

Multidisciplinary symposium *Lullabies, Histories, and Conscience*

February 3rd and 4th 2022 – Université Grenoble Alpes

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Call for Papers

While numerous collections of lullabies from many countries exist, as do many recordings, scholarship concerning the analysis or the uses of the lullaby are, even today, very rare¹. In the field of ethnomusicology, Constantin Brăiloiu's work on Romanian music² was followed by a number of studies on national or regional repertoires aiming to identify common musical characteristics, but without focusing specifically on lullabies.

The purpose of this colloquium is to question what lullabies reveals about the histories, movements, but also the traumas of different cultures and peoples, in a transhistorical and transdisciplinary perspective. What do lullabies teach us about the sometimes partial or fragmentary history of circulations and migrations? What is the importance of these repertoires in the oral transmission of the history of peoples? Is there a "cathartic" function of lullabies dealing with traumatic episodes? What are the effects of lullabies, their words, and the voice of their interpreter on the child's brain in the process of appeasement aimed at falling asleep?

Beyond these two days of meetings, the project aims to encourage scientific exchange in a multidisciplinary dynamic that brings together musicologists, artists, historians, ethnologists and ethnomusicologists, sociologists, linguists, neuroscientists, psychologists, and therapists on a national and international level with a view to broader reflections and subsequent publications.

Proposals for papers may fall within, but not be limited to, any of the following areas:

A. Circulations and cultural transfers

As the example of the origin of the Spanish word for lullaby shows – "*Nana, nanita*", beginning the song, derives from "*nám, nám, nám*" signifying "sleep, sleep, sleep" in Arabic – the repertoire of lullabies is rich in information on the circulation of populations over the centuries: the migration of nomadic populations from the East to the West, the Arab domination followed by the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609 in the Hispanic sphere, the forced uprooting of populations reduced to slavery, all of these are found in the aesthetic evolution of lullabies in each geographical sphere. The search for musical exoticism in the Romantic period and the desire for universalism in the 20th century, the travels of artists associated with the collections infuse the scholarly repertoire which is enriched by the contribution of traditional or popular aesthetics³. Some musical styles related to the lullaby, such as the *nana* of the flamenco, show a musical

¹ See the work of musicologist Annie LABUSSIÈRE, but also Anne BUSTARRET, *L'oreille tendre : Pour une première éducation auditive*, Paris, éd. ouvrières, 1982; Marina ALTMANN DE LITVAN (dir.), *La berceuse : Jeux d'amour et de magie*, Ramonville-Saint-Agne, Érès, 2001; Andy ARLÉO and Julie DELALANDE (dir.), *Cultures enfantines. Universalité et diversité*, Rennes, PUR, 2010; César SÁNCHEZ ORTIZ and Aránzazu SANZ TEJEDA (dir.), *La voz de la memoria, nuevas aproximaciones al estudio de la literatura popular de tradición infantil*, Cuenca, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2019.

² Constantin BRĂILOIU, *Esquisse d'une méthode de folklore musical*, Paris, Fischbacher, 1932.

³ César SÁNCHEZ ORTIZ and Pedro C. CERRILLO (dir.), *Presencia del cancionero popular infantil en la lírica hispánica*, Cuenca, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2013.

syncretism that needs to be analyzed more precisely. Concerning the circulation of repertoires within political, religious, social, or ethnic groups, the processes of learning and transmission also merit study, potentially from a comparative perspective. Proposals for papers on periods prior to the 20th and 21st centuries will be particularly appreciated.

B. The transmission of traumatic memory

Throughout the centuries, many lullabies have been used to transmit traumatic memories linked to conflicts or persecutions of a political, racial or religious nature: the famous "Cossack lullaby" collected in the 19th century, the Yiddish or Sephardic lullabies commemorating pogroms or the exile of Jewish populations, the gypsy lullabies evoking the fate of marginalized populations, the lullabies composed in concentration camps or those of Atahualpa Yupanqui, imprisoned under the regime of Juan Perón, are some examples. Beyond the memorial and testimonial aspect of this repertoire, which addresses a political, religious or cultural community, its challenge and interest also lays in what it says about the destiny of individuals. The study of these repertoires also questions the initiatory aspect of songs whose violent text or unexpected character contrast strikingly with their musical aesthetic.

C. What science tells us about lullabies

In the field of neuroscience and cognitive science, many studies have been conducted on the influence of music – including some lullabies – on young children⁴. The beneficial effects of voice and words in falling asleep remain to be explored. Studies on the stressful or negative effects of lullaby repertoires that reflect episodes of violence are almost non-existent. Similarly, there is a lack of research on lullabies and their cognitive impact. It may also be relevant to look at current research in music therapy, particularly the one which concerns work on the corpus of lullabies with populations that have been forced into exile or emigration.

D. Performative and literary lullabies

"Put on paper, caught in the order of the page and passed through the sieve of the printing press, the written lullaby also undergoes the erasure of its ritual dimension⁵." The lullaby is above all performative, despite the diversity of the cultural forms it can assume. The lullaby's passage to the written word sometimes involves an extraction of the soothing function, an aestheticization aimed at making a literary work; thus the lullabies written by Aleksander Kulisiewicz in Sachsenhausen are not all intended to be sung, but rather read like poems by an adult audience. This passage from the oral to the written word and all the losses it induces might nourish further reflections.

E. Constitution of a corpus

Although a number of collections already exist, it seems important to look for new sources in various geographical areas to allow a real dialogue between the repertoires of lullabies; various projects have been carried out in recent years, notably around the question of the place of lullabies in the trajectories of exile⁶. Proposals concerning the constitution of a corpus, organized by geographical area or according to the areas mentioned above, will be welcome.

Proposals for papers in French or English (approximately 500 words), accompanied by a short biography, should be submitted by January 5, 2022 to berceuses2022-uga@sciencesconf.org.

⁴ In addition to the work of Maya GRATIER (Université de Nanterre), Emmanuel DEVOUCHE (Université de Paris), and Sandra Trehub (University of Toronto), many studies have been published by *Advances in Infancy Research*, *Infancy*, *Infant Behaviour and Development*, and *Journal of Caring Sciences*.

⁵ Marie-Christine VINSON, « La berceuse, une oralité perdue ? », *Pratiques* [Online], No. 183-184, 2019.

⁶ Josselyn GUILLARMOU, « Chanter les mémoires de l'enfance et de l'exil », *Hommes & migrations* [Online], No. 1329, 2020.