

Indiana University

Folklore
Institute

Traditions

Alumni News

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College of Arts & Sciences – Graduate School Alumni Association

Spring 1989

1987–88 Dorson Award Winners in Haiti and New Zealand

The first Dorson Dissertation Awards took students as far afield as Haiti and New Zealand. Michael Largey and Moira Smith tell us some of the highlights of their experiences.

Folk and art music in Haiti

When most people think of Haitian music, they envisage the drums and songs of the *vodou* religious tradition. *Vodou*'s influence is felt, too, in the songs and symphonies of Haiti's classical composers, who arranged Haitian folk music themes for chamber music and orchestral performances. In this way they forged what they called a "national music," combining the formal aspects of European classical music with the rhythmic and melodic elements of Haitian folk song.

I believe that the ways in which composers have combined European and Haitian music elements reflect their perceptions about folk music. Most Haitian composers were not ethnographers, but they used their own knowledge of Haitian music culture as the basis of their works. The result is a music that reflects not the experiences of the rural Haitian, but rather the impressions of rural life through the eyes and ears of the intelligentsia.

I spent the 1987–88 academic year in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, researching the musical and social values of Haitian art music. While there, I worked as a music instructor at l'École Sainte Trinite, teaching brass instrumental techniques to elementary- through high-school-aged students, and conducted the school's orchestra and choir, interpreting several Haitian compositions.

Haiti was in a state of political turmoil during the fall of 1987, creating additional difficulties for the fieldworker. Once, during a trip to the store for paperclips, I noticed that everyone on the street was run-

ning in the direction I was walking. When I asked a passerby why they were running, a burst of automatic gunfire was the only reply. Upon returning safely to the school where I was doing my research, I told some of my fellow teachers what had happened. One teacher admonished me for not hiding in someone's house until the shooting stopped. When I said I didn't think anyone would be interested in shooting me, he responded with a proverb which was often used in Haiti that fall: "Bal-yo pa gin prejiye" ("Bullets don't discriminate").

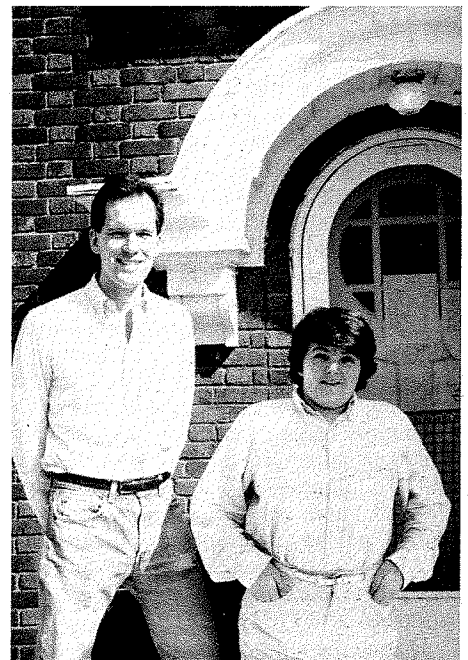
I am glad to be back in Bloomington, where buying paperclips is not such an eventful experience.

—Michael Largey

Fieldwork down under

Thanks to the support provided by the Dorson Award and other sources, I was able to devote all my time in New Zealand to research—a rare pleasure. I spent the first five months of 1988 at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, where I carried out research and interviews on the student Capping Festival. The festival has the dual purpose of celebrating graduation and of entertaining and harassing the public. Capping is the most significant occasion in which New Zealand town and gown meet, but the meeting is not always a harmonious one.

During capping, students play large-scale practical jokes on members of the public. Overnight the footprints of a large, extinct bird may appear throughout the city. Major roads are transformed into pedestrian malls complete with potted shrubs. Garden gnomes, telephone boxes, bus stops, buses, and any other moveable property vanish—to reappear on the university campus. Let-

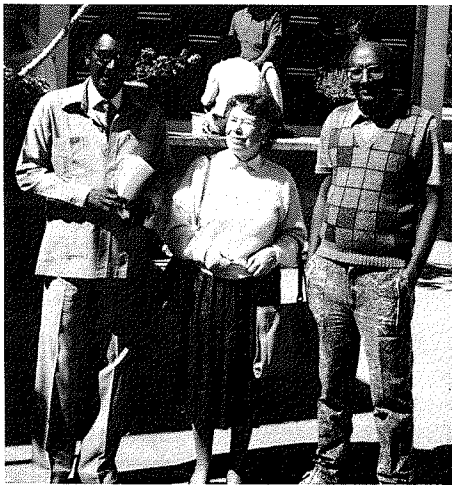


MICHAEL LARGEY AND MOIRA SMITH

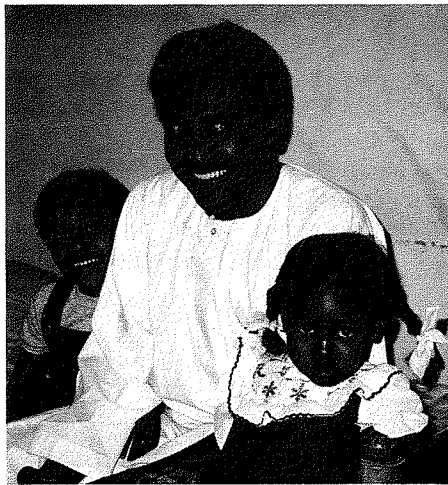
ters appear in hundreds of mailboxes instructing householders to register their cats, to bring urine samples to their local post office, or to appear for jury duty the following day. This type of activity is so prevalent during capping that any inexplicable event at that time of year is thought to be a student hoax. By these means students contrive to remind the public that they do in fact live in a university town.

The amount of capping data held by institutions and individuals exceeded my wildest expectations. Folklore is a virtually unknown discipline in New Zealand, so I was pleased to be invited to present introductory lectures, which were favorably received. Thus, the trip helped to spread interest in folkloristics Down Under, and may one day lead to the further study of New Zealand folklore.

—Moira Smith



LEFT: Linda Dégh with Sayyid Hurreiz (left) and Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim in front of the Folklore Institute in Khartoum. RIGHT: Sharaf el-Din Abdelsalam at home with his children.



Faculty activities

Richard Bauman has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for University Teachers to continue his research on festival drama in the municipality of Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. The fieldwork component of this research has been carried out as part of the collaborative Folklore Institute project, "Forms of Hispanic Folk Poetry in Performance," also supported by NEH.

At the Symposium on Paisley Poets, celebrating Paisley, Scotland's 500-year charter, Mary Ellen Brown presented a keynote lecture on weaver poet Robert Tannahill. She has also been appointed to a second term as director of women's studies and has a Grant-in-Aid to do a study of William Motherwell, ballad scholar, journalist, and poet.

Visiting Associate Professor Martha Davis has been granted an American Fulbright Scholar Award for 1988-89 for research at the Museo Del Hombre Dominicano from May to November 1989. In September she participated in an International Council on Traditional Music colloquium in Havana on "The African Heritage in the Caribbean" and presented a paper entitled "The African Heritage in the Traditional Music of the Dominican Republic."

In November Linda Dégh and Hasan El-Shamy were guests of the University of Odense, Denmark, where they participated in an international seminar on "The Telling of Tales: A Traditional Craft." El-Shamy presented a paper on "The Thousand and One Nights and the Oral Telling of Tales"; Dégh's topic was "The Snake Prince Tale as Told by Master Storytellers." They were also invited to the University of Denmark, Copenhagen, to discuss issues related to immigrant groups in Scandinavia and to meet with graduate students. Dégh then attended the 75th anniversary of the Folklivsarkivet in Lund, Sweden, where she delivered the inaugural lecture in the annual Carl Wilhelm Von Sydow Lecture Series.

Henry Glassie helped Lauri Honko train scholars in folklore fieldwork techniques as part of a workshop organized by Shamsuzzaman Khan, director of folklore at the Bangla Academy, Bangladesh.

John McDowell spent two months in Acapulco, Mexico, investigating the *corrido* tradition under the auspices of the NEH Hispanic Folk Poetry grant (see *Traditions*, Fall 1988).

Beverly Stoeltje is guest editor for *Feminist Revisions*, a special issue of volume 25 of the *Journal of Folklore Research*.

Ruth Stone has been in Liberia, West Africa, researching music performance among the Kpelle people of Bong County under a Fulbright Award. Her book, *Dried Millet Breaking: Time, Words, and Song in the Woi Epic of the Kpelle* has been published by Indiana University Press (1988).

Dégh visits alumni in Sudan

"So you are on your way to the Sudan?" asked a fellow passenger as we were boarding the airplane. He then stated, "It is not Sudan, the country, not the surface beauty of the land or its edifices that you will never forget, it is the beauty and sweetness of the people."

In early January I spent two weeks in the Sudan as the guest of the University of Khartoum and attended a symposium on folklore, oral tradition, and history. The invitation was initiated by three Folklore Institute alumni: Sayyid H. Hurreiz, PhD '72, Sharaf el-Din E. Abdelsalam, PhD '83, and Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, PhD '87, all faculty members of the Institute of African and Asian Studies and founders of the first folklore department in Africa to offer MA and PhD degrees.

During the symposium, participants from folklore, archeology, history, and anthropology in Africa, the Near East, Great Britain, and the United States read papers and contributed to lively discussions on such themes as the formation of folklore around excavation sites, the nature of oral tradition, the effects of urbanization, and literary influence on folklore. After the symposium I gave two lectures and consulted with

graduate students working on their theses.

My too-short education in Sudanese folklore included observation of worship at a saint's shrine and exorcism rites during a Sufi-style Zar performance with the ecstatic dancing, collapse, and regeneration of sick women to the accompaniment of drums, flutes, and electric instruments. I also made trips to excavation sites and pyramids of the ancient Marowit civilization in Shendi, and while riding on the bus could observe the conical lime huts, nomadic herding, and people buying and selling goods at bus stops. I went to the Obdurman market and learned about ritual jewelry, the meaning of beads, shells, yarns, colors, and incense, and their varied applications. From women I learned how to wear the *tobe*, how to use *hemna*, how to cheer, clap, and dance Sudanese style at weddings and parties.

At Sharaf Abdelsalam's home in his family village, as we were reminiscing about Bloomington days, his neighbors filed in, sat down on the carpet, and began to chant—a customary practice to ensure health and happiness. In Sudan, as in the rest of the world, folklore is part and parcel of everyday life, and everything is worthy of observation and description.

—Linda Dégh

... of student successes

Karyl Robb has received the Distinguished Independent Study Course Award from the National Continuing Education Association for her Independent Study course, F101 Introduction to Folklore. Brent Cantrell, MA '84, is the new festival coordinator for the Historical Museum of Southern Florida in Miami. Garry Barrow is the new state folklife coordinator for Virginia. Bruce Harrah-Conforth, MA '84, has been invited to the Foundation for Mind Research in New York to discuss the relationship of mythic themes and rituals to psychological structure. Patricia Sawin received a Pre-

doctoral Small Grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and Robert Dover, MA '80, has received a Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship for 1989-90 as well as a grant from the Organization of American States for his fieldwork in Colombia. Nancy Michael, MA '80, has produced a videodocumentary entitled "Every Island Has Its Own Songs: the Tsimouris Family of Tarpon Springs" for the Florida Folklife Program, where she has recently been promoted to the position of folklife programs administrator.

Alumni news

Don Hines, PhD'69, is teaching English at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia.

Rainer Wehse, MA'69, received his PhD from Freiburg University in 1977 and is teaching folklore at the University of Göttingen.

Norma Ortiz-Karp, MA'74, works as a reference archivist in special collections at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and is the resident music reviewer of the Music Festival of Arkansas.

Camilla A. Collins, PhD'78, is editor of *Southern Folklore*, which continues *Southern Folklore Quarterly*.

Kathleen Manley, PhD'79, is associate professor of English at the University of Northern Colorado.

Jens Lund, PhD'83, director of folklife programs for the Washington State Folklife Council, sends news that several members of the IU family participated in the council's annual conference in September: Jan H. Brunvand, PhD'61, is a professor of English at the University of Utah; Janet C. Gilmore, MA'73, PhD'81, is a free-lance folklife researcher living in Madison, Wis.; Phyllis Harrison Brose, PhD'83, is a folklorist in Tacoma, Wash.; and Robert E. Walls, MA'87, is a doctoral candidate in folklore and American studies at IU.

John A. Gizzi, MA'84 is teaching at Cortland, N. Y.

John R. Williams, PhD'85, English instructor, Spartanburg Methodist College, is the winner of that university's prestigious A. V. Huff Faculty Prize for excellence in teaching.

Keep those cards and letters coming! Send news of your rites of passage and changes of address to the editors of *Traditions*, c/o the IU Alumni Association, Memorial Union M-17, Bloomington, IN 47405.



SIMON BRONNER AND SANDRA K. D. STAHL hobnob at the 1988 Folklore Alumni Reception at AFS.

Alumni Publications

Sincere congratulations to the following: Simon Bronner, PhD'81, Pennsylvania State University, has published *Folklife Studies from the Gilded Age: Object, Rite, and Custom in Victorian America* (UMI Research Press, 1987), and *American Children's Folklore* (August House, 1988). His *Old-Time Music Makers of New York State* (Syracuse University Press) won the Regional Council of Historical Societies Award of Merit for outstanding accomplishment in regional, state, and local history. J. Sanford Rikoon, PhD'85, University of Missouri-Columbia, is author of *Threshing in the Midwest, 1820 to 1940: A Study of Traditional Culture and Technological Change* (Indiana University Press, 1988).

Indiana University Press has also recently published *Crime Victim Stories: New York City's Urban Folklore* (1988), by Eleanor Wachs, PhD'79, and *More Man than You'll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America* (1989), by Joseph P. Goodwin, PhD'84.

'88 Friends of Folklore

In 1988, we drew on gifts from alumni and friends of the Folklore Institute to help publish *Traditions*, host the alumni reception at AFS, sponsor lectures by visiting scholars, and continue the program of graduate student support under the rubric of the Richard M. Dorson Award.

To date, four of our dissertation candidates have benefited from the Dorson Dissertation Research Awards, and two outstanding graduate student papers have been honored under the auspices of the fund. Both of these papers were subsequently published in the *Journal of Folklore Research*.

Activities such as these cannot be supported by University funds alone; instead we depend on help from the numerous and far-flung members of our folklore "family"—faculty, alumni, and friends.

We would like to recognize and thank the following people who have contributed to the Folklore Institute in 1988. Your support is much needed and greatly appreciated. Thanks to your generous contributions to the Folklore Enrichment, Ethnomusicology, and Dorson Memorial Funds, the quality of education at the Institute has improved in a concrete and significant way.

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Nominations requested

Each year the College of Arts and Sciences/Graduate School Alumni Association presents awards to its distinguished faculty and alumni. Alumni are invited to submit nominations for these awards, to be presented in the fall. Send names and supporting material by June 1 to John Hobson, IU Alumni Association, IMU M-17, Bloomington, IN 47405.



GERMAN AND AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS at the Folklore and Social Transformation conference, held in Bloomington on November 3 (see *Traditions*, Fall 1988).

Folklore birthdays

Fall 1989 will mark the 40th birthday of the folklore curriculum in Bloomington. The creation of an interdepartmental graduate program in folklore was a tribute to the efforts of Distinguished Professor (and Dean of the Graduate School) Stith Thompson.

Thompson originally came to Bloomington in 1921 as director of freshman English, but initiated graduate English courses on the Folktale and Allied Forms, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, and Literary Origins, as well as an undergraduate Introduction to Folklore.

After World War II (and the first two Folklore Institutes), Thompson worked to attract to Bloomington other scholars who could help build an interest in folklore. By 1949, the newly-created folklore program included ten faculty. The recipient of the first PhD in folklore from the program is our own Dr. Warren E. Roberts (1953).

Spring 1988 marked the 25th birthday of the creation of the permanent Folklore Institute in Bloomington. In 1942 Stith Thompson and Ralph S. Boggs organized the first Folklore Institute of America attracting participants from as far away as Los Angeles—despite the war and restrictions on travel. Thereafter the Folklore Institutes became quadrennial, usually with a combination of Bloomington and international faculty.

In 1963, Richard M. Dorson proposed that the folklore program become a permanent Folklore Institute. The archives, which were to include microfilm copies of as many of the major European and American folklore archives as possible, began with the acquisition of a copy of the Finnish Folklore Archives. The *Journal of the Folklore Institute* was proposed to replace *Midwest Folklore*.

More about the history of the folklore program at IU and its role in American folkloristics will be available in a forthcoming monograph, *Sixty-Year History of the Folklore Institute*.

—Eric Montenyohl

Traditions is published by the Indiana University Alumni Association, in cooperation with the Folklore Institute and the College of Arts and Sciences—Graduate School Alumni Association, to encourage alumni interest in and support for Indiana University.

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FOLKLORE INSTITUTE, SUMMER 1966

Our newest PhDs

From May 1988 to February 1989 eleven students have received their PhDs. Hurray to you all for a job well done!

John Bealle: "American Folklore Revival: A Study of an Old-time Music and Dance Community"

Betty Belanus: "Evaluating Public Sector Folklore: The Tennessee State Parks Folklife Project"

Inta Gale Carpenter: "Being Latvian in Exile: Folklore as Ideology"

Susan Domowitz: "An Ethnography of Storytelling in an Anyi Community (Ivory Coast)"

Harry Gammerdinger: "The Use of Film and Videotape to Document and Present Folklore"

Joyce Jackson: "The Performing Black Sacred Quartet: An Expression of Cultural Values and Aesthetics"

Frank Jones: "Psalms in Black: A Study of Black Prayer in Three Diverse Contexts"

Mary Koske: "Finnish and American Adolescent Fantasy and Humor: Analysis of Personal and Social Folklore in Educational Contexts"

Sabina Magliocco: "The Two Madonnas: Festivals and Change in a Sardinian Community"

Jean-Pierre Ngole: "Bargaining Strategies as Performance: An Ethnographic and Sociolinguistic Study of Congolese Women Fishsellers in Congo"

Mary L. Stevens: "Traditional Quilt-makers of Southern Indiana."

Reuss Prize for students of folklore and history

The Richard Reuss Prize honors the late Richard Reuss, PhD '71, a leading chronicler of folklore studies. The prize of \$100 will be awarded to a student for a paper on a subject dealing with the history of folklore studies. The winning paper will be submitted for publication in the *Folklore Historian*. Submit papers before June 1 to Simon J. Bronner, American Studies Program, Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg, Middletown, PA 17057. For information on contributing to the Reuss Prize Fund, write to W. K. McNeil, Treasurer, *Folklore Historian*, Ozark Folk Center, Mountain View, AR 72560.

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