

Music making in the *Lungau*: a musical ethnography in an Austrian alp-region.

The *Lungau* is the district, which is located in the southeastern corner of the province Salzburg. The region covers an area of 1000 km² and has about 21.000 inhabitants. It is characterized through its relatively isolated geographic position, which results from the high altitude of the whole region and the surrounding by mountains. Furthermore this rural and remote location has effects on the cultural and social life of this area. There are still a lot of particular traditions and customs – some of them totally unique – that have attracted ethnographers and folklorists for a long time (cf. Fuchshofer 2002:21). Furthermore the remoteness causes structural and infrastructural disadvantages for the region, which result in emigration – especially of the higher educated population as Fuchshofer (2002) shows – and commuting. Nonetheless, the *Lungau* is – due to increasing mobility and technology – part of the fast-changing western postmodern world, with all of its complexities and cultural flows, as Mark Slobin postulates in his *Micromusics of the West* (1992). Altogether the *Lungau* represents an ideal "biotope" for cultural research and can also serve as model for other structurally weak regions in the Austrian Alps.

My dissertation thesis focuses on the musical life – especially on music making – of the region, which I want to present in the form of a musical ethnography. Following the works and writings of Ruth Finnegan (2007) and Mark Slobin (1992) I want to present a broad, comprehensive and comparative picture of the different *musical worlds/pathways* that exist in the region: this could be traditional folk music and singing, marching band music as well as folkloristic, pop-influenced *volkstümliche Musik* or *Schlager* or popular or subcultural pop-, rock-, electronic music and so on. Focusing on these different musical worlds, one has to be aware of the different levels of analysis ranging from the individual to groups and bigger cultural formations (Slobin 1992). Therefore, a special focus of my work will be the analysis of interaction on all possible levels: inside and between groups and individuals of different musical groups and worlds. A further main theme of my work will be the analysis of different concepts and understandings of music and music making and of different concepts of *tradition* and *authenticity* – two terms that are often used to describe the music which ethnomusicologists usually deal with, but which remain very vague and unclear. Furthermore, the terms are often used as ideological weapons in struggles among conservative traditionalists and innovators.¹

As basic method for my research I will conduct extensive ethnomusicological fieldwork. Apart from the main method of participant observation – including learning to perform and taking part in musical events as part of my research technique (Baily 2001) – I will also undertake additional formal qualitative interviews to gain even more data. Because I am researching in the area of my own cultural background, extensive reflection on my own

¹ A good example, which will also be illustrated in my work, is the more than 200 years long-lasting and still on-going struggle in the German-speaking *Volksliedforschung*, which ranges from positions of scholars like Wiora (1950) who writes about the *purity* and *authenticity* of the *real Volkslied* to scholars like Klusen (1969) who states that the term *Volkslied* is itself an artificial invention of 18th century nationalist song-collectors and therefore cannot claim to be authentic.

position within the research field will be necessary. In question of this aspect, the sub-discipline urban musicology offers methods and a theoretical background for researchers doing research in their own home-areas – for example Samuel Araujos writing about researching in one's own home-town (2009).

References cited

ARAUJO, Samuel

2009 „Ethnomusicologists researching towns they live in: Theoretical and methodological queries for a renewed discipline“, *Musicology* 9, 33-50.

BAILY, John

2001 „Learning to Perform as a Research Technique in Ethnomusicology“, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 10(2), 85-98.

FINNEGAN, Ruth

2007 (1989) *The hidden musicians: Music-making in an English Town*, first Wesleyan Edition, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.

FUCHSHOFER, Rosemarie

2002 *Heidi wohnt hier nicht mehr. Zur Abwanderung des autochthonen kreativen und innovativen Potentials aus dem Lungau*, Zwischenbericht 2001 & Endbericht 2002, Projekt des Jubiläumsfonds der Österreichischen Nationalbank Nr. 8347, Salzburg.

KLUSEN, Ernst

1969 *Volkslied: Fund und Erfindung*, Köln: Gerig.

SLOBIN, Mark

1992 „Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach“, *Ethnomusicology* 36/1, 1-87.

WIORA, Walter

1950 *Das echte Volkslied (=musikalische Gegenwartsfragen 2)*, Heidelberg: Müller-Thiergarten.