

Ethnomusicology in the UK – 2003 Survey

Compiled by Martin Clayton for BFE

Introduction

The UK ethnomusicology research community excels in many ways, as evidenced by the high international standing of our national subject association (BFE), its conferences and journal, as well as many outstanding individual scholars. BFE conferences are major international events in the field. The British Journal of Ethnomusicology is one of only 31 international music journals selected for inclusion in the prestigious JSTOR collection, and is set to increase its reach thanks to a publishing deal with Routledge signed in 2003. The major biennial conference of the International Council for Traditional Music will be held at Sheffield in 2005. The British Academy this year funded a group of 14 British scholars to attend the biggest international conference in the field, the Society for Ethnomusicology (in the USA). This high standing is also clear from the significant numbers of overseas and EU students attracted to study ethnomusicology in the UK. Developing ethnomusicology further will build on these strengths and increase the amount of world class research conducted at UK universities.

Ethnomusicology has grown dramatically in the UK in recent years. Although both Ethnomusicology and its forerunner Comparative Musicology boasted a number of distinguished scholars in Britain, the disciplines struggled for many years to gain a significant institutional presence, especially in departments of music. The last two decades, however, have seen an unprecedented growth in this presence, an expansion which has run in parallel with significant changes in orientation in the 'mainstream' of anglophone musicology, which has started to take on board ethnomusicological perspectives. Ethnomusicology is now seen by many music departments as an integral and valuable part of their overall profile: as the number of ethnomusicologists in academic posts increases, so do reports of increasing student numbers on ethnomusicology courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. In recent years ethnomusicology PhDs have found a variety of work including university lectureships and research fellowships; school teaching; performance; media (television/radio/journalism); libraries, museums and archives; and cultural administration, the heritage sector and tourism industry.

Our 2003 survey is the first of its kind, so we can quantify this expansion only to a limited extent. Where we now have 19 research-active departments, the figure in 1993 would have been 7; numbers of research-active ethnomusicologists in post have increased over the same 10-year period from roughly 12-15 to 32, and research students from about 25-30 to 80. (Membership of the BFE has increased

threefold in the same period.) By any measure, then, the size of the research community has at least doubled in the last decade.

The area is attractive to students, and the experience of almost all music departments is that significant numbers of students who are introduced to ethnomusicology as undergraduates choose to specialise in the area at postgraduate level. The broader curricula afforded by ethnomusicologists also encourage potential students to study music who would not otherwise do so. As awareness and opportunity increase, ever greater numbers of students apply to study the subject (SOAS, for instance, reports that student numbers have quadrupled in the last ten years). With over 2,000 undergraduate students studying the subject each year, there is scope for an increasing flow through into postgraduate studies, which should be stimulated further by the planned growth in masters-level programmes.

Current support for ethnomusicology research

The AHRB and ESRC recognize that ethnomusicology contributes to both the humanities and social sciences, and both bodies will consider supporting research in the field. This dual status is also evident in the institutional base. This is mostly to be found in departments of music, but there are exceptions: one of the longest-established programmes lies within the School of Anthropological Studies at QUB; at Oxford, to cite another example, students move freely between music and anthropology faculties. It is clear, however, that support for ethnomusicological research comes predominantly from departments of music, and from the AHRB and British Academy, while the ESRC funds some research where an argument can be made that the project is fundamentally social, rather than essentially musical. Research students receive support from a variety of other sources: studentships and bursaries are currently held by students at half a dozen universities; several students have received ORS awards; and other students are funded by their own governments (e.g. Iran, Isle of Man) or employers (e.g. Canadian Air Force, Dublin Conservatory). The British Library Sound Archive is able to offer support to field workers, in the form of tape stock and loans of equipment.

A total of 19 HEIs employ full-time research active staff with specialisms in ethnomusicology. Of these 19, nine departments were ranked 5* and a further six ranked 5 in the 2001 RAE. Fourteen institutions currently have research students registered in ethnomusicology. All institutions training doctoral students in ethnomusicology have their own policies regarding the training of doctoral students, although each engages with the framework set out by the Joint Statement. In many institutions Master's programmes are designed largely as training programmes for future doctoral students; other departments concentrate more on identifying and meeting individual students' training needs in the context of the research supervision process. The institutions involved run a variety of induction programmes, training modules and probation schemes to support students and maintain standards.

All institutions take the training needs of their research students very seriously, and

meet them in a variety of ways - it is particularly difficult to offer a standardised model for training given the wide range of skills involved, and the unique training requirements of each student. Relevant skills include fieldwork methods such as interviewing and audio and video recording, music transcription and analysis, and language skills. Given the diverse and often specialized nature of the skills required by ethnomusicologists, many HE institutions make use of the expertise offered by third parties: for instance, students at several universities in the south east of England use the facilities and staff expertise offered by the British Library Sound Archive (in recording and documentation) and the Horniman Museum (in organology) to meet the training needs of their students; in some cases this entails student placements. In other areas of the country institutions make similar arrangements, depending on the facilities available locally.

The size of the research community

As of July 2003, the 19 research active HEIs noted above employ a total of 31.8 FTE research-active staff in ethnomusicology; numbers in individual departments range from one (at 12 institutions) up to 6.3 (at SOAS). These specialist ethnomusicologists work with various configurations of music historians, theorists, analysts, and psychologists, folklorists, anthropologists, linguists, and many others.

Despite the expansion noted above, the size of the research-active community is still relatively small: 31.8 out of approximately 500 music academics (486 were entered in the 2001 RAE) amounts to only about 6% of the sector. There is no reason in principle why this proportion should not be at least 2 or 3 times higher, although of course the rate of expansion is limited by the availability of posts within the system.

Ethnomusicologists tend to be extremely productive both as teachers and researchers. In two thirds of departments a single academic runs all teaching in ethnomusicology. Despite that fact, available data on the award of grants by the AHRB and British Academy suggest that although ethnomusicology represents only 6% of the sector, 15-20% of research awards in music are for ethnomusicological projects (see Table 6). Several of these are extensive and ambitious projects, such as the AHRB Research Centre for Cross-Cultural Music and Dance Performance. Over the last ten years 10% of music PhDs awarded have been in ethnomusicology. Those same staff supervise an average of 2.5 research students each, a remarkably high average.

As of July 2003, 80 doctoral students are registered in ethnomusicology, of whom a quarter study part-time and only 25 are full time UK students. The proportions of EU and overseas students amongst full time doctoral candidates are 23% and 37% respectively. Thus, ethnomusicology attracts significant numbers of non-UK students to study in this country. A total of 60 Masters students specialise in ethnomusicology, spread over 13 programmes; this is likely to increase as four new Masters programmes are scheduled to be launched in the next few years, and students on the biggest programme, at the OU, filter through to the final year of their 3-year MA.

Ethnomusicology is taught at undergraduate level at 17 of the 19 research-active departments, and at a further 12 or more institutions employing part-time, non-specialist or non-research active staff. We estimate that well over 2,000 undergraduate students study ethnomusicology each year (including c. 1800 at the research-active departments).

Appendix A: Statistical data

1. *Ethnomusicology in UK HEIs: Staff and student numbers at institutions currently employing permanent research-active staff specialising in ethnomusicology (source: BFE survey of ethnomusicology programmes, June-July 2003)*

	Insts	Staff (FTE)	Postdoc Res Fells	Doctoral Students	MA Students	AHRB Doct. Students	AHRB MA Students	UG Students
TOTAL	19	31.8	10	80	60	10	2	c.1800

2. *Ethnomusicology doctoral students in UK HEIs (source: BFE survey of ethnomusicology programmes, June-July 2003).*

	Doct. Studs	UK	EU	OS	Male	Female	AHRB funded
Full Time	60	24	14	22	24	36	10
Part Time:	20	11	6	3	10	10	N/a
TOTAL	80	35	20	25	34	46	10

3. *Completed PhDs from UK HEIs, 1993-2002 (source Professor Mark Everist, University of Southampton/ NAMHE)*

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Music	46	46	46	56	72	71	87	97	51	10	582
Ethnomusicology	9	6	4	5	7	4	9	7	5	1	57

4. *Ethnomusicology in the UK, 1993-2003 (source: BFE survey of ethnomusicology programmes, June-July 2003. 1993 figures are estimates)*

	1993	2003
Institutions with FT research-active staff	7	19
Research-active staff in permanent posts (FTE)	c. 12-15	31.8
Research students	c. 25-30	80
BFE membership	123	371

5. *AHRB studentships in music (source: AHRB)*

	1999	2000	2001	2002
AHRB doctoral awards in music	21	23	21	20
AHRB doctoral awards in music (ethnomus.) ¹	?	4	3	3
AHRB masters awards in music	12	17	18	17
AHRB masters awards in music (ethnomus.)	1	2	1	2

6. *Research funding in music: numbers and amounts of awards from the British Academy and AHRB (source: British Academy/ AHRB)*

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	% of awards to ethnomus., 1999-2003
BA awards in music (No.)	3	16	21	25	22	20%
BA awards in ethnomusicology (No.)	2	3	4	5	4	
BA awards in music (£)	52463	39063	39700	79932	85094	26%
BA awards in ethnomusicology (£)	3156	10966	13520	25408	12271	
AHRB awards in music (No.)	29	27	36	37	26	15%
AHRB awards in ethnomusicology (No.)	2	3	7	5	7	
AHRB awards in music (£)	1302571	845225	1179616	1178140	850140	27% ²
AHRB awards in ethnomusicology (£)	46954	8911	891321	465699	69724	

¹ Estimates based on dissertation titles: a greater number may incorporate limited use of ethnomusicological theory and/or method.

² Percentage of disclosed amounts.

