Few musical traditions simply "disappear."
Most are actively "disappeared" by intolerance, laws, bureaucratic
action/inaction, and changing economic and social processes. Should scholars do anything about this? In
2006, enough member nations had ratified the UNESCO
International Convention for the Safeguarding of
Intangible Cultural Heritage to enable it to enter into force.
This presentation is based on the author's experience
with the earlier UNESCO program of the Proclamation of
Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of
Humanity when he served as Secretary General of the
International Council for Traditional Music. He will also
draw on his own field research as well as discussions of
the effectiveness of cultural policies implemented
following a given musical form to be a Masterpiece in
order to address whether it is possible to safeguard
intangible cultural heritage, and if it is, whether
we should try.