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ATTITUDES, APPROACHES, AND ACTIONS

Learning and Teaching the Musics of Minorities in Europe

Three key factors have contributed to the embodiment of musical diversity in the European population: The presence of minorities from the continent itself (such as the Roma); the settling of former inhabitants from European colonies; and economic immigration (either invited or self-directed). The latter has undoubtedly had the deepest impact on cultural diversity beyond mainstream cultures. When Europe first started to receive large numbers of migrant workers, it was assumed that they were temporary guests to our shores. This is evident, for instance, with the German word *Gastarbeiter* and its equivalents in other European languages. Implicit in such terminology is the assumption that these people were to return to their home countries once the work was done. As we can say now with the wisdom that only comes with hindsight, this is not exactly how it turned out. Many of those brought here to assist in the workforce stayed, brought over families, and have inextricably become part of the cultural fabric of contemporary European societies.

DEALING WITH CULTURAL DIVERSITY

It would be unfair to say that this process was (or is) entirely harmonious. While there has been much rhetoric on the blessings of a diverse and colourful Europe, we have found as much evidence of 'culture as confrontation' (Ministerie van OCW 2000). As I have argued elsewhere (Schippers 2001: 7), it can be useful to distinguish four major approaches to cultural diversity in this context, which relate to culture in general, and to music in particular:

- *Monocultural.* In this approach, the dominant culture (in most cases western classical music) is the only frame of reference. Other musics and approaches to music are marginalised. This may seem outdated but in essence still appears to be the underlying philosophy of most institutes, programmes and methods.

- *Multicultural.* Here, different musics lead completely separate lives. This translates mostly into music education targeting the 'roots' of the learners. Blacks are taught African music, Moroccans Arab songs, and whites Mozart, blissfully oblivious of the rapidly changing and blending cultural reality of musical tastes in our societies.

- *Intercultural.* This represents loose contacts and exchange between cultures, and includes simple forms of fusion. It is very popular in North-western Europe, particularly in music in schools, and steered largely by musical interest and awareness, although one may suspect that political correctness plays a role as well.

- *Transcultural.* This refers to an in-depth exchange of approaches and ideas. At first glance, it might sound a bit too idealistic. But it is actually possible to imagine – and even to realise – programmes where many different musics and musical approaches feature on an equal footing, particularly in general introductory courses, history, theory, methodology, aesthetics.

As the above text suggests, there may well be discrepancies between professed and practiced approaches. While throughout the 1980s and 1990s there was an explosive growth of cultural policies that explicitly recognised cultural diversity and meetings, the organisational structures of most institutions supposed to implement them – be it concert organisations, schools, or institutions for higher music education – have remained essentially unchanged. While their rhetoric welcomed diversity, their ethos stayed almost exclusively white middle class in approach and outlook, in the manner of Bourdieu's ideas of a European bourgeois culture that creates

inequality supported by "an educational system offering (very unequally) the possibility of learning by institutionalised stages in accordance with standardised levels and syllabuses" (Bourdieu 1984: 328).

In the same vein, Elliott, one of the leading philosophers of music education, criticises western education as "based on modernity's scientific-industrial concepts, including standardised curricula, standardised achievement tests, teacher-centred methods, restricted instructional time, and age-segregated and ability-segregated classes" (Elliott 2002: 86).

While the rhetoric has changed, the remnants of these characteristics are still evident in educational practices across many European countries. Banks highlights how bringing in cultural diversity can bring change, as

> it challenges Enlightenment, positivist assumptions about the relationship between human values, knowledge, and action. Positivists, who are the heirs of enlightenment, believe that it is possible to structure knowledge that is objective and beyond human values and interests. Multicultural theorists maintain that knowledge is positional, that it relates to the knower's values and experiences … (Banks 2002: 6)

LEARNER-TEACHER INTERACTION

To complicate things further, cultural diversity in music education implies different approaches not only to learning and teaching, but also to the entire interaction between the learner and the source of what is to be learned. The latter can be performed, recorded, or notated, used independently (as in learning pop music from the radio), or in combination with an embodiment of musical skills or knowledge: A master, teacher, facilitator, or just an example that can be emulated. The interpersonal interaction is crucial in the transmission of many musics, from western classical music to *gamelan* or the music of the Turkish *bağlama saz*, but it varies in nature from culture to culture.

This variation is not specific to music: One of the clearest insights into the possible fields of tensions comes from a study of corporate headquarters across cultures, in which Dutch researcher Hofstede identified five dimensions of values and attitudes: a) small power distance versus large power distance; b) individualism versus collectivism; c) masculinity versus femininity; d) avoiding uncertainty versus tolerating uncertainty; and e) long-term orientation versus short-term orientation (Hofstede 1998: 25). Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars developed a similar model, distinguishing a) universalism versus particularism; b) individualism

versus communitarianism, c) neutral versus emotional; d) specific versus diffused, e) achievement versus ascription; adding f) attitudes to time; and g) attitudes to the environment (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1998).

For those working with cultural diversity in contemporary European settings, such binaries resonate with their experiences with Indian gurus and Brazilian samba musicians, who do not always follow the mitigated master-disciple model of western classical music, the more egalitarian relationships in jazz, or the peer learning experiences common in popular music (Green 2002). They also help to explain the challenges of many Asian students torn between the respect for authority they have acquired from an early age, and the independence of opinion expected when they enter European higher education. Talented young people from even more divergent cultures of learning, such as sub-Saharan Africa or outback Australia, often do not get past the first year of degree courses due to expectations foreign to their skills, however finely attuned they are to their own cultural and musical background.

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

There are additional challenges at a next level of depth. Every music has a complex (and rarely explicit) underlying system of values and attitudes relating to what is considered beautiful, intellectual or spiritual; desirable, acceptable or objectionable. For instance, in western classical music, the canon of acknowledged masterworks remains a principal frame of reference, an anchor for tradition. This canon is like a 'musical museum' (Cook 1998: 30): It stays essentially the same, allowing only subtle variations in its (re)interpretation. In North Indian classical music, the ragas are largely handed down from generation to generation, but their interpretation is expected to be distinctive from one performance to the next, even by the same artist. In much popular music, the songs have to be different every time, although the basic frame of reference stays the same. Looking at the wealth of musical styles and genres that inhabit Europe today, there is a range from static to living traditions, ones that focus on preservation and ones where the principal concern is creation.

Related to this, is the concept of authenticity. We have inherited a concept of authenticity that idealises the original: *of time* for what is now called 'historically informed' practice, and *of place* for much world music. In contrast to this authenticity of 'trying to be as close as possible to an original' is the idea of authenticity as 'being an expression of the self', which suggests not trying to emulate any model or example. While the former

definition often claims a kind of moral superiority, the latter can lead – and has indeed led – to vibrant new musical scenes, such as *bhangra* as a powerful expression of the spirit of UK based Indian youth (not to mention its fusion with Brazilian samba into *sambhangra* – how inauthentic can you get in terms of 'pure ethnic music'?).

Recontextualisation is of particular relevance for Europe in what is now often called 'world music'. While ethnomusicology from the 1960s has advocated that music can only be understood in context (suggesting an 'authentic' context), changes in musical practices and tastes over the same period have demonstrated that much music travels remarkably well over space and time (Merriam 1964; Slobin 1993). This goes as much for medieval Italian sacred music played in pagan 21st century Copenhagen, as it does for African ceremonial drumming performed at festivals in France, or Javanese court gamelan in a school in the UK. Most music is recontextualised, often more than once: From churches or temples to courts to concert halls to records on the web, or from village squares to brothels to rock festivals. These are the fascinating dynamics of most musics we deal with, both in Europe and their cultures of origin; they represent complex but powerful realities.

40 YEARS OF PRACTICE

In the face of the dense enumeration of obstacles and complications on the previous pages, it would be logical to assume that the music of minorities has little chance of flourishing in European countries. As it turnes out, that is not the case. Since the 1960s, but particularly since the 1980s, numerous initiatives featuring 'migrant music', 'minority music', or 'world music' have seen the light, many by individual musicians or communities, but also in institutional contexts. In what I consider the first decade of recent world music history, the 1980s, projects in institutions were often naïve or opportunistic: Naïve because the possible cultural tensions had not been thought through or discussed and opportunistic because they were often triggered by the promise of additional funding. Many of the projects from this period failed because of incompatible expectations from the organisations involved, the teachers hired in (often without training or qualifications to work in these settings), and the learners, who oscillated between their cultures of origin and that of mainstream Europe.

There are many reports of such confrontations (e.g. VKV 1992), where a lack of awareness regarding the kinds of issues discussed above led to disappointment, conflict, and discontinuation of projects that may well have been viable.

In the late 1980s, the situation changed. Firstly, the 1987 'world music campaign' that emanated from the UK positioned 'world music' as an attractive listening option for 'indigenous' Europeans, creating a more knowledgeable and more diverse market for the music of (at least some) minorities. Secondly, those who had been involved in 'teaching world music' started finding each other at the conferences of educational organisations such as ISME, EMU, AEC and MENC, at ethnomusicological gatherings of ICTM, ESEM, and SEM, and targeted networks such as *Cultural Diversity in Music Education* (CDIME), which held its first seven international symposia in Europe between 1992 and 2003 (www.cdime-network.com). Discussions started to address different ways of organising learning and teaching, with a number of examples at public music school level (Malmö, Berlin, Lyon, Amsterdam), and at tertiary level (Dartington, Basel, London, and Rotterdam) providing practical models for shaping world music education with sense and sensitivity.

While some programmes in schools kept using outdated volumes with 'songs from many lands' robbed of their beauty by squeezing them into western staff notation and accompanying them with a few chords on the piano, allowing little room for subtle rhythm, intonation or timbre, many others began to work from authoritative recordings, or even with musicians from the countries themselves, often framed within a larger project of learning about another culture.

While some music schools kept pretending that learning the *saz* or *djembe* is essentially the same as learning the recorder or *viola da gamba*, others worked with teachers to arrange groups, pedagogies and a learning environment that made sense from the point of view of the music and its (inevitably new) contexts. Rehearsals may have taken longer and been interspersed with sipping tea, smoking *kreteks,* or eating *baklava*, but they have also yielded engagement, enjoyment, and rapidly improving musicianship.

While some conservatoires insisted that only western art music had a place at a conservatoire, others (particularly those with strong education, composition, jazz, or percussion programmes) embraced the opportunity to import new strands of inspiration, in many cases leaving some leeway for out-of-the-ordinary elements in the curriculum, honouring aural transmission and electives focusing on skills such as accompanying dance, clapping Indian *talas*, or exploring Turkish poetry. In 2001–2002, over 50 European conservatoires were identified as having at least some courses in world music on offer (Kors, Saraber and Schippers 2003).

PRESENT AND FUTURE

Turning to the present, the beginning of the third millennium has witnessed two opposing developments. The rise in racism and mistrust of other cultures post-September 11, 2001 has led to subtle but dubious de-funding of culturally-diverse projects in some countries. It is becoming less politically incorrect to dislike blacks or Muslims; consequently, however unfairly, the support for music associated with these 'others' is suffering. At the same time, a number of projects and networks have come to maturity after ten to 20 years of experience: There are highly evolved policies and practices for world music in schools; many public music schools have included djembe ensembles, 'world choirs' and the music of the minorities directly surrounding them in their offerings. Other community projects abound. At the level of professional training, a number of European institutions now deliver credible musicians in *flamenco*, gamelan, *tango* or djembe. At university level, world music ensembles are still not as common as in the United States (Solis 2004), but research into learning and teaching world music is on the increase.

The greatest potential strength of the 'world music education sector' for the next decades perhaps lies in bringing together these layers of the music education infrastructure and combining them with performance, breaking through institutional divisions that do not necessarily make sense for the musics of minorities in Europe. The largest experiment of this kind to date is the recently opened *World Music & Dance Centre* (WMDC) in Rotterdam, which works across the gamut from schools and communities to elite performance and research. Using both local heroes and international stars (such as Paco Peña and Hariprasad Chaurasia), and concentrating its activities into a custom-designed building in the multicultural suburb of Delfshaven, the WMDC has the chance to create a musical ecosphere that nurtures music lovers and enthusiasts from the first contact through to trial workshops, amateur courses, and professional training and research for the few who choose to aim for a professional career (Schippers 2007).

The musics of minorities in contemporary Europe have begun to fulfil their potential as a major force in the life of towns and cities. They blur cultural stereotypes as some use music to confirm their socially or individually constructed identities, and others embody an ever-loosening link between ethnic background and musical activities or tastes. Where these have fully connected to communities and individuals, where they have naturally gravitated towards striving for the best possible quality, they have become an integral presence in the soundscape of their environment. In other places, there is still ample room for growth, in line with the summary recommendations of the EU-funded project *Sound links* (see appendix

overleaf). Continued curiosity, respect, dialogue and well-considered action without fear can carry this European cultural treasure to its next incarnations. The necessary shifts in awareness and practice have already been made; the next ten years will hopefully see wider discrimination, well attuned to the continuing shifts in approaches to learning and teaching, technological developments, and the ever-changing realities of musical diversity in Europe.

APPENDIX

Emergency guidelines in case of world music
In the summary of the final report of *Sound Links*, a project investigating cultural diversity in higher music education funded by the European Commission, some of the key findings were communicated as a variation of the fire warnings encountered in every hotel room around the world to highlight both the urgency of the topic and the possibility of a commonsense approach.

What to do in case cultural diversity enters your institution
1. Open all doors and windows: receive the new influences in the same spirit of *curiosity and receptiveness* that have been at the core of most major developments in the history of music across the globe.
2. Set realistic, tangible *aims and targets* for pilot projects or long-term initiatives, and relate them to the key motivation for including these activities in terms of artistic, personal and organisational outcomes.
3. Be aware that cultural diversity does not only refer to many musical sounds and structures, but also to a wealth of approaches to *teaching and learning* that can benefit the entire institution.
4. Quality criteria are complicated within traditional conservatoire subjects; activities in cultural diversity call for an even more *flexible set of criteria*, with fitness for purpose and relevance to context.
5. The success of cultural diversity in higher music education also depends on its *position in the structure*, ranging from optional workshops to credited parts of the core curriculum.
6. Cultural diversity has been high on the cultural and political agenda for some time. Placing it carefully in the *political and funding climate* will benefit the activities and the institution at large.
7. As a new area of development, cultural diversity lends itself very well for *making connections*: in the community surrounding the institute, the national arts world, and international networks.

8. Experience shows that successful initiatives in cultural diversity centre on inspired people, well supported in the hierarchy. This has implications for *leadership, organisation and management.*
9. Cultural diversity may lead to the formation of isolated islands within the institution. Constantly involving *staff and students* in planning, process and results will help to avert this danger.
10. It is relatively easy to realise a single, successful initiative. The greater challenge lies in ensuring *sustainability* by creating a climate that will contribute to an open and inspiring learning environment. (Kors, Saraber and Schippers 2003)

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