

Canada Research Chair in Ethnomusicology at Memorial University of Newfoundland

Among the remarkably few Canada Research Chairs that universities have designated for Fine Arts disciplines, Memorial University of Newfoundland succeeded in establishing a CRC in Ethnomusicology. Dr. Beverley Diamond recently moved from York University in Toronto to St. John's to fill the position. While part of her work there will continue to involve indigenous musicians in both North America and Scandinavia, she will also coordinate a number of projects relating to the diverse traditional music of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as other locales. Already in process at MUN is a proposal to establish a Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media, and Place, a facility that would house a small conference center, multi-media production studio, and audio restoration facility. One aim is to enable projects that build on the rich archival resources of the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), making some of the more than 40,000 audio recordings more accessible to the public. Memorial University is also developing a graduate program in Ethnomusicology.

Diamond explains the intellectual objectives of her research program as follows:

My overarching aim is to explore how media reshapes the meaning of the "local" in broader contexts. That is to say, my research will spearhead a range of projects on issues faced by musicians, technicians, producers, marketers and listeners when they "translate" music that is deeply invested with place-related and community-based meaning – that is, music that is often labelled "traditional" – for circulation via transnational media and global networks. This broad objective will underpin studies that explore questions such as the following: how live performance informs recording, and vice versa; how musicians participate in networks that extend beyond the local; what preferences musicians, producers, and technicians have about the sound ideal and "arrangements" of music; how disjunctures between different artistic visions are resolved; how lines are drawn concerning the appropriateness of machines as replacements for human sound producers; how and why hybrid traditions and/or the values that inform them are brought

together; why musicians may choose to produce recordings locally, nationally, or internationally, and what is lost or gained by those decisions; how producers and mixers embed social values in the post-production manipulation of sound; how the social relations of studio production may vary for musicians from different ethnocultural traditions, genders, or ages; how available technologies may circumscribe the sound of a particular place; how contextual information is represented for outsiders; how different listeners come to belong to different interpretive communities; and how discourses of individual, collective, and place-related identity emerge in relation to all of the above.

Beverley Diamond has recently been joined by Postdoctoral Research Associate Dr. Johanne Devlin Trew, who proposes to study concepts of Irishness and place in the Irish Newfoundland musical community.

Some Project Initiatives:

- Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media, and Place.
- Postdoctoral Research Associate position.
- Co-ordination and facilitation of research projects on musical traditions of the province and region.
- Extension of contextual research for MUNFLA collections.
- Collection from key tradition bearers in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Case studies of individual recording projects, especially vis à vis the negotiation of copyright, as well as production questions specified above.
- Interdisciplinary graduate program in Ethnomusicology.
- International speakers series
- Digitization of MUNFLA catalogue and recordings and linkages with other sound archives in Atlantic Canada.
- CD series based on MUNFLA materials.
- Interactive website.