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Brenda M. Romero

Introduction

American music exists not only in the realm of sound, but as a cultural intellectual legacy of a discipline that was born in Europe in the late 19th century and blossomed in the United States to help shape music and humanities scholarship worldwide. Ethnomusicology took on this moniker in the United States during the early part of the 20th century, but only following the groundbreaking fieldwork innovations a German immigrant, Franz Boas, introduced to his anthropology students when he asked them to collect not only textiles and other material artifacts, and cultural artifacts like myths and stories, but also to record the music of a given population. Roger Sanjek writes of Boas's activist nature:

A victim of anti-Semitic affronts while a student in Germany, Boas abhorred any linkage of group ancestry with feelings of superiority; he actively opposed such popular views on the basis of his understanding of the race-language-culture non-equation. In a commencement address to African-American students at Atlanta University in 1906, Boas stressed the social, not biological, causes of Black subordination in the United States, and urged appreciation of the iron-age civilizations existing in Africa before European contact “cut short” their cultural advance.¹

The emphasis on Native American musical cultures in studies formative of the discipline called “comparative musicology” also illuminates the foundation of ethnomusicology as defined by various scholars shaped by Boas, his student George Herzog (1901–83), and for Bruno Nettl (born in Prague in 1930), an important figure of the next generation. Nettl arrived in the U.S. at the age of 10, when his parents sought asylum after fleeing Germany in 1939. As certainly as they were caught up in the turbulence of those times, the central founders

of the discipline of ethnomusicology responded to 20th century politics as they reflected on the results of forced migrations and their subsequent impact on identity formations facilitated by expressive culture. The themes of migration, asylum from political and religious oppression, and identity and hybrid formations expressed through music and the arts overall, have affected many generations of United States citizens in all walks of life, and have constituted the elixir from which democracy is distilled.

Another result of the wondrous mix and match that is the fabric of democratic American societies is a push to diversify university curricula to further explicate our similarities and differences. I wondered how to use comparison to help achieve the production of such new knowledge. Following on the heels of early comparative and systematic musicologists and taking my cue from one of Professor Nettl's top students, I modeled my first course in this realm on Dr. Victoria Levine's very contemporary "Comparative Music Theory" approach with undergraduate music majors at the Colorado College, which focused on transcription to a large extent. I take this opportunity to thank her for her guidance at that juncture. It has finally led to this volume of articles, but there is more to the story.

Highlights of my teaching career are almost synonymous with my participation in the College Music Society (CMS). As a board member I was privy to many excellent conversations about music teaching among scholars across all music disciplines. I am particularly proud to have founded and hosted the CMS Summer Institute on the Pedagogies of World Music Theories (IPWMT) as a bridge between ethnomusicology and music theory. I worked closely with Dr. Paul Humphreys (Loyola Marymount University) and Dr. Jonathon Grassé, composer-ethnomusicologists who had developed a new curriculum for ethnomusicology when it became a department at UCLA in 1989. With office support from CMS and in-kind and financial support from the College of Music and University of Colorado's IMPART award,² I hosted the IPWMT, a five-day workshop for music professors across the US (one from Singapore), first in summer 2005, and again in 2007 and 2010, and there is an open possibility of continuing the IPWMT in the future. Faculty presenters included ethnomusicologists Dr. Victoria Levine (Colorado College); Dr. Sarah Morelli (University of Denver); Dr. Kwasi Ampene (then at University of Colorado Boulder [UCB], now at University of Michigan); Dr. Jay Keister (UCB); systematic musicologist Dr. John Hajda (University of California, Santa Barbara); and composer-ethnomusicologists Dr. Paul Humphreys (Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles); Dr. Jonathon Grassé (California State University, Dominguez Hills); Dr. Michael Tenzer (University of British Columbia), and myself,

I believe my greatest pedagogical accomplishment is the development of the World Music Theories courses that grew out of the IPWMT. In fall 2009, I began teaching a doctoral seminar so titled, exploring comparison as a means of creating new knowledge; gratifyingly, the course appealed to performance majors and academic music graduate students. Its premise is that one can only appreciate something in relation to something else. Rather than engage this process to decide that one music is “better” or “more intelligent” than another, the exercise requires seeing the similarities and differences as musical concepts, and as intellectual property. I thank Dan Obluda for pointing to Kunz Dittmer’s claim that only by comparison do we truly discover what makes a culture’s music unique.³ The final paper includes comparisons with the practices and values of western art music. In the end students realize that all musics are valid in their own ways and students further their understanding of music and performance as “text.”

In fall 2012, the UCB College of Music Curriculum Committee approved World Music Theories (MUSC 4168 / 5168), as an upper division requirement for students in the BA Musicology—Brenda M. Romero

World Musics degree program, and counting as an elective in Music Theory. Nonetheless, we avoid using the term “music theory,” since it could easily be understood to denote the western tonal system as unmarked; we prefer rather to discuss musical concepts in world musics as “theories.” This initiative parallels “Analytical Approaches to World Music,” which welcomes any and all perspectives and theoretical insights. The World Music Theories approach acknowledges that ideas develop in unique ways and connote unique cultural nuances without which intercultural dialogue is greatly reduced and impoverished. Additionally, ethnomusicologist Dr. Richard Wolf at Harvard University has been central to another related initiative, “Theorizing the Local”⁴; Dr. Wolf spoke via Skype with the World Music Seminar for Performance doctoral students in spring of 2016. I have previously mentioned the pedagogical applications that Victoria Lindsay Levine has brought to this project in her own teaching initiatives.

An interesting compilation of the term papers written by musicology doctoral students in my fall 2015 World Music Theories seminar comprises this special edition of the *American Music Research Center Journal* for which I am serving as guest editor, in collaboration with Thomas Riis. The papers have undergone elaborate editing over the last year, not only by Professor Riis and me, but also by our Guest Student Editor, Kelsey A. Fuller, who provided critical feedback to the students in trimming and developing their pieces to the required length. In addition to her own chapter, Ms. Fuller offered a close

reading of the whole volume, several editorial suggestions, and her own synopsis of the project below; her clarity and eloquence much surpass my own.

I am deeply grateful to Ms. Fuller and Professor Riis for their support in bringing this project to fruition. I also wish to thank the Dean of the College of Music, Robert Shay for his support of our program, and the rest of the ethnomusicology faculty, Drs. Jay Keister, Austin Okigbo, and Benjamin Teitelbaum for directing donor financial support to this project.

NOTES

¹ Roger Sanjek, "Boas, Franz," in *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, eds. A. Barnard and J. Spencer (London: Routledge, 1996), A–Z 113.

² IMPART: Implementation of Multicultural Perspectives and Approaches in Research and Teaching

³ Quoted in Alexander L. Ringer, "One World or None? Untimely Reflections on a Timely Musicological Question," in *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music*, eds. Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 188.

⁴ Richard K. Wolf, ed. *Theorizing the Local: Music, Practice, and Experience in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Kelsey A. Fuller

The Project Description

Since its publication in 1964, Alan P. Merriam's *The Anthropology of Music* has remained a canonic piece of pedagogical literature for students of ethnomusicology. Therein, Merriam proposed a three-part model for theorizing musical meanings: "conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself."¹ This model was designed to bridge the social sciences and humanities, the perspectives of the people being studied and the analyst, and the sociocultural and structural, while inviting considerations of symbolism, change, history, aesthetic, and complex interrelationships of elements within cultures. Brenda M. Romero built upon Merriam's model to foreground considerations of central synergetic convergences, which relates these distinct parts into a unified whole, with meanings that contain more social significance and broader relevance due to their encompassing and composite nature.²

With this framework in mind, my colleagues and I were given the task of exploring and theorizing some of the conceptions, behaviors, and sounds associated with a wide variety of genres and styles of music making from around the world. Far from the realm of Comparative Musicology of the past, these studies may make use of comparisons to illustrate the applicability (or inapplicability) of several examples from the diverse body of World Music Theories to discuss synergy and meaning. Here, we consider musical recordings, transcriptions, texts, and other mediums such as film and dance in conjunction with ethnographic theories to explicate synergetic and holistic meanings, taking into account the cultural, social, and musical components acting together.

The meanings which are obscured by failing to consider broader components and contexts of music demonstrate why the field of ethnomusicology—as we know it in the United States in general and in Boulder, Colorado specifi-

cally—has in general moved towards interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches. In this same vein, we must also seek to build frameworks that will grant local theoretical conceptions an authority that is equal to—or ideally, greater than—the researcher’s own comfortable musical notions. As creative innovation permeates or transcends traditional musics, and as the local environments are influenced by and mediate global forces, the contexts of these musics change. These dynamic conditions require appropriate and flexible theories that allow for more nuanced understandings. Advocating for applicable theories that address musical expressions in their own complex terms, as intellectual property, is perhaps one of the most nonintrusive and immediately necessary contributions we can make within our discipline towards better understandings of the diverse music and communities among us. What we hope to demonstrate here are examples of approaches and tools that can and should be united with other local and ethnomusicological theoretical frameworks to present discussions of world musics in relatable yet respectful ways.

NOTES

¹ Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 32–34.

²Brenda M. Romero, “A Theory of Infinite Variation,” in *Discourses in African Musicology: J. H. Kwabena Nketia Festschrift*, eds. Kwasi Ampene et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Maize Books, 2015), 136.

Mason Brown

Meaning, Melody, and YouTube in Irish and Tibetan Traditional Musics

Irish and Tibetan traditional musics have several commonalities. Both are innately tied to movement, and have distinctive rhythmic figures embodied in a sounded dance wherein the body becomes an expressive instrument for the enactment of rhythms that people in each culture identify with ethnically. These musics have functioned to help build and maintain such identities in the face of political repression and within the unmoored space of exile and diaspora. Musically both are primarily melodic, and blend instruments in a heterophonic texture. Both are aesthetically conservative traditions that resist change and have been viewed in essentialist ways in their respective cultures. In both these musics seemingly infinite variation is possible within their rather restricted forms. These and other musical features can hold meanings and “induce imaginings” for those who hear them.¹ In recent decades, Tibetans within the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and in the diaspora have used YouTube videos to promote pan-Tibetan identity and to counter the repression of the PRC.² YouTube videos enrich the semiotic potential of music by adding the element of visual images as well as listener comments, which provide a hermeneutical platform that is open to the public. This potential for communicating meaning about ethnic identity is also utilized in videos of Irish music. This paper will look for similarities in how cultural/ethnic identity might be communicated by YouTube videos of traditional music from Ireland and from the Tibetan diaspora. First, it will look at the music sound and how it is felt in the body—it will ask what sounds that, when heard by a comprehending listener, mark the music as uniquely Irish or Tibetan. How are these sounds translated somatically into dance steps that mark the essential points of the rhythmic cycle? Finally, it will ask what semiotic content might be present in the live sound or in the recorded video which could communicate ideas about

ethnic identity? The images in the videos will be examined to see if they are reinforcing meanings communicated by the music and, in the case of the Tibetan example, the song text.

In most Tibetan music videos of “folk” (as well as popular) songs, the visual content is often tied to the words, with images of landscapes, deities, and lamas (Buddhist teachers) passing across the screen as they are mentioned in the text. Sometimes these images give clues to hidden or coded meanings in the text, such as when a song produced in China speaks of the Dalai Lama in coded references, while the corresponding video, produced in exile, shows images of him whenever those code words appear in the lyrics.³

A similar coding of language has historically occurred in Irish song as well, in the form of the *aisling*, or “dream poem” genre of Irish poetry, in which Ireland is represented as a woman to disguise a dangerous nationalistic message. In Irish dance music, some tunes may hold coded meanings in their titles, but all music can carry associations of nationalism or ethnic solidarity invested in its *sound*. When the Irish were restricted by the British penal laws (1690–1820s) with respect to property ownership, language, dress, religion, music, and dance, Irish people were forbidden to own or play instruments. Irish music was thereby driven underground, forced to survive within the body—expressed as melodies sung with vocables only, in the form known as *lilting*.

In general, videos of Irish traditional music nowadays are usually performances filmed for television, often at pubs (or on sets modeled after a pub interior), one of the main sites of traditional music-making since the mid-twentieth century. They do not feature the cinematic-style production of their Tibetan counterparts. In both Irish and Tibetan videos, certain instruments, or combinations of instruments, are visual and aural markers of ethnicity, reinforcing any such meaning present in the music. For Tibetan folk music, these instruments comprise the classic “Lhasa” ensemble: the *dranyen*, or lute; the *lingbu*, or flute; the *piwang*, or spike fiddle; and the *yangchen*, or hammered dulcimer. For Irish music, the harp and uilleann bagpipes have special status, but any combination of fiddle, wooden flute, tin whistle, accordion (“box”), tenor banjo, concertina, and *bodhrán* (frame drum) is associated with Irish identity.

In the Irish tradition, music is generally separated into two different domains: instrumental dance tunes and unaccompanied song.⁴ Dance tunes conform to various rhythmically marked genres, such as the jig, reel, hornpipe, slide, polka, mazurka, and set-dance. They are generally in binary form, and are modal, with Mixolydian and Dorian tunes being common in addition to major and minor keys. What has been described as ornamentation, but what is actu-

ally an integral style of articulation derived from uilleann piping, is important in that it is necessary to the identity of the tune. Without the use of instrumental articulations such as the “cut,” “roll,” and “bowed” or “staccato” “triplet,” Irish music ceases to sound Irish. While the importance of dance to Irish music is crucial, it is often listened to without dancing, in pub and house sessions, and in concerts. In this paper, when I refer to Irish music, or Irish traditional music, I am speaking of this dance music.

There is really no *one* Tibetan music, but a variety of regional and local dialects. For the purposes of this paper, “Tibetan music” refers to the diasporic construction of Tibetan folk music as promoted by the Tibetan Institute for the Performing Arts (TIPA) in Dharamsala, India, and as embraced by some Tibetan-speaking Nepalis. This Tibetan folk music is mostly pentatonic or hexatonic (modal, major, or minor), and strophic. Songs are often in the verse form aaba’a’. Tibetan music in triple meter is rare; melodies are almost always in a loping, duple meter, with the melodic apex occurring in b (this is also true of many Irish tunes).⁵ There is no separation between song and dance music in the Tibetan tradition, and songs are simultaneously sung and danced. Besides dance music, like *töshay* and *korshay* (circle dance), Tibetan music has genres designated for work and other activities like beer-drinking and weddings, which can also feature a corresponding dance. Historically, Tibetan musical instruments were used mainly in Lhasa and central Tibet, leaving the music in far-flung Tibetan cultural areas largely unaccompanied. However, since the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, the Lhasa ensemble instruments have spread throughout the diaspora and back to various regions in Tibet. The *dranyen*, with its re-entrant tuning,⁶ creates a characteristic octave displacement as it heterophonically doubles the sung melody. This results in ambiguity as to whether the melody is ascending or descending, an effect that can be heard as a marker for Tibetan music.⁷

Both of these musics have specific, organic rhythms that are iconic of their respective cultures, and can be seen as *topics* as described by Óscar Hernández Salgar, in that they are used redundantly to the point that they produce familiarity among listeners, and become conventionally associated with their socio-political identities or imagined national character.⁸ Through repeated hearing of such topics, listeners develop stylistic comprehension, allowing them to sense the parameters within which variation is allowed, and to produce meaning for themselves linked to the music. This happens through an embodied process by which the musical “motion” inherent in the underlying rhythm is understood metaphorically as movement through time and space felt within the body. This can occur on multiple levels—the loping rhythm of the *töshay*, for example, could index the actual steps of the dance, and at the

same time bring to mind the feeling of riding a horse. Similarly, the lopsided rhythm of the jig could trigger the somatic memory of the dance steps, while simultaneously invoking the feeling of “lift” that is considered essential by Irish music culture-bearers.

Both Irish and Tibetan traditional musics hold nationalistic associations to mythic versions of their respective countries, and are to some extent, “invented traditions” in the Hobsbawmian sense.¹⁰ For Hernández Salgar, such national identities imputed to music are a function of “noo-politics,” drawn from Lazzarato, in which “publics” are created through motivated signs (i.e., not arbitrary but directly related to their objects) leading to a “deformation of sense” whereby a myth acts on an image (or in this case a musical feature) to produce an idea.¹¹ This allows socio-political meaning to be attached to topics and gestures that are already recognized somatically, but in a further removed conceptual domain. Thus, the association of Tibetan folk music with the idealized landscape of a free Tibet imaginary, or the feeling of tribal belonging and shared struggle often experienced by American enthusiasts of Irish music are “mythic” and are the second step in a semiotic chain—an articulation among culture and society, sounding materials, and the bodies of listeners/performers.¹²

In looking at my examples, I will consider some of the questions proposed by Hernández Salgar for a semiotical-hermeneutic approach:

What are the elements present in the musical sound that serve as a basis for the categorization (gestures, melodies, timbres, harmonic progressions, rhythmic patterns, and so on)?

In this history of sound are there iconic relationships or indexes with some extramusical reality? Are there motivated signs?

Is there a degree of conventionalization of these relationships? Is it possible to speak of the presence of topics in the musical text? Are there communicable cognitive types? What support exists for the circulation of these cognitive types (mediums of communication, guilds, institutions, and so on)?¹³

Applying these questions to examples of Irish and Tibetan traditional musics enables us to “examine how experience becomes public through processes of categorization and conventionalization,” and tells us something about how power flows through music in terms of the promotion or suppression of such categories and conventions by various agents in differential power relationships.

Tibetan and Irish music both use seemingly endless variation within somewhat limited parameters of musical form. In Brenda M. Romero’s “Theory of Infinite Variation,” human music-making is seen as performing an adaptive function tied to the need for constant renewal of, among other things, collective narratives and imaginaries.¹⁵ I will work under the assumption that Tibetan and Irish music traditions “codify communal ideas of human interdependence, and demonstrate an innate drive for maintenance as well as infinite variation, or renewal.”¹⁶ For Romero, Alan Merriam’s three categories of musical sound, behavior, and concept affect one another mutually, and have a synergistic relationship in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Romero says “synergy helps provide access to what Stone calls ‘inner time,’ or ‘a qualitative time’ that becomes more important than ‘outer time’ intermittently, as it does in ritualized performative activities.”¹⁷

Seen in this light, the mythic second step in Hernández Salgar’s semiotic chain—that of cultural meanings and associations—is a kind of synergistic added value, which also shows the infinite potential for music to be imbued with meaning. In considering how Irish and Tibetan traditional musics might express embodied and conceptual meanings in chains of signification, I will seek to define and delineate the concepts involved in reliance on Romero’s “synergy cube,” a three-dimensional matrix that encompasses the parameters of sound, behavior, and concepts; the material, social, and expressive; and the passage of time in the form of infancy, childhood, and adulthood.¹⁸

In so doing I will articulate ways in which social imperatives can be inculcated through music, thus bringing actual survival benefit to the group—and thus the members—of the cultures in question.

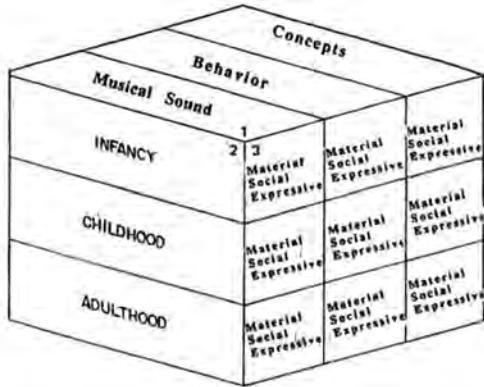


Figure 1. Romero’s “Synergy Cube,” after Wilbert, Merriam, and Kaemmer

Case Study 1: *Devanney's Goat*

In a video apparently produced by RTE (Raidió Telefís Éireann) television, but posted by Clarebannerman, Máirtín O'Connor ("box," or button accordion), Cathal Hayden (fiddle), Brendan Larrisey (fiddle), Dessie Adams (flute), Brendan O'Regan (bouzouki), and Johnny "Ringo" McDonagh (*bodhrán*), play a set of reels in Winkle's pub, in Kinvara, County Galway. The staging of this session in a pub underscores the perception of the performance's authenticity, with the players seated around two tables with pints and cigarette packets in abundance. The punters (listeners) are all watching attentively, a behavior that Irish traditional musicians generally expect. The scene depicts the community that is built through the session, which has two levels: the players, whose very mode of play is deeply communal, and the appreciative punters, who in some ways resemble the *saamī*⁷ (educated listeners) of Arabic music²⁰—in knowing when to respond with shouts and exhortations (as seen at 2:16 in the example video), and in shushing loud drinkers. These educated listeners are in search of the *craic* (good times), as are the musicians and the drinkers, and gravitate toward the music as the focus of a public, communal experience.²¹ The musicians, in turn, can feed on the attention and encouragement of the onlookers in an environment of social mixing and alcohol that is conducive to a heightened sense of connectedness. Thus, to paraphrase Simon Frith, they get to know themselves as members of a group in ways that involve cultural activity and aesthetic judgment, thereby living ideas of cultural identity in addition to simply *expressing* them.²²

This music is customarily played in "sets," or medleys of tunes, and the first one played in this video is the reel, *Devanney's Goat*. This tune is in the key of D major, and the instrumentation here provides a good example of the heterophonic texture of Irish music; the same melody is played on a variety of instruments, each with their own articulation and ornamentations. While nominally in the key of D, the tune is actually played a half-step higher.²³

As Lawrence McCullough explains, Irish music has a wide variety of styles:

Styles of traditional Irish music are continually undergoing change and have coalesced from a number of diverse sources. Some styles are representative of a particular locality, region, county, or province; others are associated with individual musicians whose playing greatly influenced their contemporaries and left a substantial imprint on the tradition's subsequent development. Some styles have adapted techniques used in the sean-nós style of Gaelic singing, while a few have borrowed heavily from other instrumental traditions. Still others have been generated by the

development of technical features peculiar to a particular instrument.²⁴

The style exhibited in this video can be characterized as belonging to a “stage” style—a highly ornamented and flashy way of playing, heavily influenced by County Sligo players such as Michael Coleman. This style has been associated with the group De Dannan, and is quite popular due to its dazzling virtuosity.

Case Study 2: Nubri Töshay

In this example, Pema Dhondrup sings a *töshay* (praise song)²⁵ for his native valley of Nubri, Nepal, in a professionally produced music video set in the local landscape.²⁶ The musical accompaniment to this song is played on the instruments of the Lhasa ensemble: *dranyen*, *piwang*, *yangchen*, and *lingbu*. These instruments play the melody of the song in a heterophonic texture, with differences in articulation according to each instrument. The *dranyen* especially is considered an emblem of Tibetan culture, being the most distinctly Tibetan in its physical form.²⁷ While Pema Dhondrup is from Nubri, at least two of the accompanying musicians on the recording, Pema Tenzin (*dranyen*), and Sonam Tsering (*piwang*), are from the Tibetan exile community, and were trained at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamsala, India. Thus this song is typical in sound for modern exiled Tibetan traditional music. The recording also has drums and bells usually reserved for ritual music. As these instruments are ordinarily not used in non-monastic music, they serve to underline the importance of the Buddhist religion in Nubri—especially its local monasteries and pilgrimage sites, which are explicitly referenced in the text and shown in the video.

The video opens with images of burning butter lamps, monks playing ritual instruments, and aerial footage of Nubri, in the visually stunning high Himalayas. Then, in what reads almost as a tourism ad, Pema sings verses written by local lama Tulku Karma Rinpoche, that emphasize the natural beauty of Nubri, its sacred mountains and historical sites, and the friendliness of the Nubri people. The images that pass across the screen are carefully coordinated with the lyrical content, as when, at 0:35, an image of Mt. Manaslu (Tibetan for “Heap of Ornaments”) appears while the lyrics say “Above is Heap of Ornaments Snow Peak, Palace of the Lords of the Three Families” (important deities in Tibetan Buddhism). During the following line, “Below is Golden-Honey Snow Peak, The practice place of Orgyen Pema,” an image of Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche, or “Orgyen Pema”) is shown.

The video goes on to show scenes of youthful dancers in traditional dress, and archery and horse riding events, as well as mentioning and showing Milarepa's and Guru Rinpoche's retreat caves, important pilgrimage sights. It also shows the singer and other youth playing at the edge of Lake Kel, one of several clear mountain lakes in Nubri. The second-to-last verse compares the four main villages of Nubri to *thunpa punshi*, the "four harmonious brothers," a motif derived from a Jataka Tale in which a hare, elephant, monkey, and bird agree amicably on their respective ages and live in harmony.²⁹ This is followed by a verse that says the people of Nubri will welcome visitors from around the world as their siblings from previous lives, accompanied by images of Pema Dhondrup receiving both a cup of butter tea in a picnic setting (a universal activity for Tibetans), as well as teachings from a lama. This mixture of specific images of, and references to, Nubri, as well as Tibetan dress and customs, simultaneously evokes Nubri's specific identity of place and greater Tibetan identity. In this way Pema Dhondrup, a Tibetan-speaking Nepali, subtly responds to the discursive dichotomy between the PRC and the Tibetan exile community to assert a third, "Himalayan" identity.³⁰

Unlike music from far Western areas of Tibet, and Ladakh, which have a wider variety of meters, music from central and eastern Tibet is almost always duple and simple, and that is how it is conceived of traditionally.³¹ However, the internal subdivision of the groove sounds more like a triplet pattern, producing a compound meter. The song is strophic, with four periods of two phrases each, in the pattern *aaba'a'*. It is in pentatonic minor, with the vocal range from C4 to G5. Since the *dranyen* has a re-entrant tuning, the melody played by the instrument stays in the lower octave during the third verse, which reaches the melody's apex, creating an ambiguity as to whether the melody is ascending or descending. The contour of each phrase is double-arched, with the overall shape of the song also being arched. The song begins with an instrumental introduction, which combines a figure that articulates the groove, with the tonic cadence of the b phrase. This groove, which is ubiquitous in Tibetan music, mirrors the pattern of dance steps which features an accent on the off-beat between beats three and four. That the groove has a kind of swung "triplet" feel can be heard in the yangchen, which plays all three notes of a "triplet" on every second beat.

Musical Features

In both Irish and Tibetan traditional musics there are special features of texture, timbre, and rhythmic pattern, that index ethnic identity and which can trigger emotional responses related to belonging. Both Tibetan and Irish cul-

tures have a history of village-based subsistence and colonial domination at different times and from different colonial forces. Such relatively hermetic conditions foster communitarian values in the realms of production and ownership, as well as an insider/outsider divide in terms of identity. Such values and boundaries are replicated and communicated through an overall instrumental sound that allows for the individuality of diverse instruments while they all participate equally—and with distinct articulations—in carrying the same melody. The communitarian values can be seen musically in that, in spite of a degree of hierarchy, no one instrument holds sway. At the same time, identifying markers, like the characteristic “roll” articulation in Irish music, or the octave displacement created by the reentrant tuning of the *dranyen* in Tibetan music, can be heard as delineating a boundary between “us” (cultural insiders with ownership of the music), and “them” (outsiders who generally do not understand the music, but who may threaten to appropriate it).

In the *Nubri Töshay* video, the communitarian values and group identities embedded in the music are reinforced by the images on the screen. Almost all the activities depicted in the video—dancing, herding, Buddhist ritual practice and study, picnicking, horseracing, and archery competition—are communal in nature. They are also activities associated with Tibetan-ness, or are thought of as distinctly Tibetan, in popular imagination. Thus the images and musical features synergistically bolster feelings of belonging and exclusivity. At the level of textual references and sites depicted, the boundaries are even more specific—they mark the line between the Nubri valley of Nepal and the rest of Tibetan culture within and outside of the borders of the historical Tibet imaginary.

In the *Devanney’s Goat* video, the communitarian nature of the musical practice in Irish traditional music is explicitly shown, which also reinforces the communalism conveyed by the heterophonic sound. The musicians form a central ring, facing not an audience, but one another in an egalitarian arrangement. Though one instrument or another might occasionally come to the forefront sonically, none is given a privileged position in space. There is, however, a boundary between the main group of musicians and the concentric circles of listeners gathered around them with reverent attention, as if observing a group of priests performing a ritual.

In both of these musics, a collection of sonically diverse instruments playing the same tune heterophonically creates a composite timbre that is instantly recognizable. In the Tibetan example, this composite timbre is centered on the *dranyen*. With its unison courses of strings picked with a plectrum, and its skin sounding membrane, the *dranyen* has a sharp, banjo-like plunkiness.

This is paired with the throaty, raspy, tone of the bowed *piwang*, which also has a skin resonating head. These are surrounded by the ghostly presence of the *yangchen*, which plays on every subdivision of the beat which an echoing repetitiveness. The *lingbu*, which is the instrument most connected to the voice, sits out the instrumental interludes between verse, instead doubling the singer, whose rustic timbre and relative lack of ornamentation evince a Western Tibetan style. The combination of these timbres evokes Tibetan-ness every bit as much as do the traditional *chuba* worn by the dancers in the video as well as the characteristically Tibetan dance steps they are performing.

While the Irish ensemble is less standardized than the Tibetan, with many combinations of instruments possible, the configuration in this example is representative. Here the button accordion plays a central role in the timbre. Its loud, nasal honk is enveloped by the double fiddles, which at times play an octave apart. The flute is difficult to hear in this example, except when it departs from the rest of the instruments in wild countermelody. All of this is underpinned by the jangly harmonic accompaniment of the bouzouki and the deep, flabby thump of the *bodhrán* which emphasize the downbeat, leaving the all-important upbeat to the melody instruments.

The heterophony is especially evident when different instruments simultaneously play a “roll,” the quintessential Irish ornament. While the fiddles articulate the figure by approaching its main note from upper and lower neighbor tones, the box is forced to play it as a “triplet,” simply repeating the note with the distinctive lopsided rhythm that backloads the notes toward either the beginning or the end of the beat.³² Ciaran Carson has pointed out the correspondence of the roll to Celtic knot work while beautifully describing its ineffability:

To define a roll is difficult—it must be heard in order to be understood, or grasped. Basically, a roll consists of a five-step rhythmic cluster: you play the note to be rolled, then a note above the anchor note (the ‘cut’), then the note, then a note below the note (the ‘tip’), and finally the note again. How you play the cut and the tip depends on whatever instrument you’re playing, and how you want to emphasize or shape the roll; they consist of the merest flick of the fingers, and seem to exist outside of conventional time, since the quintuple movement happens in triplet time. Once you learn how to do it, it is tempting to roll all over the place and reduce the structure of the tune to a tasteless slabber of ornament. It is doubly tempting because its arabesque fits nicely into the received mythology of Irish music as a *Book of Kells* cottage

industry with anonymous scribes passing time or doing time in endless loops and spirals.³³

Two rolls in succession can be heard at 0:15 on the video, a third at 0:19, and a fourth at 0:21, in which musical time does indeed seem to be momentarily altered by the rhythmic and articulative ambiguity of the heterophonic texture and composite timbre. In an example of synergy, the version of the tune that is created goes beyond its individual parts and renews the tune itself through a constant freshening in which it is never the same twice.

Dance

In an Irish Reel such as *Devanney's Goat*, a dancer would tap out each subdivision of the four-note micropulse. This micropulse has been described as having the same rhythm as the word "alligator," in which the first syllable has the strongest stress, and the third syllable has the second strongest, as in "AL-li-Ga-tor." Like the bouzouki and bodhrán, the dancer often stresses the downbeat (though the upbeat is also given stresses), leaving room for the melody instruments to accent the upbeat, providing the sense of "lift" that is essential for this music. This lift is often embodied by competent listeners, especially older men, by raising their shoulders up in a rhythmic "shrug" on every upbeat.³⁴ While the dancer's loudest tap is often on the downbeat, the lift is sometimes expressed on the upbeat by leaping or kicking. This sequence of repeatedly grounding on the downbeat and lifting on the upbeat is felt in the body even if one is not dancing, as no one is in this video. However, at 2:18 a woman behind the fiddle players can be seen starting to move as the musicians change to their last tune. She is bobbing her head and shoulders up and down to the beat, with the upward motion happening exactly on the upbeat. Even if this music is not always danced to, it still has a powerful somatic effect, causing the listener to feel it as movement in space. Even referring to the divisions of the rhythmic cycle as "downbeat" and "upbeat" echoes this metaphor of movement.

Tibetan dance of the kind that would typically be done to a song like *Nubri Tōshay* also has an aspect of lift, as well as a strong back-and-forth movement, all the while inscribing a larger circle, encompassing three dimensions of movement in space. Like Irish dance, the steps of Tibetan dance are sounded, creating a kind of percussion, or "tap dance." As mentioned above, the stressed beats, which outline the four-beat rhythmic cycle, with an added emphasis on the off-beat between the third and fourth beats. As the dancers execute these steps, they move in a clockwise circle, with men on one side and women on the other, and often with the musicians in the middle.

This formation is analogous to the mandala, or sacred circular cosmological representation in Buddhism and Hinduism. The music is the central deity and the dancers comprise the environment, delineating a filigreed periphery where each dancer is equal, while at the same time both self-sufficient and an indispensable part of the whole. Although the dancers shown in this video are dancing in a straight line in front of sacred lake Kel (1:21, 3:25), or spread out in a staggered line in a field (3:59), a common adaptation to the demands of stage or video performance, in traditional practice this kind of dance would often be done in a circle, a fact which would be experienced as a somatic-memory by many Tibetans on hearing this music. Besides evoking the feeling of the movement of dance, this music also evokes the traditional costume of the Tibetans, shown here as the *chuba* (outer robe) worn in different versions by both men and women, as well as the colorful aprons worn by married women. For Tibetans (in this case, ethnically Tibetan Nepalis) dance and costume are inextricably linked as embodiments of Tibetan-ness.

Semiotic Topics

Tibetan music such as *Nubri Töshay* displays a high degree of conventionalization. Musical features such as timbre, rhythmic pattern, texture, and melodic contour serve as bases for categorization by the competent listener, allowing them to attach individualized but paradigmatic conceptual meaning to aural experience and embodied memory. The melodic contour of *Nubri*

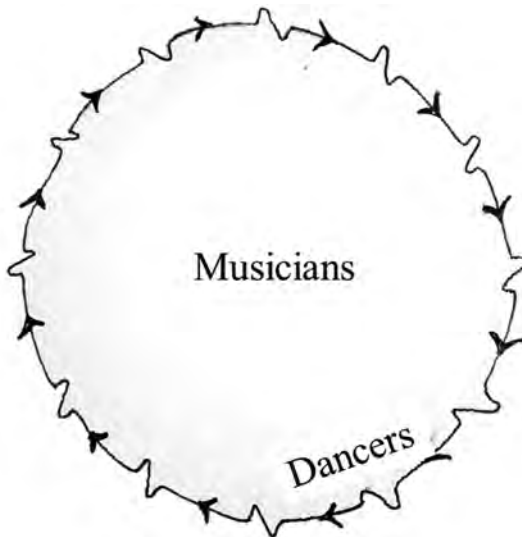


Figure 2. Inscription on the ground of a Tibetan circle dance.

Tōshay is typical of Tibetan folk song. It is a series of arches, reaching its apex in the third of four lines, and finally undulating back down to its beginning note. This pattern is repeated in a cyclical manner, creating a circle of peaks and valleys that loops back on itself. This bears an iconic relationship to the extramusical reality of the way the horizon is experienced as a circle of peaks in a Himalayan valley, and as such, can function as a motivated sign. This is reiterated in the circle of the dance, which inscribes jagged up-and-down and forward-and-back movements on the horizon of the musical space (see Figure 2). Thus the dancers could theoretically be mirroring the cyclical mountain-horizon-shaped contour of the melody, which in turn reflects the experience of being in such a landscape, which is an idealized object of longing.

The fact that these same, or similar, elements—timbre, texture, rhythmic pattern, and contour—are connected with similar images—Tibetan costume and dance, specific Himalayan landscapes, and Buddhist practice—in practically every video of Tibetan folk music I have seen is evidence that competent listeners have been trained to associate these sounds and images with feelings of longing and belonging that are often expressed explicitly in the lyrics. Throughout the Tibetan diaspora this longing is generally directed toward a mythic, lost Tibet, but in this case it is directed toward the Nepali valley of Nubri from the point of view of a youth who has migrated to the city, possibly for economic reasons. In either case, the style itself can be said to comprise a musical topic in the sense described by Hernández Salgar, following Hatten.

Irish music style acts as a topic too, and in a very similar way. In the example *Devanney's Goat* the tune follows a roadmap that is characteristic of the genre: a roll followed by arpeggiation, movement, leaps, and ending with a cadence, then repeated with variation, all within the strict rhythmic form of the reel. The distinctive collective timbre of traditional instruments playing stereotypical melodic gestures in novel combinations with the unmistakable rhythmic “swing” that creates lift centered on the upbeat triggers the somatic memory of how the body moves to this music. The aural and the physical are thus two mutually reinforcing levels of a framework on which can be hung memories, impressions, and imaginings, making it seem that the music is “enact[ing] the listener’s experience:” in other words, making the music meaningful.³⁵ As in the Tibetan video, there are visual clues as to what the content of that meaning might be. The listening audience is a community. At the heart of that community is the select group of musicians charged with creating the aural environment conducive to that community’s bonding and sense of solidarity. All of this takes place in the pub, a main locus of community in Irish culture, with the warm, intimate, and welcoming atmosphere marked as specifically Irish not only by the instruments present, but by the appearance of

numerous pints of Guinness stout on the tables. This suggests that the music has an indexical relationship to drink, friends, warmth, and safety—a feeling of joy in spite of the collective hardship in the Irish memory.

Both of these musics have social organizations that have supported the social circulation of an ethno-nationalistic mythos connected with traditional music. In Ireland and in many other countries where Irish diaspora is present *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* (Society of Musicians of Ireland) promotes a rigorously “authentic” music that was “once the preserve of the rural country kitchen.”³⁶ In the Tibetan diaspora, there is TIPA, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, in Dharamsala, India, the mission of which is the “comprehensive and undiluted transmission of traditional folk dance from Tibet’s three provinces of Dotoe, Domed and Utsang.”³⁷ There are competing organizations in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China that make similar claims to authenticity, though they may be less influential than TIPA even within China given the large market for bootleg recordings as a result of the diaspora. These social organizations are one way in which competent listeners are trained over time to associate sound with meanings of cultural and ethnic identity. This is the action of “noo-politics,”³⁸ which in both cases leads to the creation and sustenance of *publics*, or *polities*, based on shared cultural-political identities which propagate the strong illusion of actually having some inherent existence in the music, but which are actually collective myths that have to be constantly maintained and renewed.

Conclusion: Infinite Variation

Both Tibetan and Irish traditional musics are communal and participatory in nature. Irish music may be slightly less so, due to its demands of instrumental virtuosity, but in both there are roles open to anyone: musician, dancer, or active listener. In Tibetan music everyone is expected to sing and dance, and instruments are not considered essential. Although both musics are nowadays often performed in a presentational manner, their original function was, and still is, to bring communities together for celebration, social bonding, and the experience of communal joy.

That communal joy is based on feelings of belonging and security that rest on concepts of group identity, which in turn are associated with intertwined sonic and somatic experience. Looking at a few points on Romero’s synergy cube can help to illuminate some of the myriad ways all these elements combine and enhance one another (recall Figure 1). For instance, in both these traditions, children absorb the conventions of the musical sound from infancy. Becoming familiar through repeated exposure, they learn to predict

its structure, almost subconsciously. Observing adults and older children in musical contexts educates the infant about the expressive meaning, providing a vocabulary of appropriate emotional responses. In childhood, one would begin to learn the behaviors that are required to participate in music—how to dance, sing songs, and play instruments. On reaching adulthood, one would expect a native to have a well-developed sense of the collective identity, and a personalized version of it, with feelings of longing for a mythic past and landscape, and feelings of solidarity derived from both experiences and narratives of oppression, made concrete by memories and associations of musical gatherings, and the affects triggered by them in the past. The profound interdependence of the material, social, and expressive dimensions of the socio-cultural system with the musical sound, behavior, and concepts that give them meaning is the cause of synergy: these things are working as a whole to produce the musical being and to insure his or her survival as that person through continual renewal in concert with the community. These two musics thus map onto Romero’s model of infinite variation in very similar ways: the musical sound is heterophonic, has a composite timbre, and rhythmic cyclicity and regularity; behaviors include egalitarian group-playing, the drinking of alcohol, dance, and use of native languages; and concepts, which are operating within religious or nationalistic worldviews, include ideas about essential ethnic characteristics and narratives of collective history, as well as a collective imaginary of place.

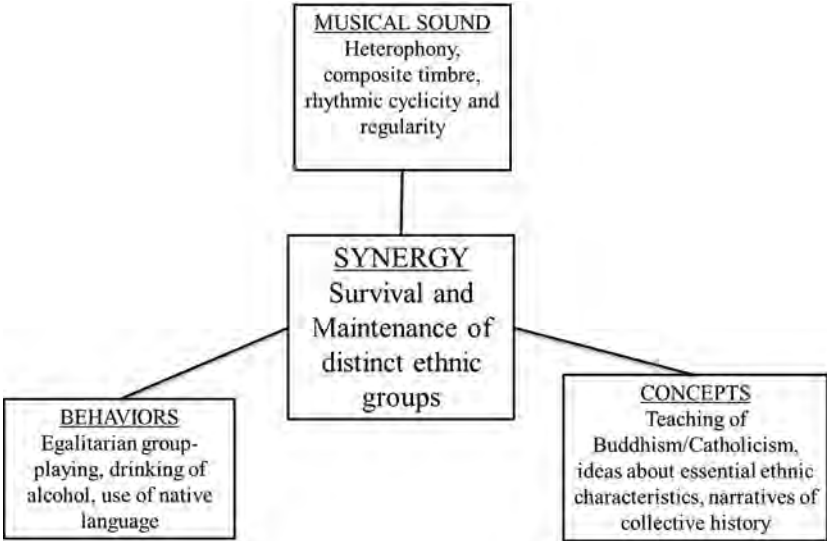


Figure 3. Tibetan and Irish musics in Romero’s model of infinite variation

The synergistic effect derived from the interaction of the three is nothing less than the survival and maintenance of the ethnic group. Arguably, without music these groups would not be able to maintain their individuality and would be absorbed by the groups which dominate them in a process of assimilation. In both Tibetan and Irish cultures, music has played a central role in identity maintenance, and indeed seems to have contributed to their survival.

NOTES

¹ Kendall Walton, "Listening With Imagination: Is Music Representational?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52/1 (1994): 47-61.

² Cameron David Warner, "Hope and Sorrow: Uncivil Religion, Tibetan Music Videos, and YouTube," *Ethnos* 78/4, (2013), 543-568. DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2012.724433

³ Dr. Holly Gayley, in an independent study semester with the author, 2013.

⁴ Although Irish traditional musicians have often accompanied songs since at least 1950s, unaccompanied singing is still afforded higher stature in terms of authenticity, purity, and adherence to tradition.

⁵ Tibetan meter can have a compound feel, like 6/8, but the only genre I have seen that is sometimes in actual triple meter is Gur (*mgur*), or "songs of realization."

⁶ A re-entrant tuning system means that strings are not ordered in strict descending or ascending order according to pitch.

⁷ The effects of octave displacement on musical perception have been written about extensively by Diana Deutsch (1975, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1992, 1999, 2010), Roger Shepard (1964, 1982, 1999), and Beth Szczepanski (2015), among others.

⁸ Óscar Hernández Salgar, "Musical Semiotics as a Tool for the Social Study of Music," Brenda M. Romero, English translation. *SEM Online Translations*, (July 5, 2016). Originally published in *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales, y Artes Escénicas (Journals of Music, Visual Arts, and Theater)* 7/1 (January 2011): 39-77. (accessed 12 November, 2017). <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/emt/article/view/22335/28281>.

⁹ D. Johnson, ed., *Bone, breath & gesture: Practices of embodiment* (Vol. 1), North Atlantic Books. 1995.

¹⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹¹ Hernández Salgar, "Musical Semiotics," 23.

¹² *Ibid.*, 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁵ Brenda M Romero, "A Theory of Infinite Variation," in *Discourses in African Musicology: J.H. Kwabena Nketia Festschrift*, eds. Kwasi Ampene et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Maize Books, 2015), 124-154.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁷ Ibid., 135.

¹⁸ Ibid., 141.

¹⁹ “Reels & Creamy Pints Go Leor”(accessed December, 2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWp0jT94IXI>.

²⁰ Jihad Racy, “Improvisation, Ecstasy, and Performance Dynamics in Arabic Music,” from *In the Course of Performance*, ed. Bruno Nettl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 95-110.

²¹ There can be quite a bit of overlap between drinkers and educated listeners, but I make the distinction to show that some people are there mainly to drink and have little or no interest in, or knowledge of, the music.

²² Simon Frith, “Music and Identity” from *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, eds., Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1996.

²³ This is a stylistic trait associated with, among others, the band De Dannan, of which three of the musicians in this video, O’Connor, O’Regan, and McDonagh, have been members. De Dannan was led by fiddler Frankie Gavin, who is said to have adopted the sharp tuning in order to sound more like the great Michael Coleman, whose 78 rpm recordings from 1920s America are hugely influential. For whatever reason Coleman’s recordings are roughly a half-step sharp. Whether Coleman also tuned up, perhaps to match the piano which was accompanying him, or whether he was recorded at a slower speed, or the pitch change resulted from modern engineers “pitch correcting” the recordings as they transferred them from 78s is unknown. It is also possible that this tuning has been employed by musicians to exclude players of D-tuned instruments from sessions. At any rate, the high tuning has been adopted by a number of players (Roger Landes, Instant Messenger conversation with the author).

²⁴ Lawrence E. McCullough, “Style in Traditional Irish Music” *Ethnomusicology* 21/1 (1977): 85-97.

²⁵ In Tibetan the spelling *bstod gzhas* means “praise song,” but if spelled *stod gzhas*, it can also mean, “song from Tö, western Tibet.

²⁶ Pema Dhondrup, “Nubri Toshay by Pema Nubri Lama, with Tibetan subtitle,” YouTube video, posted by PHOTO STATION, 12 July, 2015. (accessed December 2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKEmLhjSNWg>.

²⁷ Ian Collinge, “The Dra-Nyen (The Himalayan Lute): An Emblem of Tibetan Culture,” *Chime: Journal of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research*, 6 (1993): 22–33.

²⁸ Gen Sonam Tsering, the main teacher of the Nepal Tibetan Lhamo Association, passed away in 2015.

²⁹ “Jataka Tales” are stories, derived from Buddhist *sutras*, that tell of the previous lives of the Buddha.

³⁰ Since the 1990s, there has developed a discourse of “Himalayan Identity” in Nepal, in which various indigenous Tibetan- or Tibeto-Burman speaking Nepalis, such as Sherpas, Dolpos, and Tamangs, have sought both to distance themselves from exile Tibetans and to assert their own specific identities by referring to themselves and their cultures as “Himalayan” rather than “Tibetan.” Since the native inhabitants of Nubri seem less likely than some other groups to insist on this distinction, I have retained the use of “Tibetan” for the purposes of this paper, although I admit that

some Tibetan-speaking Nepalis might take issue with it. I intend to explore this issue in depth in my forthcoming dissertation.

³¹ Noe Dinnerstein, "Ladakhi Traditional Songs: A Cultural, Musical, and Literary Study," PhD diss., City University of New York, 2013. ProQuest (3601923).

³² This can depend on how the roll is being used and whether it is on a quarter-note or dotted-quarter.

³³ Ciaran Carson, *Last Night's Fun: In and Out of Time with Irish Music* (New York: North Point Press, 1996), 55- 56.

³⁴ Randal Bays, conversation with the author, 2008.

³⁵ Hernández Salgar, "Musical Semiotics," 18.

³⁶ *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* website, accessed 12 November 2017, <https://comhaltas.ie/about/history/>

³⁷ TIPA website, accessed 12 November 2017, <http://tipa.asia>

³⁸ As theorized by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, noo-politics is a method of obtaining political power by forming a mass public, which through manipulation or other circumstances would exhibit similar moral images or ideologies.

Benjamin Pongtep Cefkin

“Lao Duang Duen” Lost in Translation: A New Perspective on the Southeast Asian Classical Arts

Thai classical arts are primarily performed in the royal courts of Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, which form part of a larger Indianized-Mainland Southeast Asian cultural system. Though each culture within this system is unique, they have all experienced centuries of cultural diffusion and exchange to the point that origins or roots for particular concepts are historically obscured. In discussing the roots of the Thai and Lao traditions, the two countries of this larger cultural system that share the closest ethnic relationship, Terry Miller explains that “ascertaining the truth is obstructed by a lack of evidence and by potential distortion from Thai or Lao centrism.”¹ Thus, any research done on the subject can be sensitive and controversial to various peoples of Southeast Asia.² It is with this understanding and cultural sensitivity that I approach my study of the classical arts of Thailand, and their relationships to similar concepts found in neighboring Southeast Asian traditions. As shall be seen, continuous transnational migration of Southeast Asian peoples and art practices have resulted in a region that is more united by cultural concurrence than divided by its multi-nationality.

The concern with Thai-centrism in the transnational study of Southeast Asian music is a consequence of several historical and political events that have placed Thai culture in a position of prominence in the region. Unlike its neighbors, Thailand has never been colonized by a European power. As a result, Thailand did not experience the same level of institutionalized Eurocentrism, and traditional Thai arts continue to be taught in dozens of government-supported fine arts schools. In contrast, Laos has only one national fine arts

academy, in the capital, Vientiane. Additionally, long before European colonialism, Thai imperial ambitions resulted in the subjugation of neighboring peoples. Thai political control of Cambodia and Laos during the Ayutthaya (1351–1767 C.E.) and early Rattanakosin (1782 C.E.–present) eras resulted in a prevalent and politicized perception of Thai cultural superiority and Thai cultural hegemony in the court lives of these three countries.

The historical kingdoms and courts of Southeast Asia perpetuated a continuous circulation of ideas and peoples. Populations constantly migrated, sometimes a result of armed conflict, and cultural exchange was abundant. Explained by ethnomusicologist Ward Keeler, “it was the practice in Southeast Asia that a triumphant army did not long occupy a vanquished kingdom. Instead, conquerors physically removed many of its inhabitants . . . [to] the invading army’s homeland, where their labor could be put to use.”⁴ Court artists were no exception. For example, when the armies of Ayutthaya sacked the Khmer capital of Angkor in 1431 C.E., they acquired the Angkorian royal troupe of three hundred musicians and dancers and brought them back to the court of Ayutthaya. At the Thai court, the Khmer repertoire of these Angkorian artists was absorbed and reinterpreted to fit Thai aesthetics. When invading Burmese armies sacked Ayutthaya in 1767 C.E., the transplanted Thai court artists brought Thai forms, as well as the adapted Khmer repertoire, to the Burmese court where they were likewise absorbed by Burmese court artists. Nonetheless, the presence of Thai dancers employed in the Burmese court is recorded as early as 1466,⁵ three hundred years before the accepted date of Thai cultural diffusion to the Burmese court. In reality, we do not, and perhaps cannot, know the full extent of cultural borrowing across two millennia of Southeast Asian history.

In addition to cultural diffusion amongst these Southeast Asian nations, historical records point to a crossroads of trade between India and China since antiquity, attracting people from all areas of Asia, the Islamic world, and, starting in the sixteenth-century, Europe.⁶ This has created a multi-cultural atmosphere in Southeast Asia rich with ideas adapted from foreign models, as well as preconceptions about foreign peoples.

Thai people are known to readily accept foreign concepts, and are also noted for a tendency to acknowledge and categorize objects and concepts according to their foreign origin. These indicators of foreignness are found throughout the Thai language. For example, fried banana fritters are colloquially called *kluay khaek* (Indian bananas), chewing gum is called *maak farang* (Western betel nut), and New Year banquets are known as *toh jin* (Chinese table). Indicators of foreignness are common among the Thai classical arts as well.

As Thai musicologist Panya Roongruang explains, “Thai musicians have borrowed from various cultures elements . . . and have either re-created them in Thai versions or have created new, ‘exotic’ music based on those elements.”⁷ These same ideas permeate the related classical traditions of Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar.

The *samniang phasa* repertoire refers to Thai classical music composed in the Rattanakosin or Bangkok era (1782 C.E.–present), in which a foreign nationality is assigned to the title of a piece. These foreign assignments can point to a number of possible foreign or foreign-associated factors. Most commonly this would indicate the instrumentation, *nathap* (drum pattern), or *thang* (mode) to use in the performance of the particular piece, and, rarely, an actual tune of foreign origin.

Also specifically referred to as the *sipsong phasa* (twelve languages), the *samniang phasa* repertoire incorporates a dozen national categorizations. By far, the most prominent are pieces in the Lao “accent,” of which there are likely hundreds. Also found are pieces in the *jin* (Chinese), *yeepoon* (Japanese), *yuan* (Vietnamese), *malayu* (Malay), *chawa* (Javanese), *khamein* (Khmer), *mon*, *phama* (Burmese), *khaek* (Indian), *khaek khao* (Arabic or Persian), and *farang* (European or American) “accents,” reflecting some of the nationalities of foreigners that Thai people would have encountered frequently in nineteenth-century Bangkok.

The concept of national accents exists in the Khmer classical music of Cambodia as well. Certain titles in the Khmer repertoire include the designation of *lao*, *mon*, *khmer*, *phoumea* (Burmese), *chvea* (Javanese), *chenn* (Chinese), *baraing* (European), or *arabb* (Arabic).⁸ However, the lack of a Thai national accent in the Khmer tradition seems curious, considering that Thai use of *samniang phasa* likewise does not include an explicitly stated Thai national “accent.” In the Thai context, I would infer, as a Thai musician, that this is because any piece without an assigned *samniang* (accent) would be in the “Thai” style. Could this show a direction of diffusion of this particular musical concept from Thailand to Cambodia? Or could this possibly be a deliberate cultural reaction against a perceived Thai-centrism in Cambodian culture, by omitting explicit references to Thai culture?

A number of Thai *samniang lao* (Lao accent) pieces have also become standard in the Lao classical repertoire. Miller suggests that Lao musicians may identify with *samniang lao* pieces, as some believe they consist of Lao melodies adapted by Thai composers.⁹ This could very well be true, though it is also likely that these melodies originated with the *Thai Lanna* (northern Thai) or *Thai Isaan* (northeastern Thai), both often referred to as “Lao” by their

southern neighbors in Ayutthaya and Bangkok because of their geographic and cultural proximity to Laos and ethnic demographics. Notably, melodic recycling also appears frequently in the Thai repertoire. For example, the coda-section of many pieces from northern Thailand and *samniang lao* pieces, called *soom*, is identical to coda-sections for pieces in the *lao deum* (Lao classical) tradition. In this instance, the use of the *soom* as a coda melody is spread across a wide range of pieces in both Lao and Thai music repertoires.

The Burmese classical arts, as well, have a number of musical pieces and dances referred to as the yodaya repertoire, reputedly retained from the Thai repertoire taught to Burmese court artists after the sacking of Ayutthaya in 1767.¹⁰ This music and dance style, though not necessarily recognizable as “Thai” to Thai artists, remained popular in the Burmese court due to its characteristic steadily metered rhythmic melodies and fluid dance movements, which were deemed more fitting for stately court culture.¹¹ These characteristics likely represented Burmese associations of the music and dance of their Thai neighbors.

Each nationality included in the *samniang phasa* has a unique *nathap* (drum pattern) associated with the foreign “accent” of the piece it is accompanying. *Nathap* also vary according to the type of drum used. For instance, the *nathap mon* (Mon accent drum pattern) played on the *thon ramana* drums to accompany the *khruang sai* (string ensemble) will be significantly different from the *nathap mon* played on the *glong song naa* (two-headed drums) used to accompany the *pi phat* ensemble.

Similar to the nationalized *nathap*, certain *thang* (melodic modes; organization of tones within the Thai scale) are also sometimes associated with a certain *samniang*. The *thang lao* (Lao mode), for example, consists of the tone organization of do, re, mi, sol, la, using the Thai system of fixed-do solfège adapted from the West in the late twentieth century. The *thang khamein* (Khmer mode) instead uses a tonal organization of fa, sol, la, do, re. These modes are not viewed as a rule for composition in the *samniang phasa*; rather, they are one set of possible parameters. While the famous piece “Lao Duang Duen” (Full Moon, in the Lao style) does use the *thang lao*, another well-known piece, “Lao Duen Dok Mai” (Flower Moon, in the Lao style), instead uses a tonal organization analogous to the *thang khamein*.

Many of the nationalities that make up the *samniang phasa* have particular playing styles and emotional attributions associated either to the music of the culture being imitated, or some stereotype of the people being represented that exists within Thai culture. *Samniang lao* songs are gentle, lyrical, and ballad-like. *Samniang jin* (Chinese accent) songs are bouncy and playful, char-

acterized by frequent spaces within the melodic texture and a deviation from the standard Thai *ching* (finger cymbals) pattern. The *ching*, acting as the main timekeeping instrument in Thai music, normally sounds a repeated cycle of an open strike “ching” followed by a closed strike “chap,” marking what essentially comprises one measure of musical periodicity. The *ching* pattern for Chinese accented songs instead consists of two “ching” and one “chap” followed by a space in the rhythm, as shown below. The underlined syllables mark the large beats of each repeated period, usually conceptualized as the beginning of a measure in the West, and thought of at the end of a cycle in many Asian music cultures:

Normal <i>ching</i> pattern:	ching	chap	ching	<u>chap</u>
Chinese accent <i>ching</i> pattern:	—	ching	ching	<u>chap</u>

The *samniang phama* (Burmese accent) is characterized by fast syncopated music, reflecting the Thai view of traditional Burmese music in relation to Thai, in which the highly syncopated rhythms of the Burmese melodies stand out against the steady continuous meter associated with Thai styles of music. On the other hand, Thai musicians describe Mon accent pieces as possessing a certain quality of sadness and melancholy. One theory for this emotional association may have to do with the use of the *pi phat mon* (Mon classical ensemble) for rituals concerning funeral and cremation rites. Another factor may be the status of Mon people in Thailand as political refugees, who fled to Thailand at various times throughout Southeast Asia’s history to escape marginalization and Burmese aggression in the Mon homeland.¹³

From this very broad survey of the *samniang phasa* and its elements, we can see that the same, or similar concepts of “foreignness” that exist in the Thai classical arts do appear to a large extent in the classical cultures of Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar as well. Their cultural significance and meaning are, however, not homogenous. The pre-accepted narrative of cultural diffusion within Southeast Asia, from Cambodia to Thailand to Myanmar, may not accurately account for the origins and trajectory of diffusion of these concepts. As a further complication, socio-political issues may cloud national narratives of these cultural practices.

The topic of cultural origin and ownership is contentious among the Khmer, Lao, and Thai alike. One need only glance at the comments section of a YouTube video of Thai or Khmer dance to find accusations of “culture stealing,” “copying,” and the like, coming from all sides of the argument. Comments such as these are often fueled by current events in Southeast Asian politics and media, with the land dispute between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple being the most recently reoccurring example.¹⁴ Com-

ments reveal two prevalent, if false, assumptions; first, that culture is homogenous and transmits as a whole, and second, that culture is static and exists without change over time. There can be many interpretations of a single concept within one culture, just as one concept can have multiple interpretations across many cultures. These interpretations themselves change over time, leading to new forms and new meanings. Thus, one cannot think of the classical art traditions of Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand as monolithic entities. Rather, they should be viewed as traditions with infinite degrees of cross-cultural commonality and regional variation, shaped by centuries of continuous cross-cultural exchange.

The various royal cultures of mainland Southeast Asia share many of the same applications of the concept of “foreignness” to their music and dance traditions. The use of *samniang phasa* classifications, and their related musical designations in particular, appear in some form throughout these classical cultures. However, the ethnic associations and intra-cultural meanings can be specific to each tradition. To explore this, we will take an in-depth look at one particularly well-known and popular piece in the traditions of Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia: the classical song “Lao Duang Duen” and its accompanying dance.

Global internet accessibility provides scholars a unique source of materials for analysis. Southeast Asian artists and art enthusiasts are increasingly uploading content onto sites such as YouTube, making it one of the most comprehensive and widely accessible sources for information on the music and dance traditions of Southeast Asia produced by Southeast Asian artists themselves. My own Thai dance teachers, for example, often consult existing YouTube videos for current ideas in choreography or staging of their own dance productions. A large part of my analysis of “Lao Duang Duen” is drawn from a survey of YouTube videos of this piece. A video search of “Lao Duang Duen” in English, Thai, Lao, and Khmer script yields a vast variety of music and dance arrangements, both for traditional and Western mediums, as well as a combination of traditional Southeast Asian and Western elements. The videos also show clear distinctions among three national versions of the piece, Thai, Lao, and Cambodian.

In Thailand, the composition of “Lao Duang Duen” is attributed to Prince Benbadhanabongse of Phichai, also known as Prince Pichai Mahintharadom (1882–1909), the thirty-eighth son of King Chulalongkorn. The traditional story is that the young prince was madly in love with a young woman from the Lanna royal family, Princess Chomchuen of Chiang Mai. Unfortunately, they could never be together, as the princess’s father would not allow her to marry a Siamese prince. In his sadness, Benbadhanabongse composed

the piece “Lao Damnoen Kwaen” in 1903, to remember his lost love. After the prince’s death at the young age of 27, the song became a popular symbol of romance and unrequited love throughout Thailand. As is commonly the case with Thai classical songs, the song was colloquially referred to by its opening lyrics instead of the original title. Thus “Lao Damnoen Kwaen” became known as “Lao Duang Duen.” The song remains popular to this day, arranged for a wide variety of musical styles and genres.

As performed in Thailand, “Lao Duang Duen” consists of two larger sections, the *chan song* (lit. second level, or medium tempo) section encompassing the vocal verses, followed by the *chan diew* (lit. first level, or fast tempo) section to finish the piece. Typical of *samniang lao* pieces, “Lao Duang Duen” uses the *nathap lao* and is also played in the *thang lao* modal organization (do, re, mi, sol, la).

The following are the lyrics and translation of “Lao Duang Duen”

Verse 1

<i>Oh-la-naaw</i>	<i>duang-duen euy</i>	<i>Phi ma wow rak jao-sao khum-duang</i>
(Vocable)	The moon (vocable)	I’m coming to say that I love you (Moon Princess)

Oh deuk laew naaw	Phi khor la-luang
Oh it’s late already, isn’t it?	May I say goodbye?

<i>Ok-phi pen huang</i>	<i>rak jao duang-duen euy</i>
My heart is worried.	I love you.

Verse 2

<i>Khor la laew jao kaeo go-soom</i>	<i>Hue-ue . . .</i>
May I say goodbye, then, princess?	(vocables)

Phi ni rak jao naaw kwan ta-riam
I love you, alas, lady, with all my soul.

Ja haa nai ma tiam	Oh jao duang-duen euy
Where could I find anything equal to you,	oh, Moon Princess?

Verse 3

<i>Hom glin gaesorn, gaesorn dok-mai</i>	<i>Hom glin khelai, khelai jao suu khawng riam euy</i>
The fragrant aroma of flower pollen,	it smells similar to thou.

<i>Hom glin groon grun</i>	<i>Hom nun yung baw loei</i>
The fragrant aroma is quite strong.	It still reminds me of you.

Neua hom cham choei . . . euy . . . rao la-naaw
My Lady’s skin is fragrant.¹⁵

A lyrical analysis of the Thai version of “Lao Duang Duen” shows identifiably Thai textual and affectual associations with Lao culture. For instance, in composing the lyrics of the song, Prince Benbadhanabongse inserted certain words from the Lao language, either to emphasize the Lao affect or as an allusion to Princess Chomchuen’s native dialect. The word *wow*, in the first line of verse 1, means “to say” in Lao and the word *la*, at the beginning of verse 2, is an archaic Lao word meaning “to say goodbye.” Another textual allusion to Lao culture, the opening phrase, *Oh-la-naw*, is a common vocable used in the opening recitative sections of Lao vocal folk music. Though not sung as a recitative, the use of the phrase in the beginning of the melody is a nod to traditional Lao musical elements.

“Lao Duang Duen,” when performed with dance, is referred to as “Fon Duang Duen.” In this titling, “*fon*,” meaning “dance” in the Lao and northern Thai languages, replaces “Lao” as the piece’s title classification. This title change is consistent with other Lao-accent pieces with accompanying dances; “Lao Phaen,” when performed with dance becomes “Fon Phaen,” “Lao Duen Dok Mai” (Flower Moon, in the Lao-accent) becomes “Fon Malai” (Flower Garland Dance). The “Fon Duang Duen” dance typically consists of one or two couples dressed with Lao-associated costume elements; for the women, long strings of flowers streaming over one ear, an open tunic, and a long *pa-thung* wrapped-skirt, and for the men, a cloth head-wrap used to represent northern Thai, Lao, and Shan characters in Thai theater.

Lao versions found on YouTube are melodically and textually similar to the Thai examples, with only slight textual differences in the song lyrics between the Thai and Lao versions. The Thai and Lao languages being closely related and mutually intelligible, certain words in the lyrics simply appear in their Lao forms. For example, “*phi*” (older sibling, used by a Thai speaker of the text to refer to himself) becomes “*ai*,” and “*rak*” (love) become “*huk*.” The lyrics of the third verse in the Lao version also differ slightly from the Thai, elaborating on the metaphors for the princess and referencing a “sweet sound.” Melodically, the Lao and Thai versions are identical, with the exception of the ending section. Instead of the Thai *chan diew*, a section featuring a variation of the previous melodic material, metrically diminished by half, the Lao version uses a *soom*. The drum pattern, shows a kinship with the Thai *nathap lao*. A comparison of the drum patterns used for the various versions of “Lao Duang Duen” with their accompanying mnemonic syllables (see Figure 1) shows the relationship between the three traditions.

Typical of Lao classical music, the ensembles seen in the videos include the *khaen* (mouth pipe organ) and *khim* (dulcimer), two instruments excluded

Thai: ting joh ting ting joh ting tham ting tham

Lao: ting joh ting ting ting tham ting tham

Cambodian: ting joh ting thum ting thum ting thum ting thum

Figure 1. Comparison of “Lao” drum patterns, transcribed by the author.

from Thai classical ensembles. Nonetheless, a Lao dance video example, “fon lao duang duan,”¹⁶ shows dance steps that are likewise nearly identical to the Thai version, though with a more traditionally-Lao costuming. It was also apparent from investigation of YouTube videos that Lao versions of the dance are apt to use the title “Fon Lao Duang Duen,” retaining the *lao* classifier that is normally dropped in the Thai context. Whether or not this detail could be evidence of Lao adoption from the Thai repertoire is uncertain. What is apparent, however, is that Lao people attach their own cultural meaning to “Lao Duang Duen,” referring to it as a Lao traditional song and emphasizing Lao traditional elements, while still acknowledging a Thai compositional origin. One Lao commenter states, “This song is actually a Siamese song written with melodic and rhythmic pattern of the northern Thai . . . so everything we heard is not one sided, in fact both Siam and Lane Chang learned from each other for centuries, similar but different at the same time.”¹⁷

The Cambodian version, titled “Raksmey Doung Chan Trea,” shows a clearer departure from the Thai and Lao versions. Though the melody is essentially the same, comments from Cambodian listeners seem to point to a different textual interpretation. A commenter on the video *SP Talent Khmer Dance Raksmey doung chan trea* mentions that the Khmer lyrics depict a girl watching the moon at midnight. “She is so worry about her life, but after she watched the full moon, she feel more better! and she wish she could meet the moon every night.”¹⁸ Perhaps in reflection of this differing interpretation, “Raksmey Doung Chan Trea” is performed by only female dancers, as opposed to the mixed-gender coupling found in the Thai and Lao version.

Though “Raksmeay Doun Chan Trea” is acknowledged as being influenced from the Thai “Lao Duang Duen,” Cambodian commenters also cite an alternate source for this melody. The poster of *The Moon Love Dance (Khmer Dance)*, “angkorpisey,” states that the Cambodian version is a “new creation based on khmer classical dance. The song is adapted from an old mahori song called ‘Lao Chaom Chan.’ This new dance was choreographed by Ms Soth Somaly and some other senior dancers of Cambodian classical dance,” and that “it’s an old mahori song. We can’t say it’s Thai, Khmer or Lao. We simply don’t know because it’s too old and we don’t have any documents to prove it.”¹⁹ What “angkorpisey” is alluding to is the propensity of melodic recycling throughout Southeast Asian musical traditions. Comments like those of “angkorpisey” attribute the melodic material of “Lao Duang Duen” to older Khmer models from the *mahori* ensemble repertoire by means of citing this melodic recycling.

We therefore have three distinct national versions of “Lao Duang Duen” with three differing meanings and origin narratives. Is the melody newly composed, drawn from Lao melodies, or adapted from a Khmer *mahori* tune? Does the drum pattern used have a Lao origin? It may be impossible to discover the complete picture. It is, however, possible to observe how designations of “foreignness,” such as the Lao musical accent, are tied to cultural associations within each of the traditions discussed in this case study.

In the case of Thailand, it is significant that pieces in the *samniang lao* constitute the bulk of accent-classified repertoire performed today. Besides aesthetic attributions of *samniang lao* songs as beautiful and lyrical, this attests to the high amount of Lao cultural influence on all levels of Thai society. One example of this is the spread of Lao and *Isaan* (Northeastern Thailand, culturally tied to central Laos) genres of popular music, including *morlam* and *luk thung*, still immensely popular among Thai people, to other regions of the kingdom. Historically, the popularity and performance of Lao music among the Thai monarchy and common folk alike is often referenced. By the mid-nineteenth century, Lao music had become so pervasive in Thai society that it was banned by King Mongkut in an 1865 decree out of fear of its replacing native Central Thai musical traditions:

Thai have abandoned their own entertainments . . . Both men and women now play laokaen throughout the kingdom . . . We cannot give the priority to Lao Entertainments. Laokaen must serve the Thai; the Thai have never been the Lao’s servants . . . It is apparent that wherever there is an increase in the playing of laokaen there is also less rain . . .²⁰

Nationalist rhetoric aside, this decree shows that playing and consumption of *khaen* music among Thai people was prevalent across various social divisions. There is no documentation of the effects of this decree, and its enforcement seems dubious, given the prevalence of Lao music throughout Thailand today,²¹ though it could very well be partially responsible for the absence of the *khaen* and the *khim*, both still considered “foreign” instruments, from Thai classical ensemble music, while these instruments have been incorporated into Lao and Cambodian ensembles.

In reaction against a perception of Thai dominance, scholars of Cambodian dance mention a process of “phasing out” of Thai elements in Cambodian court dance during the reign of King Norodom Sihanouk in the mid-twentieth century.²² Likewise, scholars of Lao music discuss a Lao resistance against a perceived Thai superiority by attaching different cultural meaning to pieces and dances adapted from the Thai repertoire.²³

In regard to the *samniang phasa* repertoire, ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong explains that “mood and character is fundamentally linked to its association with Otherness.” Unlike in the West, “the Other in the Thai imagination is rarely threatening, but more often amusing and even comical.”²⁴ If we take a critical view of the Thai-centric perspective of “Lao Duang Duen,” we can discuss how its origin narrative and musical features reflect Thai sociocultural conceptualizations of Lao others. In the cultural climate of the late nineteenth century, the Thai aristocracy viewed the Lao as alien, even supernaturally inauspicious (as exemplified in the comment attributing lack of rainfall to a Lao cultural presence), and above all, subservient. “The Thai have never been the Lao’s servants,” to quote King Mongkut above. These connotations and associations of the Lao would not have been far removed from Thai society of the time of Prince Benbadhanabongse’s compositions, only three decades after King Mongkut’s royal decree. In this light, “Lao Duang Duen” can be viewed as reflecting socio-ethnic stratifications of Lao subservience to Thai dominance, as well as Thai traditional patriarchy. The voice of the text is a male Thai speaker, the recipient a Lao female. As associated with the *samniang lao*, the music is lyrical and emotional, featuring traditional female symbolism of the full moon and flowers. The dance movements even reflect male dominance with the more active role of the male dancer, in opposition to the female dancer who instead reacts to the male’s advances, by shying away from touch and making other demure gestures. If the tale of Prince Benbadhanabongse and Princess Chomchuen is to be believed, the song’s inspiration was itself a consequence of Southeast Asian socioethnic strife: love forbidden by the ethnic constraints of Thai society at the turn of the twentieth century.

Current musicological scholarship favors multivocality and a range of perspectives. This openness allows for, and indeed encourages, critical examination of music's cultural aspects alongside descriptive discourse. In discussing the use of *samniang phasa* and the manifestations of its foreign associations in the piece "Lao Duang Duen," we have discovered three distinct and complex conceptualizations of meaning within Thai, Lao, and Cambodian culture. In order to account for these multiple narratives and meanings, I propose a reexamination of existing conceptualizations of the classical Southeast Asian arts. Rather than a diffusion of entire traditions through war and conquest, these are a collection of co-existing and interrelated constructed realities of musical meaning and practice. This reconceptualization draws primarily from the recent ontological turn of the social sciences within the past decade.

Ontology allows for the concurrent existence of multiple realities of perception and human agency. As used by anthropologists, the ontological turn accounts for the cultural experiences of a group, and how that group perceives their experiences as a fluid reality, separate from the realities experienced by others. There has been much debate, primarily among anthropologists, as to what exact role and difference there may be between ontology and cultural study. William Rollason in his article "Ontology: Just Another Word for Culture?" highlights a variety of definitions given during anthropological debates on the place of ontological study within the social sciences. These include definitions such as "an attempt to capture the theoretical ground of alterity . . . while trying to avoid the problems of representation," "another word, used in place of culture, to deal with alterity," and finally, concurrent with my usage of the term, as a "way of accepting others' ability to inhabit wholly separate realities, and to compel the reconceptualization of social science, through ethnography, on their terms."²⁵

This usage is similarly outlined in Brenda M. Romero's discussion of polyvocality and musical synergy in her article "A Theory of Infinite Variation." Romero coalesces differing views by discussing polyvocality as representing a "salience of different kinds" consisting of an "infinite variation" of possibilities of meaning and interpretation, across multiple levels of a society's culture.²⁶ Expanding on Alan Merriam's iconic "tri-partite model" of musical sound, concept, and behavior, Romero introduces "musical synergy"²⁷ to better represent the impact of the integrated whole. In this model, elements of a music culture have a synergistic relationship, the confluence of all being what constitutes a music culture in its totality. Translated to the Southeast Asian region, this "musical synergy" can be applied likewise on the larger level of nationalized styles in relation to each other.

Applied to the Southeast Asian arts, an ontological view can allow for the acceptance of multiple realities of perception of a singular shared topic, such as the song “Lao Duang Duen,” or even in terms of the tradition of classical arts in mainland Southeast Asia as a whole. The experiences of separate cultural groups within the Southeast Asian region have resulted in multiple realities of perception and meaning, informed by historical events, socio-ethnic climates, and continuous cross-cultural interaction. These coexisting realities also draw materials and ideas from each other, especially in the construction of foreign associations, such as the *samniang phasa*, and musical works like “Lao Duang Duen.” It is my hope that this approach can allow for a more unbiased representation of the complexities of the Southeast Asian classical arts. I wish to provide a more accurate alternative to sentiments of “culture stealing” and negative appropriation that run rampant in colloquial discourse between peoples of Southeast Asian descent. Shared elements, rather than being lost in translation, can then be enjoyed as a testament to the intricately syncretic cross-cultural history of Southeast Asia.

NOTES

¹ *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 4: *Southeast Asia*, eds. Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams, s.v. “Laos.”

² Born in Thailand to a multicultural family and raised in a Thai diaspora community in Denver, Colorado, my experience of Thai culture has been no less imbedded with traditionalism than that of my Thai contemporaries, as Thai diaspora communities maintain strong cultural bonds with the homeland. An implication of this transnational connection is that issues and practices in the home country continuously affect those in the diaspora. A large hurdle, then, in my study of Thai music, is the potential for Thai-centric discourse in relation to the music of Thailand’s neighbors.

³ Terry E. Miller, “Laos,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed September 20, 2015, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libraries.colorado.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/16010>.

⁴ Ward Keeler, *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 4: *Southeast Asia*, eds. Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams, s.v. “Burma.”

⁵ Noel F. Singer, *Burmese Dance and Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 22.

⁶ Chevalier de Chaumont, the leader of Louis XIV’s first embassy to King Narai of Ayutthaya in 1685 C.E., recounts the presence of Malay, Mon, Lao, Burmese, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, Vietnamese, Javanese, Turkish, Persian, Indian, Bengali, and Armenian communities, all living in the Thai capital (*Relation de l’Ambassade de Mr le Chevalier de Chaumont à la Cour du Roi de Siam*, Paris [1686] pub. in *Descriptions of Old Siam*, comp. by Michael Smithies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 42. A visitor to Bangkok today may notice Chinese, Mon, Israeli, Arab, and Japanese neighborhoods, among others.

⁷ Panya Roongruang, “Thailand,” *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libraries.colorado.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27763>, accessed 20 September 2015.

⁸ Sam-Ang Sam, *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 4, (London: Routledge, 1998), s.v. "The Khmer People."

⁹ Miller, "Laos," 381.

¹⁰ Robert Garfias et al., "Myanmar," *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com/libraries.colorado.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/04387>, accessed 20 September 2015.

¹¹ Singer, *Burmese Dance and Theatre*, 12.

¹² It is possible that the *nathap* used for a particular national accent may be directly adapted from drumming patterns used in the actual culture of representation. As was the case in the example of the *soom* melody, I have heard the *nathap lao*, or a very similar variation of it, in many pieces in the Lao repertoire as well as in the slower tempo folk music of the ethnically-Lao Isaan region of Northeast Thailand.

¹³ In my ethnographic work with Mon refugees who have settled in Colorado, they have mentioned to me that some of the first accounts of Mon music were made by Burmese travelers who were struck by the sad beauty of Mon music, brought Mon musicians to the Burmese court, and employed them in service of the Burmese royalty. This may indicate that the association of Mon music with sadness is not restricted to Thai culture, and factors into both Mon and Burmese musical discourse and representation.

¹⁴ Conflict of ownership of the Preah Vihear temple and surrounding lands, situated directly on the border between Thailand and Cambodia, dates back hundreds of years, most recently debated by the international court at Geneva. Involving ambiguously drawn maps and colonial land secessions to the French, the issue reoccurs periodically, sometimes escalating to armed conflict between the two countries.

¹⁵ Sniffing a loved one's skin is a sign of affection in Thai culture.

¹⁶ vkone kone. (May 8, 2013). *fon lao duang duean* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBK5KJA7mAc>, accessed 20 September 2015.

¹⁷ Taivieng, (August 20, 2010), *Lao Traditional song—Lao Duang Deun* [Video file], retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQtEeB4ikAc>, accessed 20 September 2015

¹⁸ Ah Mab, (July 16, 2012), *SP Talent Khmer Dance Raksmei doung chan trea* [Video file], retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT0XS7q6R5w>, accessed 20 September 2015.

¹⁹ angkorpisey, (November 20, 2012), *The Moon Love dance (Khmer Dance)* [Video file], retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz9ozonyxKo>, accessed 20 September 2015.

²⁰ Terry E. Miller, *Traditional Music of the Lao: Kaen Playing and Mawlum Singing in Northeast Thailand*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 220.

²¹ Lao communities exist throughout Thailand today (though largely acculturated), in part due to forced migration during the period of King Mongkut's rule. Temple functions observed by the author in his native region (eastern Central Thailand) all employ Lao musical ensembles.

²² Denise Heywood, *Cambodian Dance: Celebration of the Gods* (Bangkok: River Books, 2008), 71.

²³ *Garland Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Laos."

²⁴ Deborah Wong, “Mon Music for Thai Deaths: Ethnicity and Status in Thai Urban Funerals,” *Asian Folklore Studies* 57/1 (1998): 123.

²⁵ William Rollason, “Ontology: Just Another Word for Culture?,” *Anthropology Today* 24/3 (June 2008): 28.

²⁶ Brenda M. Romero, “A Theory of Infinite Variations,” in *Discourses in African Musicology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 147–148.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 135–136.

Kelsey A. Fuller

North of “the West”: Analytical Perspectives on Swedish Folk Music and Sámi *Joik*

The Swedish *polska* and the Sámi *joik* traditions are examples of geographically Western musics. However, the boundaries of “the West” as it is traditionally conceived in academia are ideological rather than geographic, and while the West appears frequently in ethnomusicological study, it is rarely interrogated for its own sake. I wonder, as ethnomusicologists, if our continued usage of the term does not rely on the antiquated configurations of comparative musicology, with European art music as both a referent for other musics and an oversimplified representative of a vast geographic area. On the other hand, methods that involve comparison and transcription, when not applied with hierarchical objectives, can help to deconstruct the notion of a Western homogeneity.

To explore this terminological conundrum, I have focused on rhythmic structure and compositional process in Swedish folk music and Sámi *joik*, musical expressions that are quite different from what is generally understood as Western. The comparison herein will be limited to comparisons with common practice European art music. Furthermore, I will also employ ethnographically informed theoretical frameworks which illuminate synergistic meanings by addressing musics in their native contexts, in ways that tonal theory as it is customarily applied to Western notated music is not equipped to attend to. I will begin by providing a brief introduction to these two musics, and subsequently explore potential synergistic meanings, giving attention to how their conceptions and characteristics illustrate difference and broaden our understanding of their functions and contexts.

Swedish Folk Music and the Polska

Polska [. . .] is a song type, a melody type, and an old type of dance. It is something that is still in living Swedish tradition. It is played differently, sounds differently, and danced differently and for many it is synonymous with Swedish folk music. [Christina Mattson]³

In discussions of Swedish folk music, it is difficult to avoid the polska. While it coexists in contemporary practice with other dance and music traditions that could be labeled “Swedish folk,” the polska dance and related music repertoire came to be regarded in the late nineteenth century as the “national dance” and tune type of Sweden.⁴ The origin of the polska in Sweden can be traced back to the eighteenth century, being derived from Polish dances such as the mazurka that were introduced to Sweden via aristocratic relations with Poland.⁵

Polskas (here used to denote both dance and music) vary throughout Sweden, with local and regional variations reflecting a popular sentiment in the contemporary Swedish folk music scene, which favors provincial pride as an alternative to overt nationalism. Typically played on instruments such as fiddles, nyckelharpas (keyed fiddles from the Uppland region), cow horns, Swedish bagpipes, and accordions, the vitality of the polska and other folk music and dance traditions in the post-industrial age represents a fascination with the rural past.⁷ The above quote from Mattson suggests that for some, the polska is synonymous with the general notion of Swedish folk music.

Sámi Joik⁸

The Sámi are indigenous peoples of Northern Scandinavia.⁹ Their homeland, Sápmi, stretches across the northernmost areas of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and to the Russian Kola Peninsula. Joik is their most iconic music tradition, “a vocal genre characterized by distinctive vocal timbres and techniques, in which the performer joiks (sings—though some commentators distinguish between ‘joiking’ and ‘singing’) something rather than joiks *about* something.”¹⁰ Joik is both a noun and a verb: “to joik someone or something is to give utterance to their being.”¹¹

Joiks are organized into four main categories based on subject content: those for nature and landscape features, for animals, for technical objects, and for people, the largest group. Some joiks are shared within communities and transmitted orally, while others, particularly those for people, are sung privately among friends and relatives. Intricately decorated oval drums were the main

instrument associated with joik (particularly in association with pre-Christian, pre-colonial religion and ritual), though now musicians frequently make use of a variety of other instruments. Joik melodies are composed with a particular aesthetic in mind: a potential mix of vocables and lyrics, a vocal timbre with frequent glottal stops, ornamented disjunct melodies, and a structural form that is often hard to discern in traditional joik, because the phrasing is determined by the singer’s breath, rather than formal or text-based structure.

In Sámi shamanistic¹⁴ practice, joik was perceived as a result of magical interactions, and even after the performer’s conversion to Christianity—resulting from a strong presence of missionaries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—it maintained a spiritual element of process and interpretation that was dependent on a Sámi individual’s and community’s relationships to life experiences and each other. A persecuted minority since their first contact with Christian missionaries, the Sámi were prohibited from joiking due to its connection with the shamanistic pre-Christian religion, and endured severe cultural repression for centuries at the hands of the church and the majority nation-states. Bans on indigenous song enforced by missionaries from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries resulted in a long-lasting stigmatization of the Sámi and their music, and the decline, but not loss, of joik.¹⁵

During the 1940s, the Sámi began campaigning for legal and political recognition of ethnic minority status, to enhance their socio-political conditions by securing reindeer herding subsidies and Sámi language instruction in schools. Two decades later, the self-affirmation of Sámi identity and the protests against repression began to appear in references and messages within Sámi popular music.¹⁶ The “joik renaissance” of the 1970s and 1980s sought to fuse joik into popular music for Sámi audiences, and set in motion a trajectory of creative innovations. This movement was largely inspired and sustained by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, a joik musician, poet, artist, and resilient voice in defense of joik and the Sámi cultural revival and equality movement.¹⁷

Rhythmic Structure and Analysis

A Study of Polska Rhythms

Rhythm is an element of integral concern regarding most dance musics, making the polska an ideal candidate for rhythmic analysis. Polskas are often grouped by their rhythmic-melodic idioms, such as a triplet polska, sixteenth-note polska, or eighth-note polska, all believed to have different origins.¹⁸ Polskas differ from most other dances in triple meter in that the third in addition to the first beat of each measure is emphasized, though regional differences exist as to how that effect is accomplished. Dahlig-Turek compiled a diagram

of transcriptions of region-specific quintessential rhythmic cadences of polskas and related dances, which illustrates several of these variations.¹⁹

Characterizing polskas by the asymmetry of their meters may provide additional historic and cultural relevance, as asymmetry is related to performance practice and oral transmission. Einar Övergaard, a late nineteenth-century student at Uppsala University, created extensive transcriptions of polskas in efforts to understand the rhythmic enigmas therein: one of his earliest transcriptions documents a polska played in $2\frac{1}{2}/4$ meter. Övergaard would later change his metric framework multiple times.²⁰ His experience illustrates the difficulties unfamiliar listeners faced when trying to codify polska rhythms: “These tune collectors’ effort to depict the music in words and notation suggests a style where beat lengths were varied, sometimes dramatically, throughout the course of the tune.”²¹ Later scholars transcribed polskas with a tuplet approach, ultimately concluding that writing a polska in triple meter with an assumed shortened first beat would be representative.²² Teitelbaum argues in a forthcoming article that despite the best efforts at notation on behalf of these scholars,

Fiddle music of 1800s western Sweden lacked meter as conceived by classically-trained tune collectors like Övergaard as well as many contemporary performers. It lacked a consistent pattern of beat durations, symmetrical or otherwise, featuring instead constantly varying beat lengths, rhythm that would resist the imposition of a time signature throughout multiple measures.²³

The work of these scholars indicates that they were coming into contact with different types of music that all seemed to fit under the polska label, yet were varied by region and used idioms implying vast irregularities of rhythmic tendencies.

An image of a polska genre emerges from the combined successes and struggles of these tune collectors. It is one where individual phrases may be rendered in an asymmetrical pattern, but where no single time signature, no single scheme of beat divisions, reigns supreme. It is a music where concepts of measure from Western art music are inapplicable.²⁴

The current convention of notating polskas in triple meter testifies to the tenacious influence of European classical art music, although regional style governs performance practice regarding proportions of beats. Because these transcriptions were collected by musicians trained in Western art music, efforts to make the rhythms fit into a conventional meter suggest that Western art music conventions at one point mediated and translated Swedish polskas

into familiar terms, a decision that continues to influence contemporary practices.²⁵ Both Ahlbäck and Teitelbaum conclude, however, that polska rhythms in their traditional forms cannot be experienced in terms of metered rhythm.

Therefore, using transcriptions and comparisons as the sole bases of analysis neglects many of the integral idioms associated with rhythms in dance music. David Kaminsky offers a “Motional Theory,” considering melodic rhythms of dance and music in their three-dimensional context. In his ethnographic work with polska performers, Kaminsky concludes that for participants, the “primary referent for rhythm is not meter, but the motion of dancing bodies.” In contrast to tonal rhythm, which offers only a reduction of rhythms executed by dancers and musicians, he proffers a more holistic approach with “total rhythm” that considers the movements of dancers: syncopation, attack, and intensity.²⁷

The asymmetrical beat proportions discussed by Teitelbaum and Ahlbäck could be examined in Kaminsky’s theory as a product of the dance function, suggesting that theoretical discussions of the music should not exclude the corresponding dance. “Music meant to inspire complex iterative locomotion would develop in such a way as to imply regular patterns that go far beyond those of simple pulsation.”²⁹ Further, the semi-improvisatory nature of some (not all) variants of the polska dance is not controlled by the musician, thus the music and dance relationship is not a one-sided conversation.³⁰ To analyze the interdependence of dance and music, Kaminsky’s abstract theory favors mechanisms of “iterations, metaphor, and sympathy” present in both, and observable in the actions of both the dancers and musicians, which is revealing of the integrated components and signifiers in polska music and dancing.³¹

Rhythm in Joik

Karl Tirén was among the first ethnologists in the twentieth century to transcribe joik. The result of his fieldwork was the book *Die Lappische Volksmusik* (1942), written in German and including Western notation transcriptions of melodies, making it largely inaccessible to his contemporary Sámi audiences.³² Joiks are usually composed of an even number of phrases of equal length, each with distinct melodies that may be repeated, with variations, from three to six times. Attempts at codifying the rhythms in a joik phrase is illustrated in Tirén’s transcriptions, which show the potential to group beats in additive meters, with accents in a variety of locations throughout a phrase.³³ Common practice Western art music does not exhibit the same flexibility in accentuation and rhythm, which makes transcriptions of joik into Western notation most valuable for illustration of difference rather than sameness.

Knowledge of Sámi cosmology and epistemology in relation to time can yield insight into the rhythmic construction of joik. Several musical differences may be embodiments of philosophical differences, in which the Sámi concept of rhythm is structurally informed by their traditional perception of time as circular as opposed to linear.³⁴

In traditional Sámi concepts of the sacred landscape, nature is recognized and comprehended through human activities that are narrated linking people to generations past and future. Traveling a pathway is to act in history and in the future, and contemporary practices take place in a continuum where there is no beginning and no end.³⁵

Joik, having no distinct starting or ending point, opposes the prevailing historical Western linear and scientific conceptions of time.³⁶ In considering Sámi cultural memory, history, and expression, joik's ability to reflect their conception of time is relevant to Sámi musical and sociocultural discourses. "A joik connects the performer and his or her listeners, not only with each other, but with their collective past by uniting it with present experience—joiking effectively collapses time."³⁷

Meanings attaching musical time to cosmology could not be included in or interpreted from Tirén's transcriptions. If the goal of ethnomusicological study is to gain insight into the cultural meanings of joik, conventional European art music notation and tonal analysis are inadequate, and comparisons demonstrate more difference than relatable similarities. However, visual representations of other types are helpful in summarizing complex relationships and processes. Transcriptions could be constructed with more visual complexity so as to describe rather than prescribe, since performance of this genre is typically restricted to the Sámi community. Brower's cognitive theory of musical meaning would prove adept at constructing a framework within which joik can be visualized meaningfully, still attached to its cultural context and reflective of its native conceptions.

Brower demonstrates analytical potential for tonal music using a series of embodied image schema: "CONTAINER, CYCLE, VERTICALITY, BALANCE, CENTER-PERIPHERY, and SOURCE-PATH-GOAL."³⁸ Visual representations make complex relationships and phenomena accessible through labeled diagrams that communicate directionality, function, and context. Several image schemas could be expanded beyond tonal music, tailored to joik to demonstrate intrinsic theoretical concepts including aesthetic and cosmological values.

Pertinent to discussion of rhythm and larger form is CYCLE.³⁹ Combining Brower’s theory with Tirén’s transcriptions, melodies can be notated on a circular staff, with no demarcation of beginning or end, and rhythms being grouped logically or practically by the performer. This diagram could indicate the cyclical nature of how joik are traditionally conceived by Sámi musicians. Further explorations could account for microtones, which are rarely represented in transcriptions, but are often encountered in joik.

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In Frode Fjellheim’s pedagogical joik text, *Juoigama Vouđđul*, cyclical musical time is described by a circle superimposed on both an image of the Milky Way galaxy and a Sámi drum, and Nils-Aslak Valkeapää characterized joik as part of a sonic ecosystem, connoting cyclical processes.⁴⁰ Ideological constructions of the space in which humans exist, and that which exists inside humans, could function in Brower’s theory as a CONTAINER. Within this container, theoretically there could be a way to demonstrate cosmological connections. In the Sámi creation belief, for example, all life came from the buried heart of a white reindeer, from which grew a network connecting all living things (and presumably, their joiks).⁴¹ Here, in relation to this container, it is possible that a CENTER-PERIPHERY spectrum could also be invoked, in which this cosmology would be represented in the center of this interconnected web.⁴²

Ánde Somby describes the fluidity between a joik’s performance, performer, and subject, and how the importance of the human and spiritual participants and their interactions should be included in discourse of musical meaning.⁴³ The notion of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL could describe the relationship between the joiker (the source) and the joiked (the goal), with the joik itself being the path that connects the two. Using these schemas to describe the process and form of joik holds more culturally appropriate weight than discussions of phrase lengths and repeat signs. This relationship could exist inside the CONTAINER, and need not necessarily be a linear relationship traveling only from one person to another.

Joik, with its circular structure and performance of personal and cultural memory that defies modernist accounts of history, can, according to Somby, serve as a resource for looking for alternative ways to think about and live in and through time.⁴⁴

Alternative philosophies in conjunction with other elements of music cannot be viewed only through the lens of historic Western art music conventions. If, in the era of globalization, music is to be a part of the discussion of cultural exchange as well as a tool for promoting acceptance for cultural difference,

such theories that can address musics mindful of their larger cultural significance and meanings will be invaluable in achieving these goals.

The Neo-Polska Phenomenon

Investigating compositional processes in modernizing Swedish folk tunes demonstrates ways in which musicians use the polska form to create Swedish music with contemporary aesthetic relevance. “Ethnomusicologists have noted with great frequency the fact that musics are seldom stable in the contexts of social change,” and social change has been persistent in Sweden throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁴⁵ World War II, the growth of the social welfare state, the ease of access to imported popular culture, and the increasing number of immigrants arriving in Sweden are some of the more prominent phenomena. The prevalence of new influences on the current Swedish musical scene, yet the preservation of the polska form, style, and specific tunes, suggests fluidity between the intents to embody cosmopolitan modernity while still maintaining “Swedishness.” While processes of fusion are by no means unique to Sweden, these new compositions as products carry meanings particular to Sweden.

Examples of creative processes within the polska tradition include pieces that are vastly dissimilar, and offer representations of Swedish musical culture at different times and from different perspectives. These examples are a mix of old and new, demonstrating a conversation between tradition and modernity, and of foreign and domestic influences. The presence of folk tunes and polskas in these modernized contexts can be analyzed through theories associated with identity discourse. To this effect, I turn to Martin Stoke’s text on musical construction of ethnic identities, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*. “Music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them.”⁴⁶

Rather than arranging examples chronologically, arranging them by perceived deviance from perceived tradition evokes a spectrum of contemporary styles and meanings of Swedish folk music. The band Väsen is perhaps ideal to use as a “control group,” a Swedish folk ensemble including nyckelharapist Olov Johansson, who was a recipient of the Gold Zorn Badge in the summer of 2013.⁴⁷ Tracks from their live album *Levande Väsen* (2010), such as “Pedal-polska” and “Slängpolska efter Byss-Calle,” represent performances of polskas accepted as exhibiting continuity with recognized tradition, as Väsen maintains the instrumentation, forms, styles, and performance practices associated with the Swedish folk music repertoire.

What then, do we make of the Swedish Sax Septet, who performs danceable polskas on a mix of saxophones on tunes such as “Mats Berglund’s Polska” from their album *Riff-Ola* (1999)? The Swedish Sax Septet challenges neither the form nor the context of polska music, but rather the instruments that are permitted in the folk music milieu. The saxophone can, in the realm of Swedish folk music, claim neither antiquity nor authenticity compared to instruments such as the fiddle or nyckelharpa. Rather, it adds a timbre of modernity (perhaps an association with jazz) to otherwise unchanged melodies and rhythmic conventions.

While musicians often feel both constrained and simultaneously validated by discussions of authenticity and preservation,⁴⁸ the polska interpretation of the Swedish Sax Septet inspires discussion of musical identity rather than authenticity. A Swedish qualification and identity can be asserted despite the comfortable dismissal of authenticity. The band’s name explicitly asserts them as “Swedish,” and while there is nothing intrinsically Swedish about seven saxophones, the effect of reinforcing their nation of origin is still accomplished by the inclusion of polskas, recognizable to Swedish audiences.

This connotation of jazz evoked by the Swedish Sax Septet could be a reverent nod towards a genre known as *folk-jazz*, illustrated in its early form by Jan Johansson’s *Jazz på Svenska* (1964, “Jazz in Swedish”). A collaboration with bassist Georg Riedel, this album features folk tunes⁵⁰ from several regions of Sweden recast in cool jazz arrangements. Included are several polska arrangements, such as “Polska från Medelpad” and “Polska efter Höök Olle.” The combination of Swedish folk music and American jazz idioms constructs a new context for the polska, in which it is no longer a dance tune, per se, but a domestic variety of contemporary foreign popular music.

Jazz på Svenska displays comprehension of the idioms of folk music as well as jazz in both arrangements of the folk melodies and in subsequent improvisations—use of the Dorian and other diatonic modes, pedal points or drones reminiscent of several regional fiddle styles, and substantial melodic and harmonic embellishments. Transcriptions illustrate a fusion of musical devices of folk music and jazz, which in turn embodies the fusion of socially constructed meanings associated with folk music and jazz in Sweden (see Figure 1). It also demonstrates a multifaceted deviance from Western art music, not so much in what can be written or seen in the transcription, but in contrast, in the idioms of jazz and folk music that escape notation.

My own study of jazz has led me to consider improvisation, along with the context it reflects, as a performance of identity. Therefore, identity theories

Berg-Kirstis Polska

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Berg-Kirstis Polska". The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes a Piano part and a Double Bass part. The Piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with whole rests in both. The Double Bass part is on a single staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system also includes Piano and Double Bass parts. The Piano part has a whole note chord on the treble clef and a whole note chord on the bass clef. The Double Bass part continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Figure 1. The opening of a polska track from *Jazz på Svenska*. Note the modal inflections, the bass emphasis of the first and third beats as common in the polska form, as well as Johansson’s piano emphasis on the second beat—the only available offbeat, in keeping with jazz traditions. (Transcription by the author.)

let us explore improvisation as a representation both the individual’s identity in the moment, as well as a group’s identity established through familiar and shared conventions and values that the performer reproduces in an improvised way. The process of bringing folk music into the setting of jazz could also be utilized to explore how identities are perceived and shaped to better reflect changing times by removing the perception of “static symbolic objects” which is rarely a true semblance of any music.⁵¹

Rather than recasting a folk tune or dance through one foreign medium such as jazz, the Ale Möller Band’s “Samicos—Pers Erik-Polska” from the album *Argai* (2012), includes numerous foreign influences in their construction of contemporary folk music. With band members from Sweden, Senegal, Canada, Greece, the United States, and Mexico, few other bands could construct a more multiethnic polska than the Ale Möller Band.⁵² Their polska composition is problematic (impossible!) to analyze in absolute terms, seeking to extract and segregate the Swedish from the foreign. And here, the productivity of comparison lies in exploring the diversity of sounds and styles included in their music, making this a perfect example to challenge the geographic connotation of “the West.” The music is as multicultural as the band members,

resisting geographic labels, and embodying a collaborative approach to the performance of globalization and immigration. Rather than contrapuntal polyphony, this recording could be described as “cultural polyphony,” reflecting the interactions and influences occurring in contemporary diversified Sweden.

The Ale Möller Band’s collaborative approach is not the only response to cultural exchange in Sweden, of course. A more exclusive definition of Swedishness can be found in the music of right-leaning nationalist movements, expressions of disenfranchised people who feel their identity is challenged and threatened by multiculturalism.⁵³ These contesting examples mirror Stokes’s theoretical discussion of musical and cultural reflectiveness and negotiation in conditions of social change, where larger sociocultural debates can be expected to manifest in changes in musical expression.⁵⁴ In considering both perspectives within this debate, one can see that “the incorporation and ‘domestication’ of musical difference is an essential process of musical ethnicity.”⁵⁵ Comparison is here aided by inclusion of social theories which illustrate divergent approaches to negotiations of both domestication and differentiation, even within small geographic areas.

The Contemporary Composition of Joik

During initial efforts of joik melody collectors, the Sámi were the victims of salvage ethnography, in which foreign researchers, often operating with a cultural evolutionist perspective, sought to preserve the “primitive” music before modernity forced traditions out of practice. However, the Sámi have maintained traditions despite oppression and changing notions of modernity for several generations. Hilder is therefore justifiably critical of “our habit of pitting modernity against tradition.”⁵⁷ Rather, modernity and tradition in contemporary joik composition are best presented as a flexible continuity rather than a strict dichotomy, and the work of several Sámi composers seems to reflect that this perception of flexibility is an important feature to accentuate, perhaps more so than in other Western genres and contexts.

In Nils-Aslak Valkeapää’s resistance of cultural evolutionism and linear time, he emphasizes that staunch preservationism cannot present a music as genuine. Rather, it systematically rejects the genuine, meaningful, and relevant expressions by disregarding elements that are rooted in modernity.⁵⁸ While this suggests the modernization of joik must be envisioned as unavoidable and necessary to remain a genuine expression of Sámi experiences, the formative years of modernized joik were not without conflict. Changes made by some culture bearers sometimes faced objection not just from disinclined members of the majority populations of Scandinavia but also from within Sámi

culture, from those who had reservations against mixing joik with foreign and popular genres.⁵⁹

In many recent recordings of joik, performers emphasize a metric regularity of phrasing and breathe accordingly. This appears to be a result of Western religious, artistic, and popular music influences, which began as early as 1200, when Christian missionaries in their efforts to convert the Sámi also tried to convert their soundscape and musical expressions.⁶⁰ These influences continue, and are accelerated by modern technology, with the global popular music industry as a vehicle for dissemination and consumption. Joiks are now often recorded in harmonic settings with synthesizers and guitars, for example. This new sound can be heard to varying degrees in the recordings of artists like Krister Stoor (2012) and Ulla Pirttijärvi (2008), though joikers singing in popular styles are also expected to be proficient in traditional styles.⁶¹ Joik has also been fused with other popular genres. Sámi composer Frode Fjellheim includes elements of joik, jazz, and Catholic liturgical Mass in albums such as *Aejllies Gaaltije—The Sacred Source: An Arctic Mass* (2004), and *Biejjiin vuelie-Solkvad* (2013). The most popular track from the latter album is the “Kyrie,” an excerpt that includes texts in the original Greek Mass, a Sámi dialect, a joik from Ulla Pirttijärvi, and a new-age jazz accompaniment.

The melodies of Stoor and Pirttijärvi could be transcribed (loosely) and accompanied by chord charts. Fjellheim’s arrangements could be notated out in elaborate multipart scores. But this would be no more successful in presenting the cultural relevancies within new composition practice than it would for rhythmic structure, and may falsely communicate similarities with Western art music that do not exist, as a byproduct of the notation’s limitations. Instead, a theoretical analysis could include discourse of global musical inter-relationships, as described by Slobin’s *Subcultural Sounds* and Arom and Martin’s “Combining Sounds to Reinvent the World.”⁶³

Slobin is very clear that his work should not be thought of as a “model” with concrete “one-sentence definitions of terms.”⁶⁴ However, a “subculture” framework is useful in discussions of meanings. Slobin defines subculture as an “embedded unit” in the superculture, though this should not be interpreted as a “closed category” or an insinuation of sameness between all subcultures.⁶⁵ If contemporary joik is a micromusic representing a subculture, what are the macro-structures or supercultures to which it contributes? The broad term “World Music” has been applied to joik, a term that was “accompanied by discourses in favor of brotherhood between peoples and world solidarity.”⁶⁶ Several ideological currents in World Music⁶⁷ discourse were also present in Sámi sociopolitical dialogues⁶⁸ as well: “meetings between human be-

ings, mixing, exoticism, concern for the environment, and solidarity.”⁶⁹ One can see a compelling advantage to employing this terminology and notation in light of prejudices against the Sámi throughout history, although it appears as a superficially idealist remedy that neglects larger social concerns and experiences of marginalized and indigenous peoples.

Arom and Martin write of “disjunctions and new conjunctions,” wherein new music technologies separate musics from the people who create them, their context, and their environment, and circulate them throughout the world, allowing for new syntheses, and thereby new meanings, to arise.⁷⁰ Subculture theory offers explanations for why some musicians feel fusion is practical, and also a theory with which to view the new meanings imbedded in new syncretic musics. Modification through combination applies to examples such as Stoor and Pirttijärvi in that the instrumental accompaniment and metrical regularity makes joik more accessible to outside audiences, without necessarily compromising the joiks. In this sense, this form of joik could have a new function: welcoming outsiders to appreciate a self-representation of Sámi culture in more familiar terms, without the artists relinquishing ownership.

With regard to Fjellheim’s music, Slobin theorizes a contingency in which there are benefits to Sámi music being intentionally cast as a subculture of World Music: “transregional musics have a very high energy that spills across regional boundaries, perhaps even becoming global.”⁷¹ Fjellheim’s inclusion of global genres such as jazz and the Catholic Mass may suggest an interest in moving towards a broader representation of Sámi culture, where “world music as a social phenomenon is closely linked to the transformation of contemporary societies and, to a certain extent, express them. It thrives on the transnational flux that weaves around the world today.”⁷² Fjellheim maintains the uniqueness of joik and Sámi musical identity and heritage, but situates it in the presence of more global musics, thus creating a musical landscape where the Sámi are active participating members of this larger musical community, not an unrelated indigenous people on the northern fringe as they have been stereotyped by others in the past.⁷³

Looking at transcriptions of musical themes from Fjellheim’s “Kyrie” on *Biejjen vuelie—Solkvad* (2013), the interrelation of the subculture and superculture can be seen in notation: melodic themes of the Catholic Mass text are derived from, and related to, the melodies of the joiks (See Figure 2). The depiction of the subculture is what informs the expression of the superculture. In other words, the joik defines the Kyrie. While these transcriptions do not realize the meanings contained in this piece, they demonstrate how meanings are communicated, and how the composer who identifies with the subculture



Figure 2. One of Fjellheim's Kyrie melodic themes.

chooses to engage and participate within the superculture. The way this music interacts with these supercultures provides meaning, identity, unity and distinction, across times and spaces to both the musicians and audiences while allowing for the creators' ownership and self-representation. As such, the joik stands out from other musical expressions, particularly that of Western art music, but not in a blatantly polemic or separatist manner.

Conclusion

In Swedish folk music and Sámi joik, the use of comparison and transcription into conventional Western notation are often most valuable for their illustrations of difference and incongruence, rather than as prescriptive, pedagogical, or preservative tools. Building on these initial differences, diverse analytical theories that address the syncretic nature of music in its surrounding culture can help ethnomusicologists understand the deeper imbedded meanings associated with these art forms, be it within the function of dance, in the context of symbolic expressions, or its fusion with other musical genres. Future fieldwork in these communities would provide opportunities to discuss how musicians feel about these proposed methods and meanings.

Having investigated some of the musical, cultural, structural, and overarching philosophical differences between contemporary folk music expressions in Sweden and in Sápmi, what becomes apparent through implicit comparison is the inapplicability of a geographic term such as "the West," which implies musical coherence over a vast region with many differentiated substyles. If comparisons, in their contemporary usage rather than the mechanisms of the past, are to become a line of ethnomusicological enquiry, careful specificity in the language and labels we use should become a part of our common practice as well. At the very least, this could help to avoid excluding, oversimplifying, or underestimating the diversity of musical philosophies and expressions that exists in the Western hemisphere.

NOTES

¹ Because the Sámi political and cultural equality movement is still an on-going conversation throughout Scandinavia, I would like to avoid exacerbating any tensions between the Sámi and the majority nation-states, and here I believe overt comparison between these musics would be counterproductive.

² The analyses contained herein should be taken as hypothetical and the framework not universally applicable. My observations are based on textual research and application of relevant theories. Wherever possible I have used ethnographically informed source materials, but I would expect to conduct extensive fieldwork before such conclusions were drawn. Rather, the foremost aim of this paper is to explore practical and diverse holistic analysis, and I ask the reader to seek value in that, rather than in any suggested cultural “truth” of these analyses, in the absence of specific and extensive involvement with the most essential primary sources: narratives from the people who create the music.

³ Quoted in Per-Ult Allmo, et al., eds. *Polska: En Bok Till Folkmusik och Dansåret 1990* (Stockholm: Organisationskommittén för Folkmusik och dansåret, 1990), 4. (author’s translation)

⁴ Jan Ling, *A History of European Folk Music* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 188.

⁵ Ewa Dahlig-Turek, “On The History of the Polska,” in *The Polish Dance in Scandinavia and Poland*, ed. Märta Ramsten (Stockholm: Svenskt Visarkiv, 2003), 11, 22.

⁶ David Kaminsky, *Swedish Folk Music in the Twenty-First Century: On the Nature of Tradition in a Folkless Nation* (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), 45, 49.

⁷ Jan Ling, *A History of European Folk Music*, 20.

⁸ While many regional dialects feature different terms (i.e. juoi’gat, voulle), and sometimes different words for the song itself and the act of singing, scholarship demonstrates predilection towards “joik” as the preferred vocabulary intending to encompass this vast group of expressions, songs, and singing of the Sámi peoples. This paper therefore makes use of this spelling with that intention in mind.

⁹ The Sámi were previously known as “Lapps,” but this etic-derived term is derogatory and pejorative. Because this term is offensive, it should not be used in contemporary scholarship except in direct quotations from older sources.

¹⁰ Tina K. Ramnarine, “Acoustemology, Indigeneity, and Joik in Valkeapää’s Symphonic Activism: Views from Europe’s Arctic Fringes for Environmental Ethnomusicology,” *Society for Ethnomusicology* 53/2 (2009): 188.

¹¹ Richard Jones-Bamman, “As Long as We Continue to Joik, We’ll Remember Who We Are:” *Negotiating Identity and the Saami Joik*. (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1993), 27.

¹² Andreas Lüderwald and Thomas Sebastian Köhn, “Sámi music.” *Grove Music Online*, 2013.

¹³ *Ibid.* Examples of older joik styles can be heard on the Smithsonian Folkways collection (1956).

The Sámi *noaidi* (shamans) were called upon as ritual specialists, with the ability to interact and possibly even control to an extent the spirits of the surrounding environment (both animate and inanimate). Their purpose was to maintain a universal balance on behalf of their community (see Jones-Bamman, “As Long as We Continue

to Joik,” 71–73). “To joik was to confirm the belief that balance was attainable” (ibid., 81).

¹⁵ Lüderwald and Köhn, “Sámi Music,” n.p.

¹⁶ Richard Jones-Bamman, “‘From ‘I’m a Lapp’ to ‘I am Saami:’ Popular Music and Changing Images of Indigenous Ethnicity in Scandinavia” in *Ethnomusicology* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 351.

¹⁷ Ibid., 355.

¹⁸ Ling, *A History of European Folk Music*, 189.

¹⁹ Ewa Dahlig-Turek, “Rhythms of Swedish Polskas and their Relation to Polish Folk Dances.” in *The Polish Dance in Scandinavia and Poland*, Märta Ramsten, ed. (Stockholm: Svenskt Visarkiv, 2003), 163.

²⁰ Benjamin R. Teitelbaum, “What did Övergaard Hear?: Transcription, Meter, and Competing Ontologies of Swedish Folk Music” (unpublished manuscript).

²¹ Ibid., 2.

²² Ibid., 8, 10–11.

²³ Ibid., 1.

²⁴ Ibid., 12.

²⁵ Ibid., 15.

²⁶ David Kaminsky, “Total Rhythm in Three Dimensions: Towards a Motional Theory of Melodic Dance Rhythm in Swedish Polska Music.” *Dance Research* 32/1 (2014): 46.

²⁷ Ibid., 47.

²⁸ Ibid., 48–49.

²⁹ Ibid., 51.

³⁰ Ibid., 54.

³¹ Ibid., 51.

³² Richard Jones-Bamman, “Following in the Footsteps of a Giant: When Fieldwork Past Influences Field-Work Present, Karl Tirén and Die lappische Volksmusik,” *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 12/1 (2003): 39

³³ Lüderwald and Köhn, “Sámi Music,” n.p.

³⁴ Thomas R. Hilder, *Sámi Musical Performance and the Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 90.

³⁵ Ramnarine, “Acoustemology, Indigeneity, and Joik,” 209.

³⁶ Hilder, *Sámi Musical Performance*, 101. This is not unique to joik, however: examples are found elsewhere include Javanese and Balinese gamelan.

³⁷ Jones-Bamman, “As Long as We Continue to Joik, We’ll Remember Who We Are,” 2.

³⁸ Candace Brower, “A Cognitive Theory of Musical Meaning,” *Journal of Music Theory* 44/2 (2000): 326. The capitalized formatting of the image schema designations follows Brower’s practice.

³⁹ Ibid., 329.

⁴⁰ Ramnarine, “Acoustemology, Indigeneity, and Joik,” 203–205.

⁴¹ Hilder, 72.

⁴² I maintain, however, that an accurate visualization of this should be informed by someone inside Sámi culture, with the appropriate cultural background knowledge I lack.

⁴³ Ramnarine, “Acoustemology, Indigeneity, and Joik,” 203.

⁴⁴ Hilder, *Sámi Musical Performance*, 101.

⁴⁵ Martin Stokes, “Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music” in *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁷ This is the most prestigious award for folk musicianship in Sweden. While silver and bronze badges are awarded to many participants annually at the Zorn Trials, the gold medal is presented to only one or two recipients, honoring lifetime achievement.

⁴⁸ For a more thorough discussion of preservationist sentiment in Swedish folk music, see Kaminsky, *Swedish Folk Music in the Twentieth Century*, 3, 19, 77–78.

⁴⁹ While Lars Gullin’s *Fäbodjazz* was recorded prior to Johansson’s *Jazz på Svenska*, Johansson was more deliberate in his folk music sources than Gullin, and gathered more momentum in terms of inspiring a cohesive folk-jazz trend, the residual effects of which can still be seen in Swedish music today, most obvious in the numerous recent tribute albums to *Jazz på Svenska*.

⁵⁰ Johansson found these folk tunes in *Svenska Låtar*, an anthology of transcriptions collected from various fiddlers across Sweden and organized by region and town, compiled by Nils Andersson in the early twentieth century.

⁵¹ Stokes, “Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music,” 5.

⁵² “Ale Möller Band.” Ale Möller Officiella Hemsida. September 3, 2012. Accessed 12 October 2015.

⁵³ Benjamin R. Teitelbaum, “*Come Hear Our Merry Song*”: Shifts in the Sound of Contemporary Swedish Radical Nationalism. (PhD diss, Brown University, 2013), 75.

⁵⁴ Stokes, “Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music,” 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁶ Hilder, *Sámi Musical Performance*, 76–77.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 95.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 81.

⁵⁹ Jones-Bamman, “From ‘I’m a Lapp’ to ‘I am Saami,’” 353.

⁶⁰ Jones-Bamman, “As Long as We Continue to Joik, We’ll Remember Who We Are,” 168.

⁶¹ Hilder, *Sámi Musical Performance*, 85.

⁶² Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993).

⁶³ Simha Arom and Denis-Constant Martin, "Combining Sounds to Reinvent the World: World Music, Sociology, and Musical Analysis," in *Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music*, eds. Michael Tenzer and John Roeder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 388–413.

⁶⁴ Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds*, 12.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Arom and Martin, "Combining Sounds to Reinvent the World," 395.

⁶⁷ The label "World Music" can be problematic for its inherent vagueness, and for the purpose of this analysis, it is valuable to acknowledge this enigma. Ultimately, however, I maintain that it remains useful to encompass the world's musical diversity at least within the record industry, even if it is not a viable descriptive category.

⁶⁸ For example, Jones-Bamman describes an incident in Oslo, in 1979, where in protest of political marginalization and environmental concerns surrounding the construction of the Alta Dam, Sámi activists camped outside the Norwegian Parliament Building in a lavvo (a traditional conical tent), and staged a hunger strike and sang joik to officials and bystanders, initiating discourse on environmental preservation and consideration for Sámi heritage and voices (see Jones-Bamman, "From 'I'm a Lapp' to 'I am Saami,'" 359).

⁶⁹ Arom and Martin, "Combining Sounds to Reinvent the World," 396.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁷¹ Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds*, 19.

⁷² Arom and Martin, "Combining Sounds to Reinvent the World," 398.

⁷³ For example, Sámi musicians participated in endeavors of what Hilder calls "indigenous cosmopolitanism." The July 2007 Riddu Riđđu festival, in the Northern Norwegian province of Olmmáivággi (or Manndalen) invited indigenous peoples from outside Scandinavia to partake in music-making, displaying solidarity with a familiar global indigenous experience (Hilder, *Sámi Musical Performance*, 187–188).

Daniel Obluda

Min'yō and Bluegrass: Finding Common Ground in Folk Traditions from Two Different Worlds

The United States has long been home to many genres of folk music, most being amalgamations of various folk traditions, whose practitioners trace their roots back to England, Europe, and Africa. On the other side of the world, Japan also has an established folk music tradition, with written records that date back over a thousand years. Although these two folk music traditions could not be further apart geographically, they do have some musical aspects in common. In this paper, I will examine both of these folk music styles through two theoretical parameters in an attempt to produce analyses that reveal how they differ from Western musics as well as cast light on the similarities and differences between the sonic and cultural characteristics inherent to each tradition. The first theoretical parameter consists of an in-depth analysis of the scalar construction found within the two genres. Here, particular attention is given to the construction and use of the pentatonic scale, seeking to find differences in how each tradition uses this type of octave division. The second parameter will explore ornamentation practices in order to illuminate different aesthetic and cultural values manifested in these two folk musics. Ultimately, these two parameters generate an analysis that reveals the philosophical differences between these societies, while at the same time demonstrating how both cultures use music in similar ways to reinforce these fundamental principles.

Japanese and American folk music traditions each contain a highly diversified set of sub-genres within them, and as a result, it is necessary to narrow the scope of this study and focus on one particular style from each tradition.

Today, most scholars typically divide Japanese folk music into three subsets: *warabe-uta* (children songs), *min'yō* (folk songs), and *minzoku geinō* (folk music for performing arts).¹ My analysis will focus on songs from the *min'yō* subset because it contains songs with a wide variety of topics, while not being restricted to a specific age group or performance setting. Narrowing my analysis to one genre of American folk music proves to be a considerably more difficult task. The population in the United States is comprised of people from a diverse array of European, African, Latin American, and Asian cultures, and as a result, many folk traditions are either a continuation of one ethnic subgroup, or a combination of several subgroups. This complex diversity of musics led me to look for a genre that would account for multiple European folk musics and also incorporate some African-American influences. I believe that bluegrass can accommodate all of these considerations. Of course, bluegrass is not intended to represent all American subcultures—no single genre could. Furthermore, bluegrass and *min'yō* both present unique issues concerning the aforementioned analytical parameters, but in a comparative theoretical study such as this, a certain degree of dissonance is to be expected and addressed.

There exist a considerable number of surface-level similarities between *min'yō* and bluegrass. Both genres primarily consist of songs that feature sung text with acoustic instrumental accompaniment that are cast in verse-chorus form. As a participant in each genre, I have noticed that songs are frequently pitched at the very top of a vocalist's range, valuing a high, strained vocal timbre.² Both genres have historically been disseminated through oral transmission, using notation sparingly as a reference tool. Finally, both genres seem to attract listeners because they foster nostalgic memories of rurality and the natural world.³ Although *min'yō* and bluegrass share many musical elements in common, a brief historical overview of each genre will enable one to better understand the cultural context in which each of these musics developed.

A Brief History of *Min'yō*

In Japan, the concept of folklore as a unified concept and academic discipline is a relatively recent development. As Japan started to become more Westernized around the turn of the twentieth century, the phrase *minzoku ongaku* was used to refer to the kind of music played in villages and towns by non-professional musicians. The phrase *minzoku ongaku* here is a direct translation of the German word *Volksmusik* [folk music]. The absence of an indigenous term for folk music idioms does not, however, imply that these types of music

were rare or non-existent prior to the twentieth century. The earliest chronicles of Japanese music were compiled in the eighth century, and these sources contain occasional references to countryside songs, sometimes showing lyrics assumed to be of rural origin.⁴ The topics of these folk songs ranged from courtship to activities of everyday life, for example, working in rice paddies and brewing *sake*. In addition to preserving portraits of daily life, these folk songs also provide chronologies of Japan, including historical events as well as detailed accounts of how the society transformed over hundreds of years.

The term *min'yō*, a direct translation of English “folk song,” began to be used in the late nineteenth century, and like the phrase *minzoku ongaku*, it arose as a product of the Westernization of Japan during that period. *Min'yō* slowly began to replace the regional terms used to identify folk music throughout the country, bringing all folk songs under one name. As a result, the variety of songs within the *min'yō* genre is widely diverse, and current scholars do not all agree on where the boundaries of this category lie. Today, some *min'yō* songs are many centuries old, having been passed down orally from one generation to the next, while others are identifiably recent, having been commissioned by rural communities in order to publicize themselves and project their unique identity to the rest of the country.

Many *min'yō* songs are associated with a specific town or region of Japan, and are so named, for example *Yasugi Bushi* [Song from Yasugij]. Within the *min'yō* genre, scholars generally separate songs into four distinct functional categories: work songs, drinking songs, dance songs, and geisha party songs. The largest of the four categories is work songs, and these tunes encompass a wide variety of activities, including sea songs, mountain songs, garden songs, and many others. Because of their large array of applications, *min'yō* songs feature significant diversity in rhythmic and metric content, most of which are determined by the setting and intended purpose of the song. For example, if a song is meant to accompany repetitive work, it will probably have a more strict and consistent meter, whereas songs designed to distract workers from the monotony of a task will likely contain a freer rhythmic structure. Generally, there are certain styles and aesthetic values concerning timbre and ornamentation that locate certain *min'yō* within their region of origin (some of which will be discussed below). However, folk songs rarely exist in one standardized format, and David Hughes provides a far more detailed examination of the genre and its regional characteristics in his monograph, *Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan* (Global Oriental, 2008).⁵

During the 1970s, *min'yō* was one of the most popular genres of music in Japan, and although its popularity has since diminished, it continues to be a

vital component of Japanese culture.⁶ Today there are societies in Japan that hold *min'yō* singing competitions, some of which feature musicians competing with one another performing often fast, technical, and virtuosic renditions of these folk songs. Beyond these contests, many Japanese people maintain some degree of contact with this traditional folk music idiom, giving it a prominent place within society. Although the average citizen today does not know many folk songs, most Japanese people are familiar with a few *min'yō* from their home prefecture, and, if they wish, can pursue their interest by either studying with professional *min'yō iemoto*⁷ in strictly structured master-apprentice systems, or studying in a less regimented environment with licensed teachers at cultural centers.⁸

A Brief History of Bluegrass

The bluegrass genre traces its roots back to 1940s white-American country music, and specifically, Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys—named for the “Kentucky Blue Grass” of Monroe’s home state. The genre consists of traditional folk repertoire preserved and sung in the American South, and these songs are accompanied by acoustic instruments with high aesthetic value placed on innovative and virtuosic performance techniques. Monroe was a mandolin player, and as a result most subsequent bluegrass groups feature this instrument prominently.⁹ Other equally influential members of the group included Lester Flatt (guitar) and Earl Scruggs (banjo). Scruggs is credited with popularizing the three-finger style of banjo playing (also known as “Scruggs style”), where the thumb, index, and middle fingers are used to arpeggiate chords in a variety of ways. The intense rhythmic drive created by Scruggs’ method of playing is now considered a hallmark of this style of music.

Bluegrass developed into a genre distinguished from generic “old-timey string bands” after World War II and eventually, “bluegrass” was adopted as the commercial term used throughout the record industry. In the mid-1950s, and into the '70s and '80s, this style would continue to be associated with and consumed primarily by a white male demographic in the Appalachian region until the late twentieth century, when women became involved in large numbers. Building on the sound of folk and country music, Monroe and others began incorporating elements of the blues, ragtime, and jazz,¹⁰ and although today many regard bluegrass as a quintessentially Anglo-American music, it contains several African-American elements, including polyrhythm.¹¹ Scruggs normally used his prototypical three-finger pattern to create a 3 + 3 + 2 accent pattern, which generated a polyrhythmic, interlocking effect with the existing duple meter. Additional African-American musical influences include the uses

of blues forms and the practice of having lead instrumentalists accompany vocalist(s) in a responsorial manner, often taking solos between verses. Monroe credited his neighbor, a Black guitarist named Arnold Schultz, with helping to form his conception of rhythm and what is possible on guitar.¹² It was this unique combination of musical elements that would solidify the bluegrass genre and ultimately lay the groundwork for its wider popularity and success in the following decades.

Comparison of Scales

My first theoretical parameter involves an analysis of the scalar structure utilized in each of these folk musics. The full range of scales found across genres and across centuries in Japan and in the West is quite diverse, so of course one cannot generalize and speak of a common “Japanese” or “Western” scale.¹³ Indeed, both *min'yō* and bluegrass feature multiple types of scales and modes, but one common type found in both genres is pentatonic scales. And yet the structures of these scales are quite different in the two genres. Bluegrass pentatonicism is based on the standard harmonic structure of Western music, with a tonic triad (major or minor) at the core; by contrast, pentatonicism in *min'yō* eschews harmonic structures but uses scales built around fourths, and which do not avoid semitones.

In Western pentatonic music, there exist two standard five-note divisions of the octave, both of which can be seen in Figure 1. The major pentatonic scale lacks the fourth and seventh scale degrees, while the minor pentatonic scale lacks the second and sixth scale degrees. It is important to observe that no half-step intervals occur between adjacent pitches in these two scales. Furthermore, because the gaps in these scales do not affect the three tones of the primary triad, both of these scales are tonal, implying a clear tonic pitch and reinforcing the Western preference for chordal, harmonic music.

In Japan, these two types of scale have gained popularity as Western musical language has become at least as popular as traditional genres over the past century. In a sense, these scales respect the Japanese traditional preference for pentatonicism while making it easy to add chordal harmonic structures. As a result, they are commonly encountered in two twentieth-century genres



Figure 1. Two pentatonic scales most commonly found in Western music.

of Japanese music which tend to fuse traditional folk song styles and vocal techniques with Western harmonization: the popular song style called *enka*, and postwar *shin-min'yō*, “new folk songs.”¹⁴

However, almost all traditional *min'yō* feature melodies based on a different type of pentatonic scale—or rather, on three types of pentatonic scale, each based on the uniting of two tetrachords (intervals of a fourth, with one or more infixed pitches). Alison McQueen Tokita and David Hughes suggest that Japanese scales are better thought of as modes—series of pitches with more than one possible tonal center—because the Japanese do not hear traditional melodies as having one tonal center (a “tonic”), but rather they perceive them as having multiple nuclear tones that are the primary goals of melodic movement.¹⁵ Figure 2 shows the three most common scales/modes of *min'yō*. (Note that these are relative pitches: the actual pitch in performance depends on the singer’s vocal range.)

ritsu:

C - d - F + G - a - C

in (also called *miyako-bushi*, ‘city melody’):

C - d \flat - F + G - a \flat - C

yō (also called *inaka-bushi*, ‘countryside melody’; mostly occurs in *min'yō*, thus also called the ‘folk song scale’, *min'yō onkai*):

C - e \flat - F + G - b \flat - C

Figure 2. The scales most commonly found in *min'yō*.¹⁶

It was Fumio Koizumo who brought the concept of a tetrachord into common use in analyses of Japanese music.¹⁷ Each octave scale in Figure 2 is formed from the union of two tetrachords: C - F and G - C. These are the nuclear tones (*kakuon*) of each mode, hence they appear here as capital letters. Any of them might, for example, commonly occur as a phrase-ending note. And as shown, between these strong notes can occur infixes (written in lower case), pitches that almost never serve as tonal centers or phrase endings and yet are crucial to the melody.

But Figure 2 only shows five pitches for each mode, whereas in fact other pitches might replace those infixes as “exchange tones.” For example, just as the Western melodic minor scale can raise or lower the seventh degree depending on the direction of melodic movement, so too can the a \flat in the *in* mode be replaced by b \flat in ascent, serving as an upward leading tone, or as a lower neighbor in a passage C - b \flat - C. Likewise, the e \flat in the *yō* mode might

From a Western etic perspective, it is tempting to speculate about the possible effects associated with the two *min'yō* modes because, to my ear, the addition of half-step intervals in the *in* mode results in melodic contours that sound more minor and melancholy than those found in *yō* melodies. This is where a cultural outsider must tread lightly, because in addition to constructing false, Westernized descriptions of Japanese music, there exists another, essential issue: Japanese folk musicians have never developed a modal theory; even the tetrachordal theory applied to *min'yō* is of Western scholarly origin, although fully adopted and developed by Koizumi. To this point, the only description of folk scales that I have found which mentions the emotional aspects comes from David Hughes, who states, “*in* and *yō* are Japanese pronunciations of the Chinese philosophical concepts of *yin* and *yang*; the names reflect the perception by some scholars that these two scales are respectively ‘dark’ and ‘light’ in mood, although this connection is hard to demonstrate.”²¹ I believe there is a shared idea of contrast in these binaries (*in* and *yō*, *yin* and *yang*, dark and light). That said, it is probably best to halt the inquiry into mode effects there, not only because it is difficult to demonstrate musical representations of *yin* and *yang*, but also because these two ideas represent the idea of balance, and they are commonly seen working with one another in Japanese music and art.²²

Shifting our focus to the United States, pentatonic scales can also be found to a certain degree in bluegrass music, which is primarily based on melodies descended from European folk tunes preserved largely in the Appalachian re-



Figure 4. Primary melody of “Tokyo Ondo” (transcription by Daniel Obluda).

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Soran Bushi". It is organized into four horizontal staves. The first staff is labeled "Introduction" and contains a melodic line in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is labeled "Verse" and contains a melodic line with lyrics "Hai Hai" written below it. The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff is labeled "Chorus" and contains a melodic line with lyrics "A Dok-koi-sho Dok-koi-sho" written below it. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines.

Figure 5. Primary melody of “Soran Bushi” (transcription by Daniel Obluda).

gion of the country. Not surprisingly, there is a wide variety of scales commonly found in this genre. Some bluegrass melodies are built on diatonic, seven-note scales, while others are constructed on the major and minor pentatonic scales (as seen in Figure 1) or possibly the blues scale (as seen in Figure 6), and lastly, some melodies are built on six-note scales that can take on various combinations of all the above. This ambiguity is problematic when constructing a system of scalar analysis. Few theories can adequately reconcile such extensive variation, but I see two ways to approach this issue. First, one can argue that all bluegrass melodies are “pentacentric” in the way Hughes uses this term for Japanese scales: based on a pentatonic skeleton (with some containing added, non-essential notes); or second, one can be less specific and try to make general observations that account for most of the various scalar phenomena. I believe there are advantages and disadvantages to either method, and ultimately both of these approaches provide unique insights into the scalar structure of bluegrass music. Therefore, I will briefly expound upon each of them.

Claiming that bluegrass tunes are essentially constructed on pentatonic skeletons is not a completely invalid assertion, but this claim is not universally ap-

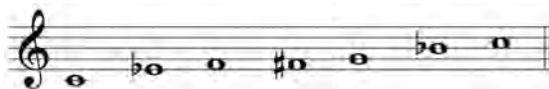


Figure 6. Blues scale.

plicable. Usually, bluegrass melodies diverge from the two pentatonic scales found in Western art music in one of two ways. First, it is possible to have the inclusion of one or both of the two scale degrees that are typically omitted from the scale, and second, there is the potential inclusion of blue notes (i.e., a chromatically altered third, fourth, and seventh scale degrees). In his article about simplified modes in Anglo-American folk songs, Norman Cazden presents ways to account for these two phenomena in pentatonic melodies. Cazden believes the pentatonic structure of a melody can absorb occasional infixes, transitions, or auxiliaries not included among its standard five degrees and still be perceived by the ear as pentatonic.²³ He also discusses inconsistencies concerning the third scale degree, believing that songs are generally perceived as either major or minor, and that periodic alterations do not ultimately affect the perceived pentatonic structure.²⁴

Cazden's statements refer to folk melodies, thus they can also be applied to bluegrass melodies because a large number are based on folk tunes. Figure 7 is a transcription of the melody from the song "Wildwood Flower," and it illustrates how a melody built on a pentatonic scale can absorb occasional infixes (all of which have been circled) and still sound pentatonic. It is worth noting that none of the circled pitches occur on beats one or three (the two strongest beats in 4/4 meter), and this metric placement might explain why this melody is perceived by the ear as pentatonic (to borrow Cazden's phrase). This tune also exemplifies how a single song exists in various forms; in this case, "Wildwood Flower," written by Maud Irving (lyrics) and Joseph Webster (music) in 1888, is known as both a country song and bluegrass song. This tune was made popular by the Carter Family in the late 1920s, and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs recorded the tune in the late 1940s, solidifying it as a bluegrass standard.²⁵

Another approach to explaining the scalar structure of bluegrass music involves loosening one's theoretical grip and using the various octave divisions to deduce some of the general principles at work within the music. Although bluegrass does not conform to a standardized scale, there are certain melodic gestures—the G-run, for example—that are common features in these tunes,



Figure 7. Primary melody of "Wildwood Flower" (transcription by Daniel Obluda).

regardless of which scale they are built on. The following observation offered by Robert Cantwell sheds light on these melodic gestures:

Our folk melodies, sacred and secular, especially those in Appalachian and African-American music, are virtually all modal in organization and ethos, with the important difference that the folk-singer often employs only six, or five, of the seven available tones. These are the so-called “gapped” scales, which confine melodic movement to a restricted set of tones, corners in musical space; unlike a fully developed diatonic or chromatic tune, which seems rounded and flexible, the gapped melody darts along rigid straight lines from point to point, describing what amounts to a tartan-like geometric design.²⁶

Here, Cantwell suggests that melodies built on gapped scales sound more folk-like (i.e. less learned) because they are not as smoothly contoured as those heard in art music. Not only does this idea help account for a wide variety of scales, it also demonstrates that gapped scales give bluegrass melodies their inherent, disjunct melodic contour.

Cazden and Cantwell each present different ways of accounting for the scalar discrepancy in American folk music and bluegrass, and both authors seem to agree that purely diatonic scales are less commonly seen in these styles of music. To test this theory and construct a set of quantifiable data, I analyzed a series of folk songs and categorized them according to scale types. Because folk songs nearly always exist in a variety of versions, I wanted to find an anthology that was completed in a time period that coincided with the advent of bluegrass. Vance Randolph's *Ozark Folksongs* (1946) provides a valuable window into the past that enables us to observe how people were singing folk songs in rural areas of the United States during the 1940s. A comparison of scales found in ninety of Randolph's transcriptions seems to reinforce the notion that there is little consistency in scalar construction in folk songs, with five-note, six-note, and seven-note scales all having significant percentages (see Figure 8). If we simplify our comparison to gapped scales versus diatonic scales, we are left with a much clearer picture. Two-thirds of the ballads Randolph recorded feature melodies containing gaps, quantifiable evidence that a majority of folk songs are not constructed on seven-note scales.²⁷

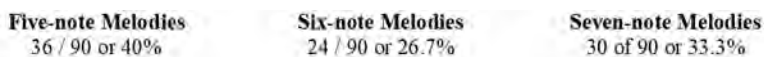


Figure 8. Comparison of scale types used in ninety transcriptions of forty-one British ballads as sung in the Ozark Mountains.²⁸

To better understand how gapped scales and infixed pitches are manifested in bluegrass music, it is beneficial to turn to a musical example that contains both of these features: “My Little Georgia Rose,” by Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys (Figure 9). This melody is primarily constructed on a C major pentatonic scale (C, D, E, G, and A), but it contains two auxiliary pitches, namely F (the fourth scale degree) and E_b (the lowered third scale degree). Cazden would argue that both of these pitches are essentially absorbed into the scale, and although I partially agree with this assessment, I believe that both F and E_b make essential contributions to the melody. Monroe clearly gravitates towards F when the chord progression settles on the subdominant triad, and seeing as how F is the root of this chord, I think it is fair to say that this pitch is essential. The E_b is more ornamental in nature, because it is an altered version of the third scale degree, which is already contained in the melody and accompaniment. Here, Monroe is using E_b as an expressive “blue note,” a gesture he borrowed from jazz and blues idioms, where musicians would commonly lower a diatonic note by a half-step to create more melodic tension and expression. Without Monroe’s strategically placed blue notes, “My Little Georgia Rose” quickly loses its characteristic flavor, and anyone familiar with the song would immediately recognize the missing notes, even though they are not technically part of the scale. Finally, the melody of “My Little Georgia Rose” demonstrates the prominence of gaps within melodic movement. The majority of the melody is comprised of disjunct intervals, which help give the tune its folk-like quality.



Figure 9. Primary melody of “My Little Georgia Rose” by Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys (transcription by Daniel Obluda).

Ornamentation in *min'yō* and bluegrass

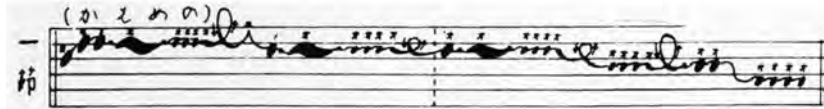
Of the various musical characteristics that help us place a melody within a specific folk music tradition, few accomplish this more quickly or effectively than ornamentation. As seen in the previous example, Bill Monroe would often construct tunes with auxiliary pitches, which he used to add crucial elements of expression and character to the line. Within the realm of Western art music, ornaments tend to be defined as embellishments that are not essential to the melody or harmony.²⁹ In some folk musics, it is the exact opposite, in that ornaments are what give melodies with their unique flavor. In language, various vowel sounds enable listeners to identify extremely subtle differences in dialects and vocal inflections; similarly, musical ornaments provide the aural nuances that enable listeners to associate a melody with its respective region and culture. This phenomenon is particularly true in both *min'yō* and bluegrass; however, the way in which ornamentation is approached within each genre could not be more different.

In Japan, ornaments—called *kobushi* [little melodies]—are the melodious twists and turns that add life to a style of singing that otherwise consists of straight, pure tone.³⁰ It has been standard practice to sing *min'yō* with added embellishments in order to give the melodies much needed vibrancy and character. Audiences commonly judge a performer's singing abilities through their use of vocal ornaments to create what the Japanese refer to as *aji* [flavor].³¹ Because melodic embellishment has long been a highly valued *min'yō* technique, practitioners in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have begun to standardize the ornaments within each song, which has resulted in a more homogenized canon of folk songs. Like the more classical forms of Japanese music, *min'yō* are now taught by licensed instructors who teach their students by rote to sing perfectly these ornamented melodies, down to the number of notes in a trill.³²

Today, most Japanese folk musicians are interested in learning the various *min'yō* that are associated with their home prefecture, and performing these songs properly requires a mastery of their respective embellishments, which are as much a product of the prefecture as the folk songs.³³ As previously mentioned, hundreds of annual *min'yō* contests bring scores of contestants together to sing one folk song, competing against one another to see who can produce the most accurate and authentic performance. In his explanation of one of these events, Hughes includes a facsimile showing a Japanese transcription of one such folk song. This notation also contains a legend that isolates each ornament, and this facsimile, along with the first phrase of the song "Esashi Oiwake," can be seen in Figure 10. Looking at the examples below, it is clear that these embellishments are not just superfluous decora-

tions added to the melody; rather, these embellishments are the melody. No other *min'yō* has its ornaments quite as fixed as this famous example, but with formal and professional teaching of folk songs having become the norm in recent decades, such fixity is indeed expected by most teachers.³⁴

First Phrase:



Ornament Legend:

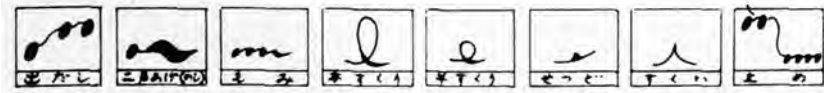


Figure 10. Portions of a Japanese transcription of “Esashi Oiwake” as well as a legend that delineates the various types of ornaments. This notation is the property of Esashi Oiwake Kai (the preservation society of “Esashi Oiwake”), and the images have been used with the permission of David Hughes.³⁵

Compared to the strict conventions that are becoming ever more standard in *min'yō*, ornamentation in bluegrass music is less standardized. Although this type of artistic freedom allows bluegrass musicians to be creative, it makes it difficult to codify the types of embellishment that occur. At the most basic level, ornamentation in bluegrass is less about decoration (which does occur frequently), and more about improvisation.³⁶ In a fashion similar to that found in jazz music, bluegrass musicians are expected to take solos, in which they improvise and embellish the melody of a tune. During these sections, performers will typically arpeggiate melodies to create contrasting rhythmic hemiolas, and they will also draw from a mixed bag of ornaments found in other folk musics; for example, the roll and the cut, which both stem from English and Irish folk musics, as well as bends (portamentos) and blue notes, which hail from African-American vocal genres like the blues.

Beyond these various types of ornaments, which are most commonly utilized by instrumentalists, there is a specific vocal style that is associated with bluegrass music. As previously mentioned, bluegrass vocalists tend to pitch melodies in the highest register of their voice, commonly singing just below their break. As a result, the melody takes on a loud and ragged quality. Although musicians like Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers popularized this style of singing, these practices trace their roots back to the Baptist churches in the rural regions of Appalachia. This vocal style is commonly called the “high lonesome sound,” a moniker it was given by John Cohen, who filmed and produced a 1963 documentary by the same name. One of the hallmarks of

this style of singing is what Cantwell describes as forceful shouting or “barking” on the highest note of the melody.³⁷ This practice was derived from the oration style of Baptist preachers, who interpreted verses like Isaiah 58:1 “lift up thy voice like a trumpet” literally, using their voices to produce a *jubilus* [country cry], which is a style of worship that dates back to the advent of Christianity.³⁸ Therefore, the loud and hard attack on a melody’s zenith pitch should be thought of as a type of vocal ornament because it is an essential characteristic of bluegrass that identifies it as a rural music.

Bluegrass and *min'yō* feature two entirely different performance practices and philosophies when it comes to melodic embellishments, but ultimately, ornamentation is equally significant in both genres. Unlike Western art music, in which ornaments are often viewed as extraneous melodic decorations, bluegrass and *min'yō* rely on these embellishments, which enable them to express their unique identity.

Conclusion

Analyzing these folk musics through detailed examinations of scalar construction and ornamentation reveals both similarities and differences between the two. Examining the modes and scales used in these two genres produces a mixed bag of results. Although a significant percentage of *min'yō* and bluegrass songs align with the standard pentatonic scales, there are markedly different concepts at the core of each genre that govern their scale structures. That being said, they both tend to feature melodies constructed on gapped (or pentacentric) scales, which creates disjunct melodic motion not commonly found in Western art music.

Ornamentation is an area where one can observe stark discrepancies between *min'yō* and bluegrass, and these discrepancies reflect the differing ideological approach towards music between these societies. In Japan, learning music is viewed as a form of self-development, and most Japanese believe in a concept known as *dō*, the idea that there is a single way or path that enables one to learn something properly.³⁹ This concept is largely foreign to Westerners who commonly mistake it as some kind of forced conformity. Learning something the proper way enables a Japanese individual to participate in a cultural tradition that is considered authentic because it has endured and will continue to endure.⁴⁰ The concept of “harmony” (*wa*) between an individual and a group is one of the ultimate social values in Japan, similar to the concept of “freedom” in the United States. I believe these distinct cultural values are at the core of the musical differences that have been illuminated by these two theoretical parameters. Although *min'yō* and bluegrass exhibit similar

folk-like qualities, they are ultimately two different genres, each of which vividly displays the philosophies and values of their respective cultures.

NOTES

¹ Shigeo Kishibe, Fumio Koizumi, and David W. Hughes, "Japan: VII. Folk Music" *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43335pg7>, accessed 20 September 2015

² Jeff T. Titon, "Bluegrass," in *American Musical Traditions*, vol. 3 (New York: Schirmer Reference, 2002), 133.

³ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁴ David W. Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song in Modern Japan* (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2008), 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 155–156.

⁷ Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song*, 177.

⁸ Jay Keister, "Okeikoba: Lesson Places as Sites for Negotiating Tradition in Japanese Music" *Ethnomusicology* 52/2 (Spring/Summer 2008), 254.

⁹ Brenda M. Romero, "Bluegrass and Old-Time on the Front Range," in *American Musical Traditions*, vol. 3 (New York: Schirmer Reference, 2002), 146.

¹⁰ Steven Price, *Old as the Hills: The Story of Bluegrass Music* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), 3.

¹¹ Titon, "Bluegrass," 36.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Regarding Japan, see for example William P. Malm, *Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* [1958] (New York: Kodansha International, 2000), 68. But his diagram of four scales does not include all genres.

¹⁴ For basic information about these two genres, and guidance to sources, see their index entries in Hughes 2008: *enka* on p. 381, new folk songs on p. 386.

¹⁵ "Context and Change in Japanese Music," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music*, eds. Alison McQueen Tokita and David W. Hughes (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 19–20.

¹⁶ Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song*, 35–39. Capital letters here indicate the pitches that form the tetrachord.

¹⁷ For references to Koizumi's writings, see Tokita and Hughes, "Context and Change," 19–20.

¹⁸ Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song*, 39.

¹⁹ David Hughes, personal communication via email (14 October 2017).

²⁰ For a history of this song plus transcriptions showing the wide variation allowed in *min'yō* melodies, see David W. Hughes, "'Sōran Bushi': The Many Lives of a Japanese Folk Song," *CHIME* 14/15 (2001), 31–47.

- ²¹ Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song*, 35.
- ²² Mari Shimosako, "Philosophy and Aesthetics," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, Robert C. Provine, Yoshihiko Tokumaru, and J. Lawrence Witzleben (New York: Routledge, 2002) 546.
- ²³ Norman Cazden, "A Simplified Mode Classification for Traditional Anglo-American Song Tunes," in *The Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* vol. 3 (1971), 64.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ²⁵ Neil V. Rosenberg, *Bluegrass: A History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 158.
- ²⁶ Robert Cantwell, *Bluegrass Breakdown: the Making of the Old Southern Sound* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 118.
- ²⁷ Randolph collected ninety versions of forty-one English ballads between 1920 and 1942, and he took great care in transcribing these melodies in the exact manner in which his subjects had sung them.
- ²⁸ Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs* (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946) 38–213.
- ²⁹ *Webster's New World Dictionary of Music*, s.v. "Ornament" (Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing, 1998), 370.
- ³⁰ Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song*, 31–32.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 178.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 177.
- ³³ Jay Keister, personal interview in Boulder, CO, 24 October 2015.
- ³⁴ David Hughes, personal communication via email, 13 October 2017.
- ³⁵ Hughes, *Traditional Folk Song*, 161.
- ³⁶ Thomas Nugent, phone interview, 8 December 2015.
- ³⁷ Cantwell, *Bluegrass Breakdown*, 129.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 130–131.
- ³⁹ Keister, "Okeikoba," 239.
- ⁴⁰ Jay Keister, *Shaped by Japanese Music: Nagauta Shamisen in Tokyo* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 86.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Ruth Opara

We Can Sing It Without Doing It: Gender Contestation Among Nigerian and South African Women in Music

Introduction

The emergence of radio in the 1930s provided opportunities for sub-Saharan African women musicians to negotiate new professional spaces. The radio provided an outlet for the dissemination and popularization of indigenous music. Through music, women began to contest for power as it shifted from the educated elites to the masses with indigenous cultural values. This paper examines the songs of two female musicians—Miriam Makeba of South Africa and Queen Theresa Onuorah of Nigeria. It explores ways in which they functioned professionally as they forged a workable space to combat traditional gender roles that were expected of them. Looking at *Malaika* by Makeba and *Ijele Elubego* of the *Egedege* dance by Onuorah, this paper examines how gender and symbolism play significant roles in contesting power through music.

Gender functions differently in specific cultural contexts and gender analyses are affected by societal conceptions about gender. Also, the researcher's gender, gender orientation, and personal perception may affect gender analyses of music practices.¹ The specific cultural conceptions of gender, which are characterized by difference and change are manifested in all facets and every stage in a woman's life. This is mostly the case in many African cultures. For example, Igbo women in Nigeria are expected to hold specific moral values, perform specific duties, and dress in particular ways, to name only a few gender-related behavioral categories. Their elevation in society can depend on how well they perform these roles and expectations. Women who are "more"

gifted, for example, in singing and dancing could attain higher social status, and therefore, be allowed some “freedom,” although their performances are still guided by societal norms and values. In music performance, some other members of society— mostly the men as in a patriarchal Igbo society—decide who are talented according to the woman’s expression of culture, the social commentary embedded in music, the woman’s costume, and her socio-moral values.

This paper explores the elements in these songs, *Malika* and *Ijele Elubego*, that are used to negotiate gender roles and how power is articulated through music. It conveys the similarities and differences between the songs and compares them with some notions of music making in the West. It further reveals how different arts interact in music making in the African context. Because *Malika* and *Ijele Elubego* are always implicated in a constellation of arts, in this context, the word “song” should be understood to imply the whole performance, including the sung vocals with text, the accompanying instrumentation, the costumes, and the dance. The term “constellation of arts” refers to the act of combining various forms of art—singing, dancing, instrumentation, drama, masquerading, costume or regalia, etc.² These arts are combined differently in specific musical cultures to produce what Christopher Small calls “musicking.”³ Also important to this analysis is how these arts interact with each other—music synergy. Romero explains that the term synergy emphasizes that interrelationship and interdependence are both keys to survival processes that music making reinforces.⁴ Understanding music as being a constellation of arts constantly interacting with other emblems of culture is shown in the diagram below:

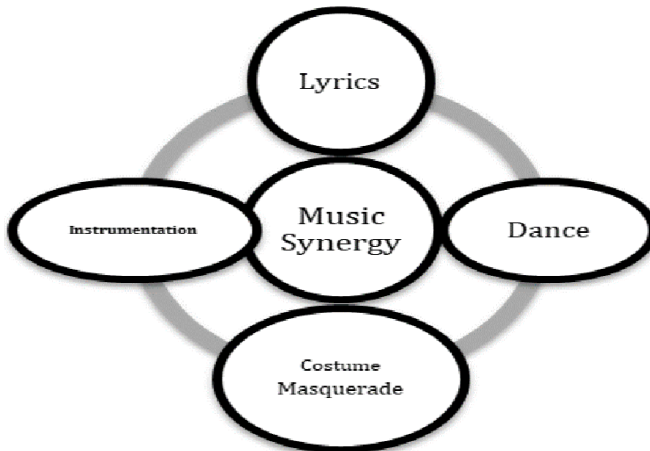


Figure 1. Module of Musical Synergy after Brenda M. Romero⁵

Oscar Hernández Salgar's theory for music semiotics informs this paper as it helps in revealing and explicating meanings embedded in *Malaika* and *Ijele Elubego*. He focuses on semiotical-hermeneutical, cognitive-embodied and social-political approaches. Salgar's semiotical-hermeneutical approach emphasizes musical texts and their signifying meanings and relationships, thereby prioritizing musical meaning that can be discerned from musical materials. The cognitive-embodied perspective focuses on the listening subjects in their cognitive and bodily dimensions. The social-political focus reveals ways in which society and power circulate through music. It examines the role of music in relation to power. In this analysis, various levels of semiotical-hermeneutical, cognitive-embodied and social-political meanings embedded in the song lyrics, costumes, and bodily gestures are deciphered in context of Nigerian and South African cultures.

Miriam Makeba's *Malaika*

Miriam Makeba, née Zenzile Miriam Makeba, and later nicknamed Mama Africa by her fans, was born on March 4, 1932, at Prospect Township, near Johannesburg, South Africa, to a Xhosa father and a Swazi mother. She "inherited" her singing skill from her mother who was well known for her singing and dancing prowess among the locals. Makeba evoked her mother's presence with her throughout her career, especially when she took to wearing her mother's robe during some performances.⁷ Makeba started singing in the community, in church and school, but soon emerged on the national and international scenes. Her life and career reflected the plight of her people—Black South Africans—who suffered under racial apartheid. Through her songs, and with determination, she condemned apartheid and gave her people messages of hope.⁸ She brought many South African folk songs, including *Malaika*, to international audiences,⁹ worked with renowned international popular musicians like Louis Armstrong, and became the most influential female musician on the African continent.¹⁰ She passed on November 9, 2008.

Malaika literally means "angel" or "baby" in Swahili, a Bantu language heard in South Africa and elsewhere. The word is linguistically rooted in the Arabic concept of angels *mala'ika*. *Malaika* is an African folk tune that is sung throughout the continent. Although different African countries claim its ownership, the origin and composer is unknown. This song functions differently among African societies and has been interpreted and rearranged often, and thereby renewed.¹¹

Malaika primarily functions as love song, mostly in popular settings and in slightly different versions. Makeba popularized *Malaika* by adding popular

musical instruments and style, and by performing it for both local and international audiences. The hybrid musical cultures of rural and urban life seen in her performances of *Malaika* and other songs, are a result of the contact between the indigenous South Africans and the West.¹²

This folk tune has been evoked and renewed in many ways to suit audiences' and performers' needs. A range of hybrid musical instruments has accompanied many versions of *Malaika*. Makeba uses the amplified electric guitar and the Western drum set, the piano, and sometimes includes rattles and indigenous drums in her performances. These instruments are employed to accompany indigenous folk tunes for two reasons: first, Western musical instruments became part of African popular musical cultures generally as part of the growth of 1950s and 1960s popular music that was a product of hybrid culture. Secondly, performance venues changed radically. Performances, which were originally limited to intimate nighttime settings, went to theaters, where there was a need to amplify music for larger spaces and audiences. In Makeba's concerts, instruments like the piano and guitar sometimes play the melody first and then accompany Makeba with chord progressions; other times they just accompany the song using chords. There is no standard key or chord progression for this song, but accompanists mostly utilize major chords I, IV and V, although some accompanists have improvised on different chords depending on the key used in performing the song at a particular

Malaika
As performed by Miriam Makeba,
Transcribed by Ruth Opara

Ma - lai ka Na ku pen da Ma

lai ka Nin ge ku o ama li we

nin ge ku o a da da Na shiri dwa na ma lai

si na we Nin ge kur o a Ma lai ka

Figure 2. *Malaika* transcription

performance, while maintaining the melodic structure and rhythm. The chord progression Makeba generally utilizes in her performances, as shown in the transcription below, is D-A-D / A-D-A / D7-G /G-Em-A-D-A/ A7-D-A. This chord progression applies to the three verses.

Although the time signature of my transcription is four quarter notes in a bar, it is only a guide. In practice, the rhythm might be free in pulse and moderate in tempo, as is typical of love songs in sub-Saharan Africa. The form is strophic with each of three verses comprised of five basic phrases, with variations; the structure could be described thus: AAB²CA². The A repeats, B and B have the same melodic contour and rhythm but different pitches. C is the climax (*Nashindwa na mali sina we* / I am defeated as I do not have wealth); it has the highest pitches and builds on B and B² with different rhythm and melodic contour. Performers have expressed this line in different ways: by playing it very loud, by playing it staccato and by not accompanying it at all—they allow the singer to sing with utmost expression while they re-enter on A². Makeba does the latter. A² completes the melody and CA² repeats. A² has the same melody, rhythm and pitches with the second phrase in A. On a larger scale the form is ABCA².

Lyrical Meaning

Verse 1

“Malaika,” nakupenda “Malaika”

Angel, I love you, Angel

Ningekuoa mali we, ningekuoa dada

I should've married you, mummy, I should've married you, sister

Nashindwa na mali sina we

I am defeated as I do not have wealth

Ningekuoa “Malaika”

I should've married you, Angel

Verse 2

Pesa zasumbua roho yangu

Money, disturbs my heart

Nami nifanyeje, kijana mwenzio

And what should I do? I am your fellow youngster

Nashindwa na mali sina we

I am defeated as I do not have wealth

Ningekuoa “Malaika”

I should've married you, Angel

(continued next page)

Verse 3

Kidege, hukuwaza kidege

Cupid, I think about, Cupid

Ningekuoa mali we, ningekuoa dada

I should've married you, mummy, I should've married you, sister

Nashindwa na mali sina we

I am defeated as I do not have wealth

Ningekuoa "Malaika"

I should've married you, Angel

Figure 3. Malika Lyrics

Lyricaly, *Malaika* is a love song about a man who is in love with his girlfriend and wishes to marry her, but could not afford to pay dowry. He addresses his love as “angel.” The term “angel” has been used differently in African societies, but has primarily alluded to a female who is loved dearly by either her parents, relatives, or a lover. “Angels” came from religious ideologies that denote spiritual beings who guard and guide their subjects, and who in African societies are typically seen as women, understood as custodians of culture and thus expected to guide their children through societal moral values, as well as take care of their husbands. The concept of “angel” contributed to the song’s popularity, because most women love to be called angels. Calling a woman an angel especially in public automatically sends a message across that she is a “good” woman or a “good” wife. As a woman, Makeba sings with passion about not having money to pay the bride price, a strikingly masculine perspective. Although what constitutes a family differs in African societies, men are generally the ones who pay a bride price or dowry, as socially approved marriage is between a man and a woman or many women, and is often accompanied by the exchange of a bride price, paid by the husband.¹³ There have been accounts of female husbands, but such are based on cultures that allowed unmarried women—usually only daughters who inherited wealth from their fathers—to marry a woman who will bear children to further inherit the wealth of their fathers. The married women are allowed to have sex with any man of their choice to be able to get pregnant; sometimes their “husbands” contract men to do this job. Although there have been lesbians in African communities, accounts about female husbands did not reveal any affection between the women. The love between women has been generally interpreted as support, solidarity and power that enables them to form a voice of opposition in the company of women.¹⁴

One could argue that *Malaika* is a folk song people enjoyed listening to and Makeba decided to use it to entertain her audience. There are songs for entertainment in African traditional societies but they are still restricted by societal

norms and values, but what Makeba sang about was not so constrained. Also, when her passionate singing and facial gestures could suggest sexual connotations,¹⁵ one begins to wonder how Makeba still continued to win fans for herself in a homophobic African society, especially in the 1950s and 60s. At this time till the present time, women who openly make erotic gestures to men are believed to lack moral values in some African societies. Extending such gestures to same sex individuals is an act of bravery. This is what Makeba did in some of her performances.

In summary, Makeba's performance of *Malaika* seems to challenge traditional gender roles because in it she performs a role specifically assigned to men in sub-Saharan African culture—paying bride price. Secondly her facial depictions directly suggest love for another woman.¹⁶ Given the humiliation and sadness of not being able to pay a bride price, one could also argue she is appropriating her own unfulfilled longing and sadness at societal restrictions that force their love to be “chaste.” Although things are changing now, historically her performance acts were not common in 1950s sub-Saharan Africa. Arguably Makeba liberated other female artists in sub-Saharan Africa by modeling such independent behavior. Today many women perform folk songs that were originally for men, and there have been many recordings of *Malaika* by other women musicians.

Queen Theresa Onuorah: *Ijele Elubego*

Queen Theresa Onuorah was born in the 1940s, and is a traditional female musician from Umuorji village in Anambra state, South-Eastern Nigerian, West Africa, where she is well known for her self-created *Egedege* dance. The south-easterners are mostly of the Igbo ethnic group, and the territory is usually referred to as Igbo land. *Egedege* dance started as a moonlight dance at Onuorah's father's compound in Umuorji, where she played with her sibling in 1971 until their performances became very popular in the Umuorji village and neighboring villages. As one of the oldest of her siblings, and recognized for her creativity, she became the leader of the group and taught her younger siblings. In 1974, she led her family members who later joined the group to the recording studio where they recorded most of their songs including *Ijele Elubego*.¹⁷ After the recording, the accompanying video became popular and was much appreciated in Igbo land, being one of the few indigenous music videos in the 1970s. It was produced in an era following Nigeria's independence in 1960, that encouraged the beginning of decolonization as Nigerians sought to distance themselves from Western cultural hegemony of the British colonizers, and were looking to return to their native traditions, which include

rich and diverse musical cultures. Onuorah used her music to revitalize the traditional folk and dance music of the Umuorji and Anambra. She gained a reasonable number of fans due to her performances of Igbo folk and traditional dance in South-Eastern Nigeria. The Igbo people in diaspora also appreciate her music because of the nostalgic feeling her *Egedege* dance evokes. Unlike Makeba, Onuorah has not gained much popularity among other Nigerian ethnic groups or the international audience.

Ijele Elubego, which literally translates to “Ijele is almost here” is the name of a song Onuorah uses to call for dance at the beginning of her performances. Ijele is the name of a highly-respected masquerade actor in Igbo land who appears often during popular festivals. It is referred to as *Nnukwu Mmanwu*—the “big masquerade.” In most Igbo communities, Ijele is regarded as the greatest of masqueraders. When it comes out to dance every other masquerader leaves the arena because Ijele does not dance with others. Ijele is often decorated with mirrors and looks magnificent. The mirrors reflect those around it, and so could be considered a masquerade that calls for self-introspection in most Igbo communities. Ijele is also a musical instrument—it includes leg rattles that are utilized in *Egedege* music. The musicians tie them around their ankles so that they make sounds whenever the musicians move. It accompanies dance steps, and is considered to make many sounds at the same time.

In this song, *Ijele Elubego*, Onuorah refers to *Egedege* dance as *Ijele*. Symbolically this means that her music is the greatest and therefore cannot be compared with another. It also makes huge and distinct sounds that attract people.¹⁸ This is the metaphor Onuorah uses to describe her music, and her fans feel the same way about *Egedege* dance.

In the lyrics, she calls for all and sundry to get ready to listen and dance to the great masquerade that has “intimidating” sounds, as she refers to her music. She performs *Ijele Elubego* at the beginning of her performances where she asks her audience to dance with her.

Ijele Elubego

Ijele elubego mu n’onye ga-agba egwu?

Ijele draws near, who will dance with me?

Ojiugo nwafor nata nwanneya, Ojiugo nwafor nata

Ojiugo, son of the soil, come back brother

N’ Ijele mu elue.

My Ijele draws near!

I ga-agbakwuru jeenu onye ego na-achi

Do you run to the filthy rich?

Ijirigodi ji, mu n'onye ga-agba?

Even with such abundance of wealth, who will dance with me?

O bu di mu n'onye ga-agba?

Who actually will dance with me?

Ijele mu elue

My Ijele draws near

Mu n'onye ga-agba egwu?

Who will dance with me?

Madu leecha anya O bu ihe nwoke na-ayo nwanne ya

After all, it is what brother asks of a brother

Ijele mu elue,

My Ijele draws near,

mu n'onye ga-agba egwu?

Who will dance with me?

Ume wu ebube

Brotherhood is mystical

Nwanne m a si anyi kwube

My brother, we have been asked to say it

Ekwuwe be m, a si anyi kwube

I say it as we have been asked

O nwanne m, o nokwa n'egwu m, a si anyi kwube

It is in my song, O brother, for we have been asked to say it!

A si anyi gbaba egwu

We have been asked to dance

Dirigidigi-iyi, Mu n'onye ga-agba egwu?

Dirigidi-iyi, who will dance with me?

Ojiugo, nwafor nata nwanne m

Ojiugo, son of the soil, come back, my brother

Nwafor nata, Mu n'onye ga-agba egwu?

Who will dance with me?

Ijele elue, Mu n'onye ga-agba egwu?

Ijele draws near, who will dance with me?

Ijele elue, Mu n'onye ga-agba egwu?

Ijele draws near, who will dance with me?

While this song has a basic rhythmic and melodic structure, the lyrics are mostly improvised to fit the rhythmic and metrical frame.¹⁹ The lyrics emphasize communal life and brotherhood that characterize Igbo culture. Onuorah sings as long as she wants, calling out names of people, villages, and states,

inviting them to come and dance with her while reminding them how great the *Ijele* dance is. This call is meant to instill brotherhood in every listening ear. At some point the singers come in, in response to Onuorah's singing, that is, in characteristically call and response style.

Instruments that accompany Onuorah's sonorous singing are all Igbo traditional musical instruments. In his analysis, Akpabot classifies Ibibio musical instruments according to their functions—instruments with melodic functions, instruments with rhythmic functions and drums.²⁰ One of the instruments that accompanies Onuorah is the *Oja* (flute). Although Akpabot argues that *Oja* is a rhythmic instrument, it plays the melody of *Ijele Elubego* to introduce the song and also when the singing stops. *Oja* functions as rhythmic instrument in the company of other instruments once Onuorah starts singing. While the *Oja* plays the melody, other instruments that could be classified under rhythmic instruments are *Udu* (pot drum)—the metronome or “bass” instrument; *Okwa* (wood block); *Ogene* (Gong); *Ekwe* (slit drum) and *Osha* (rattle). Indigenous drum sets are called *ogwe*. The *ogwe* consists of three adjacent drums in different sizes, arranged from the smallest to the largest, or vice versa depending if the player is right- or left-handed.

The instruments are combined to create complex rhythms that synchronize with each other. Each instrument plays a distinct rhythmic pattern, combines with others to create a whole rhythmic motive, and recycles continuously until the end in the form of an interlocking ostinato. Stone confirms this in her analysis of Kpelle music of Liberia: “The individual pattern could be thought of as an ostinato or repeated motif. All of the patterns together were combined to create a multi-ostinato that ultimately became the larger whole of the music composition.”²¹

Figure 4 is a representation of what the instruments that perform a rhythmic function play in one motive. It shows the basic rhythm for each different instrument and would be very close to what this music sounds like. Most of the instruments are multiplied—sometimes there are two to three sets of *Ogwe*s that are playing and a set is made up of three *Ogwe*s. The *Ogene*, *Osha*, and *Okwa* are also doubled sometimes. The instrumentalists also play improvisations at will. The rhythm is played repeatedly until Onuorah decides to end the song. Audience participation also determines when the music is stopped. The music is prolonged if the audience is enjoying and dancing to the rhythm.

Interestingly, Onuorah's costume looks like that of the *Ijele* masquerade. According to Joe Egede, this costume is dedicated to the gods and gives Onuorah power and freedom to sing. The audience is expected to respect anyone wearing the costume to avoid the “wrath” of the gods. It is believed

Rhythmic Motives in Ijele Elubego

Udu		
Osho		
Okwa		
Ekwe		
Ogene		
Drum 1		
Drum 2		

Figure 4. Rhythmic motive in *Ijele Elubego* (transcription by Opara).

that some members of the audience including Christians who spoke ill of the costume, or disrespected the artist wearing it had been punished in several ways—hardship and sometimes sickness that led to death.²²

Masquerade musics in Igbo culture are generally considered music of the spirit and have been exclusively for men. One begins to wonder why Onuorah wears the costume of the masquerade in a society where women are expected to only watch masqueraders perform. There are varieties of masquerades and they are usually designated to particular gods; they could also represent ancestral spirits, especially those of kings and great leaders.²³ Initiation rituals are performed before someone can join the “secret cult.” Men who are members are automatically elevated in most Igbo traditional society. Women’s involvement is restricted to watching and appreciating the music, as well as cooking and arranging arenas for performers.²⁴ In this way, by wearing the *Ijele* costume, Onuorah transcends gender roles and negotiates power. At present times, Onuorah’s music is still appreciated, despite her transgressions.

Parallels and Differences in *Malaika* and *Ijele Elubego*

While the style, instruments and instrumentation, rhythm, melody and musical features in *Malaika* and *Ijele Elubego* completely differ, there are two remarkable similarities between them. One being that both songs have contested the societal gender roles in unique ways. This is revealed by unpacking symbolic

meanings embedded in them. Secondly, both songs evoke and renew folk songs of the indigenous people of Sub-Saharan Africa in provocative ways.

While gender distinctions still exist in most Sub-Saharan African societies especially in the rural areas, in the contemporary era and especially in the cities, all of these gender roles do not necessarily hold to traditional norms. However, what may not have changed much are what Makeba and Onuorah did with their performances—a woman professing love to a woman in public and a woman dressing like a masquerader in Igbo society where those costumes are exclusively for men, especially in the 1950s and 1970s when globalization had not reached its peak. They negotiated and redirected gender roles, thereby taking possession of and distributing power²⁵ to the female gender through music. Nevertheless, Igbo society, including the diaspora, still appreciates their music. The question is: how can one reconcile the fact that what they present in the art form challenges social norms and yet still is greatly appreciated in the same society?

There is an old Igbo adage that says, “When you speak a language that people understand, they respond to you.” Makeba and Onuorah’s transgressions are “forgiven” because they speak the “language” of the people, which is folk music. Revitalizing folk music at a time when people are fed up with cultural influences that came with colonization and are trying to revive their traditional culture is what people cherish. Sometimes, moving away from hegemonic cultures results in syncretism. For example, Christians²⁶ forget the meanings and origins of songs that might conflict with their belief and just enjoy the sounds of Africa in their role as evocative of nostalgic feelings.²⁷ This is a crucial function of African music. Music of Africa is intimately bound with everyday life and culture, following the African from cradle to grave, from pre-colonial times to the present. The sounds of Africa evoke wistful feelings. The music of Africa is distinct,²⁸ and it communicates power.

Africa and the West²⁹

Why and how is music made in Sub-Saharan Africa? Many African music scholars have answered this question while analyzing specific musical cultures; some of their analyses can be found in *The Garland Encyclopedia of African Music and Encyclopedia of World Music—Africa*. They describe music in Africa as being part of life, something that follows Africans from cradle to grave. Their analyses show that at every stage in life—at birth, in naming ceremony, as lullaby, for recreational and moral purposes for children, moonlight games, puberty, initiations; in religion, work, war, love/courtship, marriage, festivals, social events/entertainment and funerals—there are mu-

sics made exclusively to commemorate these significant occasions, in which every member of the community is expected to participate. Musical practice is deeply symbolic in African indigenous cultures, depending on the ceremony that is taking place. What music represents is inherent in culture and therefore to know what music truly means, the study of the sounds and accompanying arts along with the social implications must be examined. *Malika* was originally a love song, but was turned into entertainment by Makeba. *Ijele Elubego* is a song purely for entertainment. Yet both “entertain” effectively by tapping into significant cultural tropes.

The songs I have analyzed were not originally written down. This is different from some musical cultures in the West, where some scholars may derive musical meanings from the score and the sound. Inasmuch as both notation and sound are important in some music analysis, notation is of negligible importance in most sub-Saharan African music traditions. In general, sub-Saharan African musics are not written down. Rather, they are products of oral traditions and passed down from one generation to another. Ethnomusicologists are the ones transcribing the music of Africa after observing the cultures associated with the music. Shelemay affirms, “Africans transmitted most of their musics orally, without indigenous form of music representation, but their musical traditions stand among those most frequently sampled for transcription in foreign notational systems.”³⁰ Analyzing African music from written sources implies that the researcher did not study the culture of the people and therefore might not “accurately” or to a reasonable extent, give an explanation of Sub-Saharan African people’s music. Although scholars have found reasonable meanings in scores composed by Western composers, it is important to note that different meanings are interpreted from a particular piece, and the meanings heavily rely on the perspective of the analyzer. To arrive at cultural meanings, one has to look beyond sounds and notations, and look into the ways people describe and find meaning in their music. This is crucial to understanding both Western and Sub-Saharan African music better because, as Rice rightly put it, “Each culture has a specific sets of beliefs about the origins of music, its role and significance in society and culture, its proper performance, how it is classified and described, and how it is valued.”³¹ Symbols inherent in African music make it possible for symbolic comparative analyses that are not based on music alone, as in this gender analysis of *Malaika* and *Ijele Elubego*.

The songs I analyze combine various arts. Apart from problems with ideas focused on a universality of the meaning of music, the boundaries between dance, theater, poetry, costume and other arts differ from culture to culture. In the West, they might be treated as separate disciplines. The reverse is the

case in some African musical genres: art acts and artifacts such as singing, dancing, costumes, instruments, and drama might be difficult to separate in some musical genres. Sometimes the costumes and instruments are not just mere objects but human extensions, just like Onuorah's masquerade costumes. Stone rightly observed:

Within African contexts, instruments are more than material objects. They frequently take human features and qualities. Certain solo instruments may have personal names, be kept in special houses, receive special sacrificial food or other offerings and be regarded as quasi human. To the musician playing them, these instruments provide power and sometime special aid. A close, humanlike partnership sometimes develops between musician and instrument.³²

Conclusions

African societies are culturally diverse, and analyzing the many music cultures opens up various possibilities for both similarities and differences. This is especially true for the musics of Sub-Saharan Africa, as music exists and functions differently even in the same communities. Music of Africa cannot be studied in isolation. Music incorporates many facets of arts—playing instruments, singing, dancing, masquerading, and drama as established earlier. The whole package and how they interact with each other could be called song, dance or music, as the nested performances of music in most African cultures are difficult to separate.³³ At some point in *Egedege* music—*Ijele Elubego*, Onuorah's singing becomes louder with occasional ad lib and improvisations, calling while the other musicians respond; at the same time the instruments are playing loud in upbeat rhythms interlocking and repeating with improvisations in response to each other; Onuorah in her masquerade regalia moves stylishly to the rhythm of the music while flaunting her regalia in admiration and showing defiance as well as calling members of the audience to come and dance; the dancers dance to the rhythms while making gestures to the audience and paying attention to Onuorah in other responses after her call; the audience file out in singles and groups to the dance floor, dancing, clapping, cheering and spraying money on Onuorah and the dancers. All these actions happen at the same times in synchrony with each other. How these arts interact is the idea underlying Romero's music synergy as shown in the "Module of Music Synergy" diagram.

Embedded in these gestures and practices are symbols inherent in both cultures. Salgar's theory of music semiotics informs how meaning is drawn from Makeba and Onuorah's songs. The communal life the music commu-

nicates; Onuorah's masquerade regalia and Makeba's love song that signify power to the female gender are meanings informed by Salgar's hermeneutical approach that emphasizes musical texts and their signifying; his cognitive-embodied approach focuses on the listening subjects in their cognitive and bodily dimensions, and the social-political approach reveals ways in which power is circulated through music.

Few traits in Sub-Saharan African music could be compared with Western musical concepts, and although they might not necessarily mean the exact same things, they can be similar in form. First, the convention of a song being in a strophic form—a term applied to songs in which all verses or stanzas of the text are sung to the same music. *Malaika* in its three verses is strophic. Secondly, the concept of interlocking ostinato—a continually repeated, interlocking musical phrase or rhythm is inherent in African music. The interlocking rhythm of *Ijele Elubego* repeats continuously from the beginning to the end.

Makeba's *Malaika* and Onuorah's *Ijele Elubego* demonstrate that music can be used to negotiate traditional power relationships that are inherent in gender roles in Sub-Saharan Africa. Traditional gender roles are misplaced by female musicians, who are nonetheless appreciated in their societies. This is because while they are able to combat patriarchy and articulate female power through music, these musicians simultaneously respond to societal needs in the era of decolonization; they evoke indigenous cultures that were condemned and taken away by missionaries and colonial masters. By performing traditional African musical genres and songs that Africans yearn for today, the musicians, even women, can win fans through a rupture with ideas of "sacrilege" in their society. These "good old" songs continue to hold significant symbolic meanings for the people of sub-Saharan Africa.

NOTES

¹ Ruth M. Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 145–147.

² Ruth M. Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music* (New York: Garland, 2000), 7.

³ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 12–13.

⁴ Brenda M Romero, "A Theory of Infinite Variation," *Discourses in African Musicology: J.H. Kwabena Nketia Festschrift* eds. Kwasi Ampene and Godwin Kwafo Adje (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Maize Books, 2015), 140.

⁵ Romero, "A Theory of Infinite Variation," 136.

⁶ Oscar Hernández Salgar, "Musical Semiotics as a Tool for the Social Study of Music," English translation Brenda M. Romero. *SEM Online Translations*, in press: 2, 27–28.

⁷ Ruth M. Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology*, 145–147.

⁸ Miriam Makeba and James Hall, *Makeba: My Story* (New York: New American Library, 1988), 211.

⁹ Makeba and Hall, *Makeba My Story*, 14, 22, 1.

¹⁰ Carol Ann Muller, *South African Music: A Century of Traditions in Transformation* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2004) 52, 97.

¹¹ Muller, *South African Music: A Century of Traditions in Transformation*, 104.

¹² Romero, "A Theory of Infinite Variation," 140. Essential to Romero's theory is the idea that the nature of music, as humanly made sound endlessly maintains and renews itself. This study shows how music and cultures associated with them are maintained and renewed.

¹³ Makeba and Hall, *Makeba My Story*, 6.

¹⁴ Phyllis M Martin and Patrick O'Meara, *Africa*. 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 177–179.

¹⁵ Ifi Amadiume, *Reinventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion & Culture*. (London & New York: Zed Books Limited, 1992), 199.

¹⁶ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1UID0vEeql> at 1:38 minutes, (accessed 20 September 2015).

¹⁷ By making this claim, I don't intend to argue that Makeba is a lesbian because I have no proof for that claim. I am just analyzing what I see in the video.

¹⁸ Joe Egedege, interview, 2015. Joe Egedege is Onuorah's younger brother who took his last name from the dance. He is now the director of the music as Onuorah is elderly.

¹⁹ Egedege, interview, 2015.

²⁰ Kofi V Agawu, *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 65.

²¹ Samuel Ekpe Akpabot, *Ibibio Music in Nigerian Culture* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1975), 11–12.

²² Ruth M. Stone, *Music in West Africa: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 28.

²³ Egedege, interview, 2015.

²⁴ Martin and O'Meara, *Africa*, 251.

²⁵ Akpabot, *Ibibio Music in Nigerian Culture*, 25–27.

²⁶ Oyeronke Oyewumi, *African Gender Studies: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 41.

²⁷ The Igbos are originally traditionalists and the converts are mostly Christians.

²⁸ This is a Facebook link where I saw Nigerian nuns dancing to ljele Elubego—masquerade music in the United States. <https://www.facebook.com/nkiruka.okafor.35/videos/766084306839025/>

²⁹ Martin and O'Meara, *Africa*, 260. I understand the ambiguity and generalization using the word "West." For the purpose of this article, I am referring to classical music traditions.

³⁰ Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, ed. Ruth M. Stone (New York: Garland, 2000), 24.

³¹ Timothy Rice, *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 66.

³² Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

Mei-Mey Segura-Wang

A Western Perspective on Music from Guanacaste, Costa Rica, and Cuban *Batá* Drumming

Latin and Caribbean musics have emerged recently as primary objects of study across several different academic disciplines. Studies of music in relation to gender, race, ethnicity, and theories of post-colonialism have helped ethnomusicologists make sense of different musical elements and expressions present in the region. In both Costa Rica and Cuba, for example, music has played a significant role in the articulation of nationalism, authenticity, and identity, particularly at times when colonialism, neo-colonialism, and a modern globalizing economy have destabilized local identities. Thus, citizens of both these countries have rearticulated their musical identities in new ways. Looking at the elements of rhythm, timbre, form and aesthetics in both Costa Rican and Cuban music is important not only for the sake of finding meaning in each individual culture, but also for broader implications that may shed light on intercultural and intracultural relationships. A comparative approach to both musical worlds yields an interconnected perspective of Latin American music forms as a whole.

The interrelated yet individual histories of Costa Rica and Cuba show commonalities and differences that are characteristic of each region. Guanacaste music and *batá* drumming alike were shaped by colonialism, when people from different demographics were mixed and forced to coexist. But the global synergy in both these cultures is due to more than the shared ties to Spain, to a shared language, or to Catholicism. The rhythms and forms in their musics exemplify the embracing of hybridity, which shows people's desire to come together. Music in both Costa Rica and Cuba developed stylistic trends that served to imagine communities.¹

Relationships between communities and individuals are evident in the playing of musical instruments and hint at representations of identity. Both the marimba and the *batá* drums have become icons of Costa Rican and Cuban cultures respectively. These instruments can be considered visual symbols whose meanings transcend national and transnational borders and communicate with different audiences. Similarly, the uses of certain rhythms, like the *habanera* or *clave*, that are present in both folk music of Guanacaste and *batá* drumming can be considered direct legacies from Africa and have become symbols of nationhood. The social and musical elements function to create communities that transcend a single national particularity and amount to intercultural commonalities.

Historical Context

Spain colonized both Costa Rica and Cuba in the 1500s, imposing customs and cultural practices foreign to the indigenous population. Under Spanish rule, native religion and cultures were heavily repressed, although as years passed laws and forms of organization rooted in Catholicism developed in the Americas. *Cabildos*, self-governing municipal units based on Catholic brotherhoods, formed part of this new organizational system.

In the late sixteenth century, the *encomenderos* exerted their dominance through the *cabildo*, a new style of organization for communities and social interaction that gave way to collective power.² In Costa Rica, *cabildos* were formed mostly of *criollos*—individuals born in the Americas of Spanish ancestry—and in Cuba *cabildos* comprised slaves belonging to the same ethnic group.³ With time, *cabildos* were given many functions: as means to provide entertainment for the slave population, to exert municipal control over processions and ceremonies, for regulating bullfights and performing police functions, and to provide social control to decrease the tensions among different ethnic and social groups.⁴ Costa Rican *criollos* used the *cabildos* to socialize and soon found ways to integrate their music. In Cuba *cabildos* made possible the conservation of the traditions, religions, and cultures of the African slaves. The songs, dances, and drum rhythms performed for African deities were not welcomed by the Spaniards; the *cabildos* nonetheless allowed the slaves a separate place where they could keep alive their African customs and resist Spanish cultural hegemony.

In general, some African concepts were better preserved in Cuba than in Costa Rica, which gained its independence from Spain in September 1821, while Cuba's War of Independence seven decades later lasted from February 1895 to February 1898. Cuban music, similar to Costa Rican music, encompasses

many styles of folkloric music (among them *rumba*, *charanga*, *danzón*, *timba*, *son*, *punto*, *batá*, *guajira*, *mambo*). *Batá* drumming from the Yoruba people of Nigeria is among the most sophisticated and interesting world drumming traditions.⁵ The drums form part of the Santería religion, which provided a sense of identity for slaves and have continuously shaped Cuban culture. Music rituals, known as *toques de santo*, include drummers as well as lead vocalists, and dancers. The melodies and rhythms used in ceremonies are distinctive in style, with leaps, exciting contours, and expressive characteristics.

Guanacaste

Although it is not well-known that Náhuatl spread to the Caribbean with Aztec imperialism, the name Guanacaste is derived from the indigenous *quahnacatztlán*, a Náhuatl word for the Guanacaste tree, native to this region and also the national tree of Costa Rica. Before the period of European colonization, the region of Guanacaste was populated by the Nicaraos, Chorotegas, Corobicies and Choncales indigenous groups.⁶ Guanacaste's vast and flat, rich terrains allowed for intensive agriculture, including corn, beans, cotton, and cacao crops,⁷ which allowed the Spaniards to exploit the land (and slaves) for commercialized products during colonization. During this time, vernacular musics developed mostly alongside communal activities (including work contexts), in which singing and playing of *marimbas* was popular.

In the first phase of the colonial period, the musical language of Guanacaste developed inside of a very particular social and political context. Guanacaste, at first, was considered a province under the government of Nicaragua (1523–1588). Later, it was ruled by Guatemala (1588–1593). In 1593 Guanacaste became a province of Costa Rica until 1602, when it became a more autonomous independent province, an *Alcaldía Mayor y Corregimiento* (Town Hall and Correctional). Finally, on July 25, 1984, the *guanacastecos*, “por su propia voluntad” (by their own will), were fully incorporated into Costa Rica. It is within this political turmoil that the people living in Guanacaste began to create music and dance idioms that reflected their individual and collective life styles, which today are considered completely integrated into the Costa Rican cultural patrimony.⁹

The musical culture from Guanacaste is still a living tradition; the melodies and instruments continue to form part of daily life. Activities that still take place in the community, such as bullfights, funerals, religious processions, patriotic parades, celebrations of a saint/virgin, reveal the continuing vital importance of traditional music. Guanacaste traditional music, besides being a representation of the character of the *guanacasteco*, also reflects the ethnic and cultural exchanges that occurred following the arrival of the Spaniards.

For example, the Spaniards introduced a “formal” music with the bullfighting tradition, and consequently the indigenous *sabanero* (a cowboy from the savannahs of Guanacaste) learned to include the music and dance typical to Guanacaste in the bullfighting events.

Cuba

Prior to 1492, three indigenous peoples populated Cubanacán: the Tainos, Ciboneys, and Guanajatabeyes. However, significant numbers of native people were killed and the Spanish enslaved the rest. Since the island lacked adequate labor forces, African slaves were transported to work in Cuba, bringing with them religious and philosophical concepts passed on to their descendants through the subsequent centuries. The *batá* drums of the Yorubas, Carabalís, Araras, Mandingas, and many others were played in the *cabildos*, where the slaves of each town met.¹¹ Initially, the *cabildo*—as the local governing institution—had a *procurador* (procurator) who met with the Spanish crown’s representative to present local issues or grievances. However, by 1700 the Crown had lost authority and the *cabildos* were open to local people and slaves who were working in the tobacco and sugar plantations.

Religions other than Catholicism were persecuted and the use of African drums in public was forbidden. Nonetheless, the slaves continued to use the drums to accompany dance on their feast days and as they worked in sugar factories and plantations. As a result, until the 1930s, *batá* drums were used in religious settings, either alone or to accompany singing and dancing intended to invoke the presence of the *orisha* (deified ancestors) in the dancing bodies of worshipping priests, *santeros*. It was at a conference given in 1936 on Yoruba music in Cuba by Dr. Fernando Ortiz, a Cuban musicologist and ethnographer, that the public saw for the first time the sacred *batá* drums outside of their exclusive religious contexts.¹² Unconsecrated drums subsequently became available for use in secular folkloric dance performances and in popular music.

Social Implications of Musical Elements: Rhythm and Form as Testaments of Hybridity

“Hybrid,” according to Elisabeth Bronfen and Benjamin Marius, may be defined as “everything that owes its existence to a mixture of traditions or chains of signification, everything that links different kinds of discourse and technologies, and everything that came into being through techniques of collage, sampling, or bricolage.”¹³ The Latin American and Caribbean societies that emerged in the aftermath of colonialism are defined by their hybridity, result-

ing primarily from their European and African ancestors. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the notion of *mestizaje*—miscegenation, with different Spanish terms for different cultural mixes—was prevalent. *Mestizaje* became more than just blending of skin color, however; people had to readjust to a new syncretism of cultures,¹⁴ a synthesis of different ways of life. Music evolved to reflect the traditions from mainland Natives, conquering Spaniards from the Iberian Peninsula, and African slaves from the coastal regions of Africa whom the Spaniards brought across the Atlantic. In addition, descendants of peoples from all these backgrounds had been mixing and blending for centuries in their respective New World environments.

Costa Rica: Guanacaste music

Of all the different styles and rhythms that have arrived to Guanacaste, several have remained present in the music, including the *pasillo*, the *parrandera*, and the *danza*. An analysis of a *parrandera* serves as an example of the syncretism of European with African form and rhythm in this style. The rhythmic idioms used are evidence of the influence of the *jotas aragoneses*. The *jota aragonesa* is a traditional dance, the *jota* from Aragon, a territory in northern Spain. Like the *jota*, the *parrandera* is fast-paced and syncopated. The characteristic ternary rhythm is the European contribution to this dance. Below is an example of the *jota* written in 3/8 time.

Jota del Cruzado

The image shows a musical score for 'Jota del Cruzado' in 3/8 time. It features two staves: 'Castanets' and 'Guitar'. The Castanets part is written in a simple rhythmic notation with eighth notes. The Guitar part is written in a more complex notation with many beamed eighth notes and chords, indicating a syncopated and fast-paced accompaniment.

Figure 1. Example of the *jota*, transcribed in 3/8 and with the castanet percussion part above (author's transcription).

Due to undergoing processes of transculturation the resulting *parranderas* in Guanacaste maintained the essence of the eighth notes and mixed the Costa Rican dancing traditions to create the 6/8 time *parranderas* (with the result of making the rhythm easier to dance). Different from the *jotas*, the rhythm of a *parrandera* developed in two parts: one played by the snare drum as straight eighth notes, and the other part derived of two rhythmic patterns that are played in the bass drum.

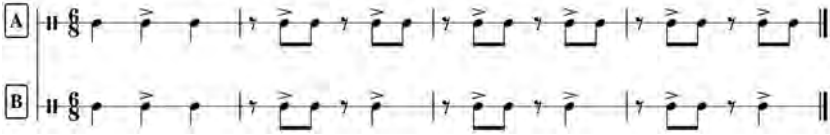


Figure 2. Two bass drum variations of the basic rhythm for a *parrandera* (author's transcription).

These bass drum patterns are usually repeated every two or four measures. Unlike the *jota*, the bass drum in the *parranderas* is accented on the second beats. The castanets also enter in the weak section of the beat (presented as accents on figure 2). The snare drum that plays with the bass drum, usually follows eighth notes in 6/8, or a slight variation of the constant six eighth notes per bar. Figure 3, A and B, shows the basic rhythmic pattern between a snare drum (*redoble*) and the two bass drum (*bombo*) variations, both creating the six note groupings that are characteristic of the *parranderas*.

Figure 3. A, B: Rhythmic pattern of both snare drum and bass drum of the *parranderas* (author's transcription).

The *parrandera*'s rhythm is repeated continuously throughout the entire piece while the melody contains variations and moments of improvisation. Although there is a mix of musical cultures in this style, the continuous eighth notes mimicking horses (a dance step known as the "caballito") are unique to the *parranderas*. The use of horses to work the land and as means of transportation encouraged people to keep the rhythm present in their music, and is perhaps a musical phenomenon many centuries old, predating the Spanish colonization of the Americas. The most popular *parrandera* is "La Soncoyeña" and it includes the *parrandera* rhythm throughout the piece in the percussion section. Here the rhythm is a triplet figure, followed by a triplet eighth-note and quarter-note roll. Even though people of Iberian descent shaped Guanacaste, the local populations managed to create music that would accommodate their light-hearted dance style. The influence of the dance can be traced to the native Chorotega traditions of using music and dance to create a link

La Soncoyeña

Melody from Teodoro Guadma

The musical score for 'La Soncoyeña' is presented in four staves. The top staff is for Flute, written in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 6/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is for Tuba, written in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring a steady eighth-note pattern. The third staff is for Snare Drum, using a drumstick notation with 'x' marks for notes, showing a characteristic eighth-note rhythm with a *redoble* (double) pattern. The bottom staff is for Bass Drum, also using drumstick notation, showing a steady eighth-note pattern.

Figure 4. The *parrandera* “La Soncoyeña:” notice the characteristic eighth note rhythm in the snare drum (*redoble*) and steady pattern in the bass drum (author’s transcription).

to communicate with spirits, but equally to the importance of dance among Africans (for similar reasons) and among Iberians as an aspect of social refinement.¹⁶ The inclusion and exclusion of European and Costa Rican traits gave way to a *parrandera* style that shows the population’s mixed cultural heritage.

In general, the *parranderas* are in two parts (A, B) that are both repeated. The A section consists essentially of I-V progressions, while the B section includes some IV chords in addition to the I-V chords. Some *parranderas* also include a *danza* either right at the beginning of the piece or at the end. Musicians introduce the *danza*, a much courtlier style, to contrast the otherwise fast-paced, lively nature of the *parrandera*. As a communal event, everyone can participate despite their differences in skin color or ancestry. The *parrandera-danza* style stands as a key to cultural synthesis and conceivably as an opportunity to overcome racial problems as it reflects a flexible approach to the inclusion of multiple cultural features in one style. The musical forms that were created and performed over a period by the *guanacastecos*, for a variety of social purposes, show hybridity and a synergy in their musical culture. Certain aspects of the imposed colonial music were assimilated and others discarded over time, undergoing creative changes, and emerging with a new “Afro-Caribbean” form. Such is the case of the *habanera* rhythm presented in the *danza*.

Danza

The *danza*, or *contradanza*, is a variation of the style *parrandera*. The *danza* in Guanacaste is not an independent musical form, but rather it is part of the formal structure of the *parrandera*. It is used to change the speed and mood from one section of the *parrandera* to the next. The contrasting tempo and rhythmic groove calms the more frantic mood of the *parrandera*.

At the time the *danza* style was developed Guanacaste was home to many people of European descent. Through a transformative process, what is believed to have been an English *country dance* became popular and spread all through Guanacaste in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ The *contradanza* in Guanacaste was developed in both 6/8 and 2/4, with the 2/4 dance as the more common. The rhythmic pattern of the *danza* is as follows:

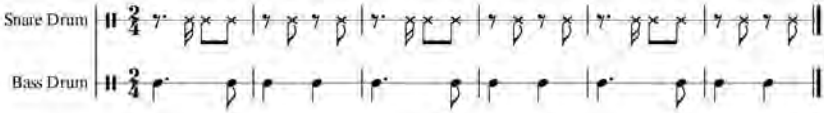


Figure 5. Danza basic rhythmic pattern in two parts: snare drum and bass drum (author's transcription).

This rhythmic pattern of the *danza* is used as accompaniment for different melodic motives as shown in Figure 6. An important aspect of *danza* is the notable Cuban habanera rhythm. The *habanera's* distinguishing musical feature is its short, repeating 2/4 rhythmic figure in the bass line, measure one and following. One of the most common *danzas* that feature the *habanera* rhythm is that of “*La soncoyeña*.”

La soncoyeña (Danza)

Moderato

The image shows a musical score for 'La soncoyeña (Danza)'. It is in 2/4 time and marked 'Moderato'. The score consists of a melody line and piano accompaniment. The melody is in G major and the piano accompaniment is in G major. The piano accompaniment features a repeating rhythmic figure in the bass line, characteristic of the habanera rhythm. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 6.

Figure 6. Melody and accompaniment for the *danza* section of “*La soncoyeña*.” (author's transcription)

The presence of the *habanera* rhythm reflects an African shaping of the *danzas* of Guanacaste as well as the migration and settlement of Afro-descendants in Costa Rican culture. The *habanera* rhythm exemplifies the appropriation and transformation of African and Iberian traditions into a new Costa Rican cultural identity that retained what was useful or appealing and adjusted it to the new environment.

An important predecessor of the *habanera* pattern is the five-note *cinquillo*. This rhythmic pattern, as the name implies, consisted of five notes per measure.



Figure 7. The cinquillo

The cinquillo is a rhythm of West African origin and is, like the *habanera* rhythm, another basic element in Caribbean music. The cinquillo that was transformed into the clave pattern can be prominently found in *Santería batá* rhythms (toques) played for the orishas (spirits).

***Batá* Drumming, Cuba**

“Caribbean identity is neither European nor African but, rather, in-between.”¹⁹ *Batá* drumming was heavily influenced by African heritage and traditions. As *batá* drummers recreated their traditions in Cuba, they mixed the songs and rhythms of different (yet related) ethnic groups in a single practice. Rhythmic cycles and the clave rhythm can be considered as symbols of the Caribbean, as they underscore the musical complexity characteristic of the region and acknowledge external influences from immigrant communities.

Rhythmic cycles are an essential component in African musical aesthetics and a relationship can be found between social organization and musical organization.²⁰ Rhythm, as in the structure and foundation of much African music, forms a main element in *batá* drumming and expresses and reinforces both a sense of individualism and of communally shared values. Performers and listeners together create the music. On one hand, the drummers superimpose rhythmic cells on top of other rhythmic cells. Each drummer must keep the integrity of his own beat pattern, while being aware of the other parts. The listeners, on the other hand, perceive the entirety of the parts, the resultant, and this becomes yet another aspect of the performance. The sensitivity from drummers to audience and dancers—dancers are not considered audience members, but are active participants with the musicians, and sometimes add

to the musical sound—and vice versa, represents the basis of the communal African traditions present in batá drumming. This communal aspect extends beyond the concepts of rhythms and cycles.

Performing *batá* drumming in different social and religious ceremonies, as well as in festivals or parties, gives an opportunity for shared social experiences. Each set of drums represents a family with specific roles. The three drums are referred to as *lyá* (Mother), then the *Itótele* (father), and finally the *Okónkolo* (small). The family of drums implies a hierarchy that is felt in society. Maternal figures serve an important role in Santería, as all life is believed to come from water, from the orisha Yemayá, the mother who gives birth and rules over all things.²¹ In contrast, the smallest drum, the *Okónkolo* is aligned with orisha Eleguá, a childish and mischievous character.²² The music reflects the roles of the *batá* drums in the ensemble. The *lyá* plays sophisticated rhythms and melodic patterns while the *Okónkolo* produces only two tones and changes rhythms less frequently throughout a cycle or *toque*.

In addition to rhythmic cycles and social values, the African influence can be seen through the presence of clave in Afro-Caribbean music, and more specifically in *batá* repertoire. As noted by the Afro-Cuban scholar John Santos, in Spanish, “the word clave literally means key, keystone, or code.” *Claves* names an instrument comprised of two sticks, typically one pitched slightly lower (*hembra* or female) than the other (*macho* or male). Clave is also a rhythmic cycle and underlying principle that provides the foundation for the different *toques*, it is the “cornerstone of Cuban music.”



Figure 8. Rumba clave is most often associated with batá drumming.

The *son clave* and the *rumba clave* patterns made their way to Cuba as a result of the enslavement of Yoruba people of Nigeria. As a recurring rhythm, the clave can be considered a set of underlying rules²⁵ that establish momentum and rhythmic drive and are a tool for understanding the relationship between all parts of the *batá* ensemble, songs and dances. In Figure 9 the mixing of the three drum parts (lines 3, 4, and 5) written in 12/8 along with the singing makes this *toque* significant. Each part is important, emphasizing individuality, but the combination of all creates community, an essential element in Cuban and African music.

CANTO PARA ELEGUA

The musical score is titled "CANTO PARA ELEGUA" and is arranged for voice and four percussion instruments: Atchere, Odeonolo, Itorelo, and Iya. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics "I - BA-BA-GO A-GO (MO-YU - BA" and four drum parts. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics "I - BA-BA-GO A-GO (MO-YU - BA O... (MO-DE KO - NI" and the same four drum parts. The drum parts are marked with "12" and "8" above the staves, indicating the number of strokes per measure. The Atchere part is a shaker. The Odeonolo, Itorelo, and Iya parts are played with sticks. The vocal line is in a 12/8 time signature.

Figure 9. Community: looking at the whole picture—3 drum parts plus clave, *Atchere* (a shaker), and voice (transcription by Zane Cupec).

The clave gives performers a constant element with which they can explore creativity within a rhythmic cycle that defines a piece. The conversations played through the different drums might seem like noise to the untrained ear, but the drums are “talking” and expressing themselves in the Lucumí language. These conversations revolve around the clave cycle. The clave helps merge the relationship between a single drumming part, and the other drummed and sung parts. As such, ensembles play within the established tradition of clave to develop conversations among the drums.

Aesthetics: Secular vs. Sacred and the Instruments

Guanacaste, Costa Rica

In the first half of the twentieth century, *parranderas* were performed on marimba for public parties.²⁶ As a form of secular music, the *parranderas* served to affirm Costa Rican life styles, particularly after colonialism, when the population in Guanacaste needed to reaffirm their local identities. By hosting parties in which everyone could participate, no matter their status, people were able to create a strong sense of community. Through the public events that included music and food, the town had experiences that emphasized cultural integration and established values among the population. These values can still be felt in today's society: the outgoing personalities, cordiality, community/family, hard work, pride in egalitarianism, simplicity, connection with nature, and "always with a smile" character of the *guanacasteco* and of any *tico*—the nickname for a Costa Rican citizen.

In addition to contributing to an image of social values, the *parranderas* helped establish the marimba as an icon of Costa Rican music.²⁷ Marimbas were used to perform different kinds of folk music for different occasions, weddings, social parties, national holidays, and house concerts. In Costa Rica a marimba can be played by a single player or in other cases three or four players play on a single instrument. Because of its multiple-player quality, the marimba gained popularity among the *guanacastecos*, and because of the possibilities of mixing rhythm, melody and harmony all in one instrument it also gained respect among the educated populace in the capital San José.

Since 1996, the marimba has been considered the national instrument of Costa Rica. This instrument of African origin represents the folklore of Costa Rica, the talent of luthiers and performers, and most importantly the meaning of being a *guanacasteco*: peaceful advocates of democracy. Around the marimba, an environment of solidarity and community arose, which helped people construct a social reality, values and experiences that could be shared with one another. The marimba helped evoke feelings of patriotism and motivation to defend and preserve ethnic roots. On July 25, 2015, it was declared that that day, besides marking the "Anexión de Nicoya" (annexation of Nicoya), would be the "Día de la Marimba: Patrimonio Cultural de la Nación" (Marimba Day: Patrimony of the Nation). The new holiday adds to the Costa Rican national identity, as it implies deep historical roots and carries an imprint of Costa Rica's history for every individual that listens to the marimba, and as such, provides a connection from one Costa Rican to another and to the whole nation.

Cuba

The growing demand for labor (once the indigenous labor force was decimated) in the first half of the nineteenth century led to the capture, enslavement, and transportation to Cuba of people from the Òyó Empire in Yoruban dominated West and Northern Nigeria.²⁸ To preserve their communities, traditions, and Santería religion, West African slaves disguised their traditional orisha worship as localized Catholic practice. Pushed to adopt Catholicism, the African slaves found ways of syncretizing many of the orishas with the Catholic saints. For example, Ochosi, the deity of the hunt, a woodsman and one of the three primary warrior orisha (along with Elegguá and Ogún), is syncretized with the Catholic archangel Santiago.²⁹ Both Catholic and Santería practices were mixed into a single whole accepted by the local residents.

The disguising of Santería with Catholic saints was not the only means by which the religion had to be kept secret. Until 1991, because of the communist ban on religion in Cuba, Santería was practiced in house churches or *casas de Ocha/casas de Santo*³⁰ and was very exclusive. In the *casas de Ocha*, *batá* drumming continued to reflect a pan-African and pan-Caribbean sense of solidarity and provided a set of cultural practices that refined Afro-Cuban culture, giving it a popular appeal as a campaign against the Catholic Church.³¹

Once Cuba was declared a secular state in 1992, the religion gained visibility in the island. Santeros were then more willing to open their ceremonies to outsiders (non-Santeros), and it was clear that music accompanied and gave meaning to most aspects of Santería. The mystical qualities of African religions were kept through the playing of the *batá*; specific *batá* drums invoke the personalities, relationships, and domains of the orishas. The spiritual connection established *batá* drums as religious icons. The unique appearance and construction of *batá* drums elevated the drum's status to visual symbols and their iconic quality because they are easily identifiable as "hourglass" shaped drums. The three types of *batá* drums, described above, were initially only played in private settings for Santería purposes, but with the 1959 Cuban Revolution players began to perform in public events on *aberikulá* or non-consecrated *batá* drums for different audiences.

Drumming, dancing, and song are essential components of *batá* drumming. The music serves to encourage participation by the audience or congregation, dancers, singers and drummers alike, creating community. Communal oneness is an important goal for *batá* drummers. Within this idea of creating a whole unit, finding a balance between adhering to certain expectations and expressing individuality is important. *Batá* traditions are not a single entity in

which all performers abide by the same set of standards. But, there is a high degree of cohesiveness among players in skills, rhythms played, and aesthetic values. A look into *batá* drumming can provide a perspective of cultural dynamism that is a testament of African diaspora, European influence, and native ideologies that have changed (and will keep changing) over time.

Closing thoughts

Even though other areas of the New World have been influenced by Africa and Europe, the syncretism that occurred in Guanacaste, Costa Rica, and Cuba reveals essential values of the societies that emerged after colonialism. In both of these places, community is important and there are always efforts to preserve it in both secular and sacred ways. Through music, the peoples of these geographical areas constructed an identity image that served as a common denominator for people of different backgrounds, whether European, African or Native American. However, identity is a process and not a static expression. In both Guanacaste and Cuba, identity was not a preconditioned state of being. In Guanacaste, *parranderas* and *danzas* created an environment that was inviting and fueled social relationships among classes and races. In Cuba, *batá* symbolizes the people's desire to protect their African inheritance and communal oneness.

Discovering linkages to Africa and to Europe helps in understanding the cultural transformations that shaped the music of Guanacaste and Cuba. The *habanera* and *clave* portray the desire for authentic communities that have music that is representative of a specific region. External circumstances, such as colonization, led to musical imitations, appropriations, borrowings, importations, and renovations across space, time, ethnicity and class, never a static process or context. This article shows that music and its evolutions can transcend geographical location and as such, cannot be studied in isolation, but rather recognizing that social elements imply different effects for different types of music.

The transcending and blending of musical traditions and musical cultures in both Costa Rica and Cuba was evident in the mixing of rhythms, dancing, creation of large ensembles, and the popularization of the different styles. These elements facilitated the engagement of more people, bringing them together and challenging social divisions while increasing awareness of their multiple identities. A critical awareness of the social reality is imperative while revisiting the roots of traditional music. Both Guanacaste folkloric music and *batá* drumming have challenged social conventions, and the musical blending in both cultures has had an impact on social issues and political issues. None-

theless, the road to connecting music with the social issues of generations past and expectations of younger generations is long, and further research is needed from multiple music-cultural perspectives.

NOTES

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Alexandra Siso

Musical Dialogues: Arabesk and Hindi Film Music as Mediators of Aesthetic Discourses

The fusion between traditional, local musical practices and foreign influences in popular music has created new performance practices and aesthetics, some of which have opened paths to new discourses. In Turkey and India, non-indigenous influences came with globalization, which resulted in major changes within their societies and attracted contemporary audiences to new genres of popular music, which grew out of the intermixture of styles. Among those genres, Turkish *arabesk* and Hindi film songs came to symbolize modernity and became platforms for new subjects and narratives. Their catchy tunes, strong media presence, and relatable and approachable subjects helped them gather a strong fan-base and become the representatives of a new generation in the twentieth-century.

Literature on *arabesk* and Hindi film music suggests that these genres are means of expression of sentiments that otherwise would be ineffable. It is accepted wisdom among musicians around the world that music conveys meaning in a more effective way than the spoken word alone, and often serves as a mediator between the lyrics and the narratives that inform them and the audience. Through the subjects of ill-fated love, stories of migration to the big cities, the dichotomy between rural and urban life and, ultimately, their social commentaries on the life of the lower classes, *arabesk* and Hindi film music gathered a massive audience. Additionally, the essence of traditional musics still present in these genres became part of a modern identity, and helped them develop a particular aesthetic that distinguishes them from other popular musics around the world. The following pages address the different

subjects associated with arabesk and Hindi film song and compares the aesthetic and cultural values the media and the audience assign to them in the contexts of film and live performance.

***Arabesk* as the voice of a generation**

Several social and cultural fluctuations took place in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The separation of government and religion, the influence of globalization, and the migration of younger generations from rural to urban landscapes brought significant changes to Turkish society that are depicted in the lyrics of arabesk songs, making it a music of and for the city.¹

The term *arabesk* was originally used in Turkey in the second half of the twentieth century to describe impoverished migrants from rural areas living in Istanbul that, as Martin Stokes argues, represented “an inner Orient in a supposedly Western country.”² However, *arabesk* is currently considered to be a popular music genre rather than a social category, which combines Turkish art musics with foreign musical elements.³ It was used for the first time in a musical context to describe Turkish singer Orhan Gencebay’s first solo cassette in 1970, *Bir Teselli Ver (Console Me)*⁴ and an eclectic musical style that combined Western influences, orchestration typical of Arab film music and traditional elements of Turkish art music.

Although arabesk is not a traditional musical genre, it employs the use of traditional instruments such as the long-necked lute *bağlama* and traditional art music structures. Its structure resembles the *şarkı*, an urban art form song in which vocal and instrumental lines alternate. This antiphonal alteration, as Stokes calls it, produces different textures and musical motifs at the end of a phrase that become instrumental introductions.⁵ According to Nedim Karakayali, unmetered instrumental introductions, or *taksim*, are characteristic of the genre and often used to display instrumental or vocal virtuosity. Unlike art music where the introductions and the *taksim* are used to establish the *makam* (the composition mode) and its modulations, in arabesk songs the introduction provides a space where the vocal or instrumental soloist can improvise in free rhythm before returning to the established *usul* (the beat structure).⁶

The alternation between instruments and voice and their respective improvisations during the introduction suggest a valuable communication between them. However, the essence of the music is always preserved underneath the improvisations and ornamentations throughout the performance. The basic *usul* must be heard underneath the different rhythmic layers of each

performer's improvisation and the *seyir* (also known as the melodic contour in an ascending or descending direction) must be followed despite the ornamentations.⁷

Although *arabesk* in the 1970s preserved these traditional performance practices, the genre flourished in conspicuously nontraditional venues: *gazin*os (night-clubs), private recordings, and in film. It resonated with an audience that had been affected by the migratory movements towards modernized cities during the second half of the twentieth-century, and owed its popularity to the poorer strata of Turkish society. According to Stokes, audiovisual platforms of radio, TV, recordings, and cinema convey these narratives to an audience that feels identified with them and that admires the performers. More than that, they are also considered to embody a contemporary urban aesthetic.

In some cases, the lyrics perfectly portray the audience's story: the tale of a young man from a provincial town who moves to a big city, usually Istanbul, and lives a hard and solitary life, for example. This narrative also extends to film, where *arabesk* singers portray a suffering but talented young rural man who is discovered by the entertainment industry and transformed into an idol.⁸ Films and music also collaborate to tell the ill-fated love story of the migrant man who falls in love with a city woman, but is overwhelmed by the plots and manipulations of a third party who interferes in the love story.⁹

Bollywood Film Music as Popular Music

While Turkish *arabesk* singers performed their songs at nightclubs and established a direct relationship with its young, poor, and migrant audiences through music, India's population was gaining access to Hindi film music through cinemas, termed "Bollywood" in the early 1990s.¹⁰ Records, as Peter Manuel explains, were as expensive as the electricity required to play them, making cinemas a more accessible way to listen to music.¹¹

Within Indian culture, film music is much more than the soundtrack to a visual experience. Although Indian cinema borrowed numerous elements from its Western counterpart, traditional performance is still prioritized and Western musical concepts are used in minimal ways.¹² As Anna Morcom explains, modern film songs still maintain fundamental elements of *rāga* melodic structures and "they are *rāga*-like or Indian in their melodic movement, rather than harmony based." Additionally, the rhythmic modes of film songs follow a traditional structure, incorporating *tāgalas* (rhythmic modes) used in light genres of Indian traditional music, such as the *kaharvā tāl* and *dādrā tāl*.

In Bollywood, the success of the music and the success of the movie are intimately related. According to Anna Morcom, the music is the single most important marketing device for the film, as the songs are often released before the movie, acting as a preview on television programs, radio, and other media.¹⁴ Music is, then, a crucial element in the success of a film.

The process of composing and producing a film song in Bollywood considers the needs and demands of the film narrative, as well as of the producer and director. It is normally composed specifically for every character and the different situations they may encounter within the film and is an integral part of the audiovisual narrative, where it acquires meanings within the context of the film and audience reception. As Morcom explains, music doesn't reinforce or alter meanings that are already present, but along with visuals and dialogue, is an active parameter in the creation or emergence of narrative and meaning.¹⁵ Although the constant use of musical numbers to break the action in the narrative implies that the story has stopped momentarily while the music is playing, "Hindi films . . . are designed for the inclusions of songs. They pause for long enough to incorporate a full song on one emotion, and audiences are used to this."¹⁶

More than a cinematic resource to further expose the motives behind a character's actions or to expand on his or her psyche and emotional state, these film songs may also serve as a situational soundtrack that can be adapted by audiences for various situations in their own lives.¹⁷ The attraction of Bollywood films is not, however, confined only to Indian audiences. Recent studies show that the sons and daughters of the Indian diaspora look to musical films for guidance on archetypes of Indian culture. Bollywood films act, in some instances, as the only cultural referent for the descendants of Indian immigrants living abroad.¹⁸

These films, their narratives and their music act as a relevant part of everyday life discourses, activities and "in particular their emotional lives, where they become a means of expressing and constructing feelings."¹⁹ Furthermore, that "Hindi films and film songs have come to constitute the largest discourse on love and romance in modern India"²⁰ testifies to the reach of the narratives behind them and how the audiences have adopted them as their own.

The narrative power behind popular music

Within the Hindi and *arabesk* film narratives, music provides discursive support: where spoken dialogues may fall short in communicating messages to the audience, music will often be used to express feelings and convey mean-

ings. Therefore, music is not only a tool for entertainment but also a mediator between the film, the music, the singer and its audience. The relevant role of Hindi film music and *arabesk* in their respective audience's daily lives shows that music is a fundamental part of the communication process of the narratives they represent.

Both arabesk and Hindi film music have constructed archetypes that contribute to discourses of identity for specific audiences. The *arabesk* music industry created idols that would fit the model of the young migrant who faces the harsh realities of the life in the city. By adapting their public image to this narrative, these idols became venerated and above all, relatable, since they have faced the same challenges their audiences have. Additionally, their roles in film guaranteed a deeper connection between them and their fans. Idols, such as Orhan Gencebay, Ferdi Tayfur and Zeki Müren, acted and sang and represented themselves in *arabesk* films by using *their* first name and telling *their* story. The tragedies of the main character would be *their* tragedies, the desperation would be *their* desperation, and the audience did not divide the film character from the singer.²¹ This believable fiction created an aesthetic surrounding these performers that supported the melodramatic lyrics, the film character, and the public persona.

The process of construction of a public image has more in common with Western popular music than Bollywood, since the former makes use of the same process of constructing a brand that identifies them with a specific musical genre, songs, and general aesthetics. In Bollywood films actors are not required to sing, and the process of creating a public image differs greatly from other parts of the world. The playback singers (who we may call the actual protagonists of the music) are often less known than the main actors, and the division between one and the other provides a challenge to create an idol in the same way that the Turkish entertainment industry does.

Nonetheless, audience reactions to a public persona are not just a product of marketing. Turkish audiences respond to *arabesk* vocals in a particular way: a singer's voice may be *manalı* ("meaningful") or *ifadeli* ("expressive") depending on the voice texture. The expression of meaning through vocal performance also leads to a debate on the features a voice must display in order to express those meanings in a satisfactory manner. For *arabesk* singers, it is preferable that their voice sounds *yanık*, which means that it is "burned with emotion."²² Turkish audiences prefer harsh and bitter sounding voices, fitting to the melodramatic subject of the songs. A similar sensitivity to vocal quality can also be observed in Bollywood film song: Indian audiences prefer a lighter and thinner vocal timbre,²³ associated with sweetness and innocence for their

female heroines. In both cases, voice quality and texture are intrinsic to the cultural values audiences assign to film music

Musical textures also embody dramatic tensions in Bollywood song and *arabesk*, where Western musical harmonies or performance practices emphasize negative traits in a performance. For *arabesk* audiences, the inclusion of too many Western elements presents a stylistic problem. Although musical influences of other cultures may be welcomed to a certain point, it is widely understood that the true essence of *arabesk* songs must be perceived as retained in order to convey the meanings of the songs. According to Stokes, instrumental passages at the introduction of an *arabesk* song would suggest a Western pop or rock idiom: modern, upbeat, and cosmopolitan. However, the vocal section, normally a pained and emotional voice, is the one that brings the listener back to the expressive world of solitary torment characteristic of *arabesk*.²⁴

In Bollywood films, Western musical harmonies and compositional techniques are used predominantly to reaffirm tension and suspense within the narrative. Morcom explains this phenomenon by arguing that excessive chromatic movement, whole-tone scales, and diminished sevenths do not exist in any Indian musical system, and so they can contribute to a sense of disturbance within a film scene.²⁵ Western musical sounds such as diminished sevenths, chromatic scales, semitones, disjunct melodic motifs, and other techniques of Hollywood film music composition are associated with disruptions, anger, and suspense, because they are an antithesis to the *raga* and classical Indian melodies.

The stories of these film and musical genres, such as the dichotomies between modern and traditional, corruption and honesty, and wealth and poverty, are the axis around which *arabesk* and Hindi films center their narratives. In general, Bollywood employs some of the same concepts that *arabesk* uses in its films: love, personal tragedy, and helpless heroes or heroines sabotaged by the schemes of manipulative third parties. In a word: melodrama, to which music is central.²⁶ However, as *arabesk* films address the lower economic classes by portraying and denouncing their situation, Bollywood portrays idealized stories of happy endings and undefeated love. The two cultural approaches to the concept of love through musical films denotes a social discourse that is inherent within the musical genres. *Arabesk* films and songs portray love as the cause for the disgraces of the protagonist and Bollywood film music portrays love as the main force that guides the protagonists.

While both Hindi film music and *arabesk* are designated as popular musics, they have preserved within themselves key elements of traditional musics that

have helped them depict a particular identity within the world music category. This could only be accomplished by the flexibility of the genres, shown in their inclusion of foreign influences without losing their traditional foundations and the preservation of traditional instruments and compositional techniques. Additionally, their relatable discourses and the methods through which they are conveyed, such as film and, above all, music, guarantees that they occupy a special place within the audiences of these two societies.

Overall, *arabesk* and Hindi film discourses may be qualified as overly fantastic or melodramatic. It is important to remember that music in these contexts acts as a medium of expression of sentiments that otherwise would be ineffable. For these two musical cultures, music conveys meaning in a more effective way than the spoken word could ever do. The audience is not a passive receptor of these musics: film narratives address their problems, aspirations, and identity issues. Through film an intimate conversation between performers and listeners works because of the relevance of the narratives and the musical features. A fusion of traditional and foreign concepts in turn reshapes ancient traditions, which, although part of a “globalized world” are still considered “outside” because of their customs and their sensibilities.

NOTES

¹ Martin Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 1.

² Martin Stokes, *The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 74.

³ Elliot Bates, *Music in Turkey: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 73.

⁴ Martin Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate*, 118.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶ Nedim Karakayali, “Arabesk,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* vol. 6: *The Middle East*, eds. Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2001), 285–286.

⁷ Bates, *Music in Turkey*, 73.

⁸ For more information on the construction of arabesk idols, please refer to Stokes, *The Republic of Love*, 2011.

⁹ Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate*, 141.

¹⁰ Alison E. Arnold, “Bollywood,” *Grove Music Online* (accessed September 24, 2015). <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2282235>

¹¹ Peter Manuel, “The Cassette Industry and Popular Music in North India,” in *Non-Western Popular Music*, ed. Tony Langois (Farnham: Ashgate, 1991), 307–322.

- ¹² Anna Morcom, *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 63.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Morcom, *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema*, 195.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 235.
- ¹⁸ Amandeep Takhar, "Consuming Bollywood: Young Sikhs Social Comparisons with Heroes and Heroines in Indian Films," *Journal of Marketing Management* 26 (2010), 1057–1073.
- ¹⁸ Morcom, *Hindi Film Songs*, 224.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.
- ²⁰ Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate*, 138.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 133.
- ²² Morcom, *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema*, 150.
- ²³ Stokes, *The Republic of Love*, 85.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 144.
- ²⁵ Morcom, *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema*, 142.

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