

# Preface: Music and Crossing Bridges among Generations

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Perhaps it is not surprising that in Prague, the City of Bridges and the “Crossroad of Cultures,” a second publication having the theme “Music and Crossing Bridges” is appearing. While the first one – a thematic issue of *Urban People 2/2015* – focuses on a synchronic perspective on the functioning of music in interactions of groups, communities, and cultures, how it transgresses borders or shifts them, this time our perspective is diachronic. We ask how music is transmitted among generations, which function it plays in this regard, and which transformations it undergoes.

In contrast to such discussions of music transmission that focus on the symbolic systems used in this process (e.g., the influential *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: Europe*, see Hopkins 2000), most of the authors of this issue concentrate on the individual actors involved in the transmission; after all, along with Jeff T. Titon (2015: 4), we tend to understand ethnomusicology as a “study of people making music.” Although the main question is how they transmit music, we learn much more from the discussions in this volume about the social contexts and consequences of these complex social and musical processes of music transmission (see Conclusion). The chapters by Kouwenhoven – Lin – Rees and Nuska are comparative studies of different modes of music transmission. Poděbradský and Nowak discuss border musicians; the latter describes the image of a 19<sup>th</sup> century musician from the Polish Podhale region as a mirror of changing perspectives of a local tradition.

The chapters by Ewa Dahlig-Turek and by Kaja Maćko-Gieszcz look at music transmission in the reverse direction: as the use of music as a way of glancing back, thus music practice of reconstructed, reimagined or invented tradition. These texts resonate with the contemporary boom of memory studies and enable us to learn more about music as a specific medium of conceptualization of the past.

Lastly, let us mention the texts that open the whole issue: the chapters in which the metaphor of bridge is connected to the history of the discipline of ethnomusicology. Bruno Nettl applies this metaphor - bridge as a connecting phenomenon - to scientific concepts, musical genres, localities, and personalities important for the history of the discipline, and Steve Blum describes “bridge-building activities” in the early stage of the discipline. We can, however, understand the whole publication as a bridge-building activity: the nestors of the field meet here with students and fresh graduates, writers with readers...

## References

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