

AUDIO/VIDEO/FILM REVIEWS

UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music. UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy 75352 Paris 07 SP France.

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The **UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music** is a series of albums (and also CDs) of traditional music that began publication in 1961 by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Collection comprises traditional music from around the world in over 125 albums released from 1961 to 2003. Over that period of time the albums were produced under a number of different company labels including Music Atlas, An Anthology of North Indian Classical Music, Music and Musicians of the World, A Musical Anthology of the Orient, and so on. From the early 1990s onward most of the recordings were re-issued in compact disk format by the company Auvidis (later known as Naïve) and by around 2003 there were a total of some 115 CDs of the re-issued recordings on compact disks. By the year 2005 these recordings were out of print, however some four years later, in 2009, UNESCO along with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. (USA) agreed to set up a program to make these recordings available once again to the public.

This comprehensive series of traditional music was originally launched in 1961 in collaboration with the ethnomusicologist Alain Daniélou (1907-1994), who was affiliated with the International Music Council (IMC, created by UNESCO in 1949), and with the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies and Documentation (Berlin) where he was a Director for a time. The recordings in this collection were rendered in the field in their natural contexts and environments and are not studio recordings. In addition, all the original disks and the re-issued CDs include commentary by noted authorities in the field of ethnomusicology, anthropology, folklore and related disciplines. The annotations that accompany the disks (and CDs) also include photographs and other illustrative materials that complement the musical examples on the respective recordings. These recordings represent an early effort and commitment of UNESCO in its program for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of mankind. The collection reflects the wide variety of musics found around the world including the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the South Pacific, Central, South, East and Southeast Asia, and Australia.

Central Asia includes music of Uzbekistan (many examples of folk music and music of the ancient courts), Turkmenistan (featuring epic singing), Tajikistan (Tajik music of Badakhsasan) and Azerbaijan (Azerbaijani Mugam). Afghani music is reflected in this UNESCO Collection by music of the Civil War years (1979-2000) and the traditional music of Herêt, including performances by female musicians, while one also finds music of the Qawal from Pakistan.

North Indian music traditions are generously covered, possibly because of the academic and professional interest of Alain Daniélou who carried out extensive research and wrote extensively on the music of North India. The Indian musics covered include the genres of dhrupad singing and other vocal music, many kinds of folk music traditions, and the instrumental classical music of both the north and south of India. The music of Nepal and Tibet are represented in this collection with ritual musics, and one album is devoted to Bengali traditional folk music.

Although the scope of the UNESCO Collection is world wide, there is a considerable focus on South Asian music as noted earlier, and also East and Southeast Asian musics. China is represented by music of various wind and percussive instrumental ensembles, the traditional music of Mongolia, and music from Hong Kong; while from Korea and Japan one can find religious ritual and court music as well as music that focuses on special genres such as the Buddhist *shomyo* ritual *Dai Hannya* ceremony, the Japanese *Kawachi Ondo* epics, *O-Suwa-Daiko* drumming and semi-classical and folk music forms such as songs by the Ainu people.

Southeast Asia is well represented in this UNESCO Collection with music by the *hsaing waing* orchestra and the Burmese harp of Myanmar, the music of the Chieng Mai region in Thailand, and the folk and royal music of Cambodia. From Viet Nam one finds the *ca tru* and *quan ho* traditional music forms, *Hat-Boi* court theatre music, and traditional music samples from the south of the country including the music for the *Hát Chèo* traditional folk theatre. From Laos there is folk music from the south of the country. Another album is devoted to the music of Malaysia featuring the *Mak yong* dance theatre performed in the Kelantan villages during the late 1960s as recorded by ethnomusicologist William P. Malm. In addition, at least seven albums are devoted to the music of Java and Bali featuring music of the traditional Javanese theater, music from West Java, Sundanese folk music, and music of Bali and Lombok.

Finally, aboriginal music and music of the New England Tablelands of New South Wales Australia (1850-1900), music from Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu comprise at least five albums.

Through the agreements established between UNESCO and the Smithsonian Institution (Washington D.C., USA) these recordings are now available to the public along with some 12 previously unreleased albums, including music from Afghanistan, Fiji, Japan, Oman, Peru, Portugal, Romania, South India, Uzbekistan and Venezuela. In addition, in late 2015 more re-issued CDs have become available on the music of Myanmar, Egypt, Iraq, Croatia, and Cuba. Since early 2014 specific albums are being released on a near-weekly basis until the entire collection is available in digital format, in streaming services, in on-demand hardcopy (CDs) and through library subscription (see www.folkways.si.edu). Some vendors are also making the CDs available today in special offers online (see www.worldmusicstore.com).

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