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## **Foundation for Endangered Languages – FEL XIX 2015 New Orleans**

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### **Foundation for Endangered Languages XIX Conference to be held at Tulane University, Oct. 7-10, 2015** *The Music of Endangered Languages*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA**, (September 29, 2015) – The international organization, Foundation for Endangered Languages, will hold its 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference Wednesday, October 7 – Friday, October 9, 2015, on the campus of Tulane University at the Lavin Bernick Center, Room 213. There will also be a welcome reception on Tuesday evening, October 6, from 5-7pm, and on Saturday, event coordinators have scheduled a special presentation from some of Louisiana’s indigenous communities—the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of LA, the Coushatta Tribe, and the United Houma Nation.

FEL, as it is more commonly referred to, has its home base in England, and holds annual meetings around the world. The foundation aims to raise awareness of endangered languages, both inside and outside the communities where they are spoken, through all channels and media. Additionally, the group supports the use of endangered languages in all contexts, at home, in education, the media, and in social, cultural and economic life where possible. Members monitor linguistic policies and practices, and seek to influence the appropriate authorities where necessary. More importantly, there is a focus on the support of documentation of endangered languages, by offering financial assistance, training, or facilities for the publication of results. Lastly, but not least of all, FEL seeks to collect and make available information of use in the preservation of endangered languages and the dissemination of information on all of the above activities as widely as possible.

FEL is led by Nicholas Ostler, who serves as the Director for this impressive initiative. Board members for FEL have hailed from Great Britain, Canada,

Australia, New Zealand, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States and many other countries.

**This year's keynote speakers include two experts in the field of linguistics: Susanna Zaraysky and Christopher Moseley.**

**Susanna Zaraysky** has studied eleven languages (English, Russian, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Ladino, Hebrew, Arabic, and Hungarian) and speaks eight of them. Born in the former USSR, Susanna has traveled to over 50 countries. Her goal is to empower people to use music and the media to learn foreign languages.

Susanna is the co-producer of the documentary, [\*Saved by Language\*](#), about how a Sephardic Bosnian boy saved his life in the Holocaust by speaking in Ladino, an endangered Judeo-Spanish language. The documentary will be shown on Wednesday, October 7, at 6pm in Room 213 of the Lavin-Bernick Center on Tulane's campus.

She is the author of the books, [\*Language is Music\*](#) (*El idioma es música* in Spanish and *Idioma é música* in Portuguese) and [\*Travel Happy, Budget Low\*](#). The Russian publishing house of Mann, Ivanov and Ferber published the Russian translation of *Language is Music*, [\*Легкий способ быстро выучить иностранный язык с помощью музыки\*](#).

She hosted her own segment in Spanish on the *Al Despertar* morning show on Univision San Francisco called "*El idioma es música*" where she taught English grammar and pronunciation via songs.

Susanna has been featured on CBS, CNN, MTV, the BBC, The Guardian, the Filipino Channel, Yahoo Finance, Fox Business News, Univision, Telefutera, and MSNBC. She has given presentations at the Defense and State Departments of the United States to help diplomats and military personnel learn languages using music.

The US State Department has organized presentations for Susanna to speak to teachers, university professors and students in Bosnia, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Qatar about using music and the media to learn foreign languages. She has also spoken in Denmark and Laos and at Stanford, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of San Francisco, San José State University and the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Zaraysky's address is entitled "Do-Re-Mi Breathes Life Into Dying Languages."

**Christopher Moseley** is the General Editor of the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. From 2007 to 2011 he was a Teaching Fellow in Latvian at the

School of Slavonic and East European Studies at University College, London. Originally from Australia, his first objective in traveling to Britain was to study Scandinavian languages in 1974, but since then his main interests have slipped eastwards, to Finland and the Baltic countries. While working as a journalist and translator specializing in Baltic affairs at BBC Monitoring, Caversham, he completed a M.Phil., also at SSEES, on the dying Livonian language of Latvia – a close relative of Estonian. After 19 years' service at the BBC, he became a freelance translator and editor in 2005. He is the author of *Colloquial Estonian* and co-author of *Colloquial Latvian* for Routledge. He has also co-edited the Routledge *Atlas of the World's Languages* and edited the same publisher's *Encyclopedia of the World's Endangered Languages* and most recently the third edition of the *Atlas of the world's languages in danger* for UNESCO. His most recent work is a revision of George Campbell's *Routledge Handbook of Scripts and Alphabets* (2012). He translates into English from Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Finnish, Danish and Swedish.

Moseley's presentation is entitled "Getting Their Voices Heard: Endangered Languages and the Recording Industry."

Registration is ongoing for the conference.

**The Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana and Tulane University** are hosting the conference this year. The Tribe and the university have been collaborating for the past 5 years on reviving the Tunica Language. Tulane is working with and providing support to the Tunica-Biloxi Language and Culture Revitalization Program as members of the tribe conduct language learning classes, workshops featuring the language and cultural craft activities (basket-making, stickball construction and game playing, jewelry-making, and regalia design). Language project partners are working on a new and updated grammar and dictionary based upon the foundation work laid out by renowned linguist Dr. Mary Haas, Ph.D., Yale, who documented the last known Tunica speaker, Sesostrie Youchigant, in the 1930s and 1940s.

Contact Info for Guest Speakers:

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Photos:



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