

WFAE 2011 PAPER SESSION (10):

“The Voice, Silence and the Sacred in Soundscapes.”

Thursday, 6/10/2011—15:00 - 15:30-- Ionian Academy, Corfu

Session Chair: Noora Vikman¹

Title of Presentation: *“The Soundscape of Byzantine and Russian Monasteries.”*

Abstract:

The paper deals with the audial image of an Orthodox monastery, consisting of a balanced mixture of natural sounds and sounds created by man. It is known that the Byzantine and Russian icon painting technique implies the deepest possible involvement of natural, visible world in the creation of an icon. Natural materials are used, such as plant materials (wood), materials of animal origin (glue, eggs) and of mineral origin (chalk, paints). A Byzantine or an Old Russian monastery is a kind of a “sound icon”, and its audial image is created likewise, with full involvement of nature and the creative activity of man. The choice of a place for a monastery has never been arbitrary. Usually, the building of a monastery began in a place where a monk received some secret “message”, often in the form of a mystic voice or chimes in a desert place. Various acoustic types of monasteries are known, depending on their location – in mountain and plain ravines, in desert islands in the sea or a big lake. The sounds of semantrons and bells, voices of people, birds and animals are united in the architectural space of the monastery and its natural environment, conforming to the common rhythm of sunrise and sunset, to the alternation of day and night. This connection is reflected in the monastery Typicons.

The time of silence and the time of sounds in the traditional schedule of monasterial life and the natural life order of birds and animals are harmoniously interconnected. The special connection of monks with birds in terms of both singing manner and behaviour is mentioned in many written and oral sources, and in church music as well. The connection between man and nature is brightly reflected in monastery semantrons: in ancient times they were made of stone and wood, and their sound was perceived as “the voice of God” mitigating the forces of nature and the life of man. The materials for the semantrons were often found close to the monastery. The sound of monastery metal cast bells acoustically connects the church with the surrounding landscape. The repercussions of the watery waste surrounding the church in an island monastery, or the clamour of birds, which are abundant in the monasteries located in ravines and gorges, create a peculiar musical antiphon complementing the psalms sung by monks inside the church.

¹**Noora Vikman** is a soundscape researcher with a current interest in the ways of approaching and applying the knowledge of rhythms of acoustic environments and the aspects of quietness in everyday life and community planning.

AUTHOR

Irina Chudinova, PhD, Senior researcher at the Russian Institute for the History of the Arts.

Irina Chudinova graduated from Saint Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatoire as a composer. She defended a PhD dissertation on the subject "Church Music Culture of Saint Petersburg". Currently I. Chudinova is a senior researcher at the Russian Institute for the History of the Arts. Her research interests are music in church statute, Greek-Slavic connections in the music of monasteries, listening and sound creation in Orthodox ascetics. Irina Chudinova is the author of two monographs: "Time of Voicelessness: Music in Monastery Statute" (2004) and "Singing, Bells, the Ritual: Topography of Church Music Culture in Saint Petersburg" (1994), and of over 50 articles. She is the supervisor of the research program "Voice in Culture"; as part of this program, 4 international conferences have been held and 3 collections of research papers have been published.

Email Address: irinachud@gmail.com Telephone Number: +79219449277

Title of Presentation: *"When Soundscape Studies Encounter Buddhism: Methodology Development of Soundscape Studies on Chinese Buddhist Temples."*

Abstract:

The ethnographic ideals of 'reflectiveness' and 'openness' inspire the researcher to think deeply about how to develop ethnographic soundscape methodology during the research process. This Paper presentation develops an adaptive research method for soundscape studies on Chinese Buddhist temples. Chinese Buddhist temples are monasteries and dwelling places of monks. They are also the miniature of "pure land", the land of Buddha. Hence, temples have been considered as the landmarks of quiet and peace in China for thousands of years. Are they still like that nowadays? What and how are the soundscapes of Buddhist temples? Have any changes happened in the soundscapes? How does the Buddhist way of thinking about hearing impact the Buddhists' way of hearing? I have been studying these questions for one year now.

AUTHOR

Yi Yuan, PhD student, University of Eastern-Finland, Joensuu. Member of the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology. Connected with Wuhan University in China.

Yi Yuan is a soundscape researcher with a background of philosophy and aesthetics. She is writing her PhD Dissertation on Silence and Temples: Sonic Identity and Changes on Soundscape of Chinese Buddhist Temples. She has written about the way of thinking about hearing in Buddhism. She has been doing Soundscape field work in three Chinese Buddhist Temples. She has been active in the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology and its soundscape projects from 2009.

Email Address: yuan@student.uef.fi Telephone Number: 358465561590