexplicit political dimensions.

This raises two related questions. What can music and dance teach us about the technologies of domination (Foucault) and the practices of resistance (Scott)? And how can the analysis of the political dimensions of music and dance inform us about the very nature of these activities?

The following four sub-themes are provided as guidelines and suggestions for panel discussions.

#### **I. Cultural Policies and Political Strategies of Identity: Nation-state versus Minorities**

During the building of nation-states, questions of belonging and national identity produce a new status: the status of the minority. Political strategies can marginalise those who do not match the criteria and norms established by the nation-state: they stigmatize memories and generations and shape minorities' consciousness.

From ethnographic examples, this panel will question the confrontation between minorities and nation-states as seen through musico-choreographic practices. Within a contemporary context of intense heritage creation, how are musical practices formulated, organized and interpreted by minority groups, as well as political elites and national and international organisations? What are the institutions involved – music academies, universities, cultural managers – in kinds of “state traditionalism”? To what extent are musical and choreographic practices pivotal for minority groups in the process of trading visibility and symbolic and political power within national communities?

## **II. Investing Space: Music, Dance and Territory**

Music and dance can be used in specific local situations in order to give or deny existence to social, ethnic, gendered or generational categories, thereby organising a representational space of relationships. Geographers working on music also explore the inscription of musical practices into chosen physical spaces, which are organised and invested with meanings. To analyse the performance space allows us to question the way territory reflects the meanings given to musical practices and to the social positioning of actors. In other words, to take place in the physical space is to take a stand in the social space.

From ethnographic examples, this panel will question the notion of “place” and its investment by individuals, opening up a discussion on the relationships between music, dance and territories. How do people appropriate and transform territories through musico-choreographic practices, whether at the local, national or international level? How do music and dance contribute to the definition and the reconfiguration of private and public spaces?

## **III. The Political Voice: Power of Words and Melodising the Engagement**

Setting words to music seems to give to its content a particular effectiveness. Sung by a group, a song takes on a powerful collective dimension. When it becomes a speech setting out demands, the expression of an engagement, a political positioning, turning speech into song imbues it with an inspiring power, that of revolutionary songs and national anthems. Music can also affect the power of political speech.

This panel will focus on the specific details of speech set to music. Theoretical debates about semantic approaches to music could be the starting point of a larger discussion on links between music and language. What are the specificities of speech when it becomes music? How does melodising and adding rhythm to words contribute to its social efficiency? Clashes between the emotions created by speech and the emotions created by sounds will be analysed through ethnographic examples, where the meaning of melodised speech can be sublimated as well as scoffed at.

## **IV. Music and Dance: Efficient Political Practices?**

Why, more than any other social activity, are music and/or dance always at the heart of political processes and particularly of political strategies for identity? A numbers of works in social anthropology and ethnomusicology have demonstrated how the practice of music and dance and the aesthetic experiences they generate can function as a political force for transformation and can act concretely on the social organisation of groups or even societies.

Beyond the specific features of any particular fieldwork, this panel will address the nature of musical and dance performances through the dynamics they generate. The ability to create a specific relational pattern, particular cognitive and emotional properties, specific

communication media and the means of evoking a singular experience of otherness are some of many aspects of music and dance (and the list stays open) that can enable us to draft a theoretical answer to our initial question. Eventually, music and dance can be approached separately, as activities that have an impact neither on the same objects nor in the same manner: what, then, are their fundamental differences?

### **Guidelines**

Each paper will be allowed 30 min, followed by 15 min of discussion.

Deadline for sending proposals, up to 3 000 characters, along with the name, institutional affiliation and the email address of the proposer: **7<sup>th</sup> of February**.

*Please send your proposals to the following address: [recherche@festival-ethnomusika.org](mailto:recherche@festival-ethnomusika.org)*

Proposals' selection from the scientific committee: **8<sup>th</sup> of March**

Deadline for sending full written papers, up to 16 000 characters, in order to help panel chairs for introduction and discussion, as well as for the preparation of a future written publication: **20<sup>th</sup> of May**

### **Keynote speaker**

Loïc Wacquant (Berkeley University)

### **Chairs of panels and concluding session**

Marie-Pierre Gibert (University of Lyon 2)

Denis Laborde (EHESS)

Rosalía Martínez (University of Paris 8)

Yves Raibaud (University of Bordeaux 3)

Loïc Wacquant (Berkeley University)

### **Scientific Committee (for proposals' selection)**

Eftichya Droutsas (Paris-Sorbonne)

Nathalie Gauthard (University of Nice-Sofia Antipolis)

Christine Guillebaud (CNRS, CREM-LESC)

Sara Le Ménestrel (CNRS, CENA)

Bernard Lory (INALCO)

Yves Raibaud (University of Bordeaux)