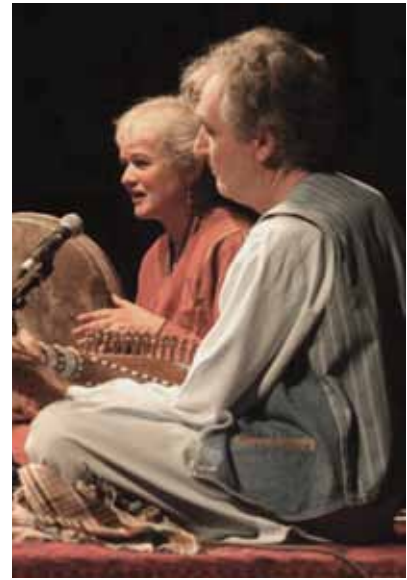


Ethnomusicology becomes newest Five College certificate program



The 18-member Smith College Gamelan Ensemble, performing in the 2006 Five College World Music Festival, which was sponsored by the Five College ethnomusicologists.



John Baily and Veronica Doubleday, scholars visiting in 2010.

The newest Five College certificate program has long been the center of faculty collaboration among the campuses, so much so in fact that despite beginning to enroll students just last fall, it will already see its first graduates this spring.

Ethnomusicology joins a dozen other certificate programs ranging from African studies to cognitive neuroscience as a field that students may explore in addition to their work within their majors. Akin to academic minors, certificate programs offer students the opportunity for focused study in areas most campuses couldn't offer alone. In the 2009–2010 academic year, 64 students earned certificates.

As described on the ethnomusicology website, "While music is the centerpiece of the certificate program, the topics that appear under the rubric of 'ethnomusicology' extend far beyond 'music in a cultural context' to include history, political science, economics, evolution, science and technology, physiology, media studies, and popular culture studies, among others."

"It will create a structured path for people wanting to pursue the subject," according to Jeffers Engelhardt, assistant professor of music at Amherst College and an organizer of the program. The certificate program grew out of conversations among faculty members over the last three years, in which "we realized the truly tremendous diversity and experience of ethnomusicology faculty in the valley," said Engelhardt.

Five College ethnomusicology faculty members focus on subjects as diverse as post-Soviet religious orthodox Christian renewal music in Estonia, Appalachian string band music, Nikkei Brazilian communities in Japan, improvised music and experimentalism in African American communities, popular music of the Islamic world, and the history of musical instruments.

Such a wide range of faculty expertise not only makes the program possible, but makes it of national note, "It's rare to have this many specialists in such a small place," says Engelhardt.

"There are a couple of comparable programs nationally, but that we can draw on faculty from across the Five Colleges gives this program a unique breadth and depth."

Five College ethnomusicology faculty members have been collaborating for some 15 years, and have added breadth to their own expertise by hosting visiting artists and scholars, such as John Baily and Veronica Doubleday last spring. The experts on music, culture and censorship in Afghanistan performed a public concert, screened and discussed two documentaries and lectured on music and censorship in Afghanistan across the five campuses.

By working within a Five College certificate program, ethnomusicology faculty will be able to expand on such offerings and build a stronger program, according to Engelhardt. "Having a certificate program will raise the awareness of ethnomusicology in the valley."

—*Elisabeth Sweeney AC '11*