

The EthnoFolk Letters 10*

March 22, 1996
Valladolid, Spain

Dear CSTM/SCTM members,

I'm sitting in the *paraninfo* (auditorium) of the student centre at Valladolid University, listening to a presentation "with one ear" and writing this letter at the same time, as there hasn't been much in the way of real spare time in the past two weeks. The occasion is the second congress of SIBE (pronounce *see-bé*), the Sociedad Ibérica de Etnomusicología, the Iberian Ethnomusicological Society, with whom we are exchange members. Naturally, I've left some copies of the **Bulletin** and notices about our fall meeting out on the table here at the conference, and left our MOS catalogues with a couple of musicology department heads who've mentioned that there is, not surprisingly, a dearth of materials on Canadian traditional music in their libraries. (I feel compelled to use "dearth" more often since discovering last month that the Faculty of Education of the University of Toronto considers it too difficult and obscure a word for high school students—along with "circumnavigate.")

There's a lot of good work being done by Iberian musicologists. There's little live music here at the conference—aside from my own performance tomorrow night—but several people are showing video excerpts from their fieldwork. The very first session included Josefa García's presentation—at once lively, quirky, and well-organized—on her teaching of flamenco to kids as young as Grade One, in Andalusia, Luis García showed some provocative footage of Galician dancing as done by villagers at local celebrations and the same dances transferred to the stage by professional ensembles. Jorge Rodríguez, in the session I'm chairing tomorrow, has a video of traditional song-duelling in the Alpujarra mountains near Granada, Ramón Pelinski, who has been transferring his home base from Montreal to Spain over the past few years, is leading a presentation on the area I first lived in when I began travelling to Spain during the Franco era, the Maeztrazgo mountains and the coastal region north of Valencia. There were also papers on Spanish punk and rock. It's a warm, friendly group of people, with a lot of students and a lot of cooperation—I'm the only person whose first language isn't Spanish (or Catalan, Galician or Portuguese), and feel totally at home! (Special thanks to Josep Martí and Enrique Cámara who went out of their way to make my attendance and participation feasible.)

This conference, though, is only occupying the last few days of my two weeks in Spain. I've given lecture-recitals of Sephardic, medieval, and "minority Romance language" music at the Complutense University in Madrid and the Institute of the Galician Language in St. James of Compostela (thanks to Professors Angel Saíñz Badillos and Antón Santamarina, respectively); and concerts in Zamora and Valladolid in the hallowed halls of the Bank of Salamanca (banks sponsor concerts a

lot in Spain); and recorded a Sephardic song with Paco Díez—who organized the bank concerts—for his new CD. In Vigo, my friends Ramón and Marcos (see coincidence story in *EthnoFolk Letters* 3 (27.3, 1993) organized a concert for me at the café *Uf*, where I was even able to borrow



photograph by GWL

an *oud* conveniently hanging on the back wall; and a Balkan dance workshop. Oddly enough, even as the relevant email discussion group bemoans the lack of younger people involved in North American Balkan dance groups, they're just beginning to start up in Spain, and I taught an unholy number of dances to the Vigo group in one marathon session. Also from Vigo, I treasure a newspaper article in which the reporter manages to call me both "Judith Collins" and "Judith Cohen." In between, we managed a visit to the small Jewish community in Porto, Portugal, as a preliminary to some possible fieldwork with them next summer; and part of a class in traditional Galician women's singing and tambourine style taught by another friend, María-Xosé Martínez, with Melisa (See *EF Letters* 3, 27.3)

March 24

On the early train back to Madrid, to catch the plane home—reluctantly. Yesterday I gave both my paper and a final concert at the conference, and the evening sort of went on, between one café and another, till about 3:00 a.m.—leaving me just about the right amount of time to pack my knapsack and catch this 6:35 a.m. train. I don't know what it is about Spain that makes this insane rhythm seem normal—lunch at 3:00 p.m., supper at midnight, concerts beginning at 10 or 11:00 p.m.—sleep when you can fit it in. I certainly can't keep it up at home in Toronto. And it wasn't the sun—today is just about the first sunny day of the two weeks; it's been mostly cold, damp and cloudy. It must be something about the seemingly oxymoronic unhurried intensity of people's lives and interactions.

Anyway, I think the concert combined the academic aspect of the conference with our traditional CSTM-evening atmosphere. I sang a lot of "academically-correct" selections, but had the audience participating in a way most of them (especially the musicologists) seemed unaccustomed to; told them stories, made them laugh—one of them told me afterwards it was "ethnomusicological therapy"! I'm still thinking about that one as the train rattles on toward Madrid.

A few of the SIBE people took CSTM application forms and said they'd join as individuals and try to come to the fall meeting. If any of them manage it, I'll look forward to reading *their* reactions in some future **SIBE Bulletin**. Meanwhile, where are *your* EthnoFolk Letters? Where have you all [*Judith, I didn't know you came from Texas, too?! —GWL*] been over the past year or so? Write and tell us! And—tell us in person at the meeting Hallowe'en weekend. I hope to hear from many of you before that, and see a lot of you there.

Judith

**Your red-faced editors (particularly GWL, and in the words of Brendan Behan, "that's not just the color of me politics") acknowledge that during 1994, the numbering of the EthnoFolk Letters got screwed up. With this entry, there have in fact been ten of these letters. Sorry if we've caused any confusion.*

CONCERTO
JUDITH COHEN
(CANADÁ)
UNHA VIAXE POLAS TRADICIÓN MUSICAIS



A HITCH-HIKER'S NOTES

VENRES 15-CAFÉ UF - 22:00 H
ENTRADA LIBRE - RÚA DO PRACER, 19 (VIGO)

—poster by Ramón Anaricio and Marcos Baquero. Vigo (Galicia). Spain