

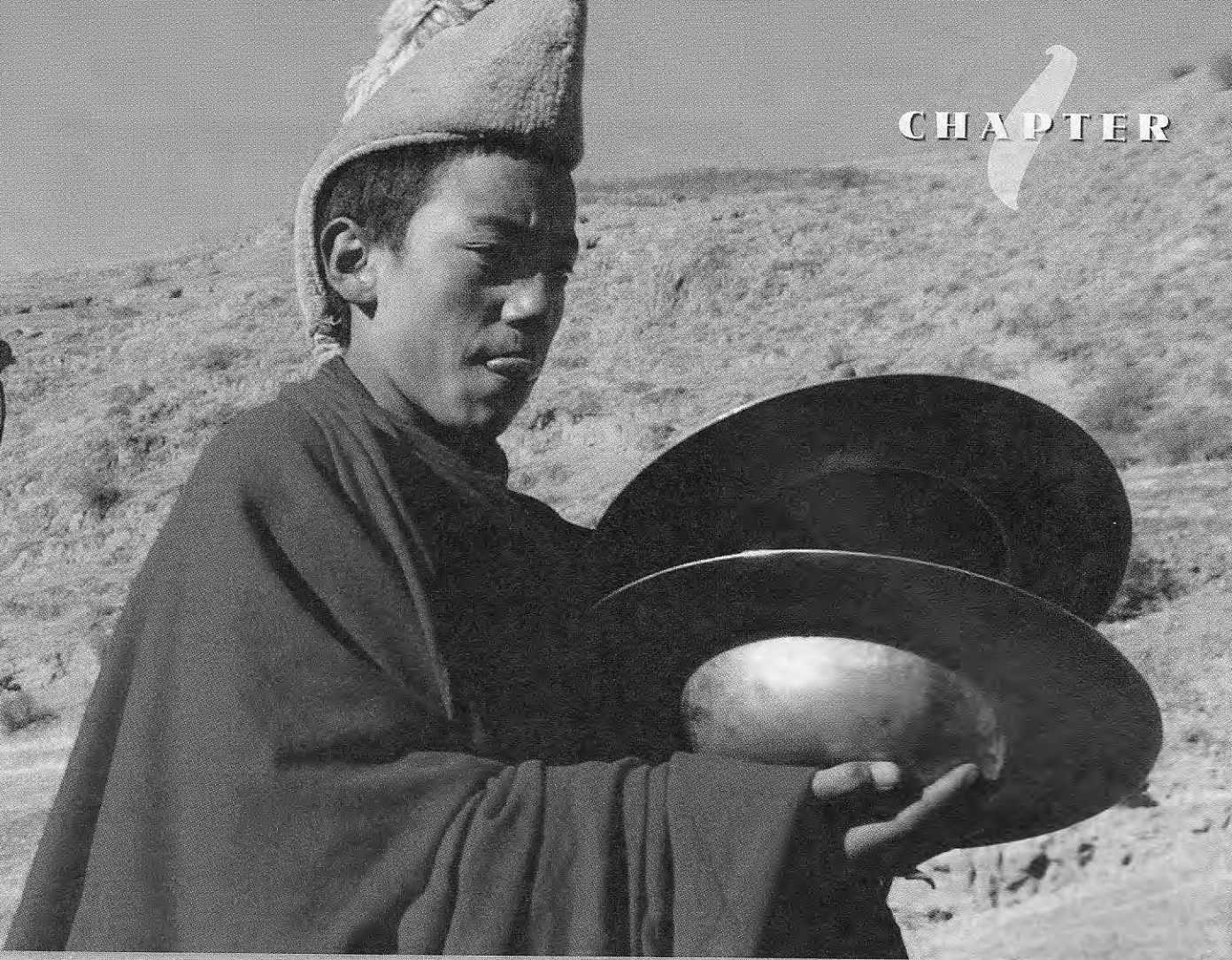


Introduction: Studying Musics of the World's Cultures

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PRESENTING THE WORLD OF MUSIC

The purpose of this book is to introduce the reader to the world of music, the music of the world's cultures, emphasizing the diversity and the uniqueness of each. Directing ourselves to students—particularly those without a technical background—and to general readers, we want to give a sense of the character of music and musical life of all the world's peoples. There are thousands of peoples, each with their own music, and so clearly, we can do this only by sampling and by judicious synthesis. But rather than simply providing an introduction to non-Western music, or “ethnic,” music, we include also the musical culture of Europe, its academic or art music along with its folk, or vernacular, and popular traditions, among the musics of the world. We have divided the world into eleven major culture areas or blocks, devoting a chapter to each, mindful, of course, that within each of them there is a great deal of cultural and musical variation. In each region and for that matter in the whole world, we have tried to provide a representative sample. Even so, there are large areas that we have had to leave untouched.



In order to provide a degree of depth as well as breadth, we have had to be selective. We can do no more than provide excursions that, taken together, will provide the reader a picture of the way the world's peoples make music, think about it, use it in their lives, and also what all this music sounds like and how it is structured. The world's musical diversity is reflected to some degree in the diversity of the organization of our chapters, but there are some things on which all chapters touch. In each chapter, we first focus on a detailed description of a musical event that may be considered broadly representative of its culture area. Ordinarily, this is followed by an introduction to the cultures and societies of the area; then a more synthetic treatment of musical life and ideas about music, of musical style (described in terms comprehensible by nonspecialists), music history, and musical instruments; a brief description of a few additional musical genres or contexts; and finally, a consideration of recent developments and popular music. We describe musical cultures as they exist today, but wherever possible we provide some information about their history. We do this in some measure to dispel the notion that Western academic or art music lives in a sense through its

history, whereas the musics of other societies have no history at all, or at best a very different sort of history.

We should make one thing clear right now: Every musical system—that is, the music and musical life of each society, from the multifarious society of New York City to a native Amazonian tribe of two hundred persons—is a very complex phenomenon that may be analyzed and comprehended from many perspectives. We certainly would not be able to provide the amount of detail necessary to illustrate this point for all the cultures and musics with which we deal. We therefore introduce the world's musical complexity selectively, each chapter featuring one or a few concepts. Thus, in addition to providing a set of general and essentially parallel introductions to the musics of twelve world areas, this book may also be read as an introduction to the topics within world music study:

- Chapter 2, on India, gives special attention to the relationship of music and dance.
- Chapter 3, on the Middle East, concentrates on different conceptions of music in the world's cultures and on ways musicians learn to improvise.
- Chapter 4, on China, presents a detailed examination of the role of music in the political development of a modernizing nation.
- Chapter 5, on Japan, shows the survival, in a very modernized society, of its older traditions.
- Chapter 6, on Indonesia, examines the place of Indonesian music in the Western world and of the role of Western artists and tourists in Indonesian musical culture.
- Chapter 7, on sub-Saharan Africa, provides special insight into the world of popular music in non-Western urban societies.
- Chapter 8, Europe, concentrates on the interrelationships among folk, art, and popular musics in the contemporary world of Europe and looks at its attempts, since World War II, to become an integrated musical unit.
- Chapter 9, Latin America, analyzes the relationships of social values and musical style in a variety of Hispanic cultures.
- Chapter 10, the Caribbean, gives a sampling of the diverse musical styles and genres from the multitude of island cultures, showing how in many ways, music serves to unify the very contrastive cultures often living in close proximity, while at the same time giving each society an emblem of its ethnicity.
- Chapter 11, Native Americans, provides information on the study of history and prehistory of musical cultures without written records.
- Chapter 12, North America, provides insight into the interaction of traditional, rural folk music, and modern urbanized music through multiethnic culture.

For each area of the world covered by a chapter, we have tried to provide an overview; thus, Chapter 2 speaks at least briefly to many of the kinds of music found in India; Chapter 7 tells of the differences between East, Central, and



Mariachi band playing during fiesta in the streets of San Antonio, Texas. Photographer: Lawrence Migdale. Source: Lawrence Migdale/Pix.

West Africa, between rural and urban musics; Chapter 11 gives an overview of the musics of the hundreds of Native North American tribes.

Although we believe that our accounts achieve this kind of breadth, we also wish to show the reader the depth of musical culture, the many things that go into the composing, performance, and understanding of even a simple song or ritual, its history and the effects it has, and how it is perceived and judged by the people who render it and who hear it. We have tried to accomplish this by concentrating, in each chapter, on a limited number of representative cultures, communities, events, and even instruments within the broad geographical area that it covers. Thus, in Chapter 3, the author concentrates on Iran, where he had done original research, to impart a sense of the many things to be noted, even though space limitations prevent giving the same attention to the Arabic peninsula or Turkey. Chapter 8 presents the scope of European music, with all its variety, through the prism of the city of Vienna.

One of our purposes is to explain music as a cultural phenomenon. We do hope to persuade the readers to listen to music of at least some of the world's many societies and to find it enjoyable. But the idea that music is principally to be "enjoyed" is a notion characteristic of Western culture, not necessarily shared by other societies. Indeed, much of the music we will be discussing has purposes far beyond enjoyment. The significance of much of the world's music is in the realm of religion and society, in the way humans interact with the supernatural and with each other. In some societies, music identifies clans and social classes, confirms political status, expresses communication from the supernatural, and cures the sick. Thus, although readers will want to know how

the musical pieces of the world's cultures are put together and what general principles of composition may dominate in a given society, it is perhaps even more important for them to understand each culture's ideas of what music is, what its powers are, how it relates to other aspects of life, and how it reflects important things about its people and their view of the world. For this reason, although we wish to explain the nature of musical sound, we also have tried to present a holistic picture of musical life and musical culture.

NOTES ON THE *MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*

Our purpose is to present the varieties of the world's musics and to present several ways of looking at music, all of them necessary for understanding a particular work of music as it interacts with its culture in many ways. The world's music includes the music of Western culture, and we illustrate our approach first by commenting on a work familiar to many readers, Mozart's opera, *The Marriage of Figaro* (originally named *Le Nozze di Figaro*). Its structure is an alternation of recitatives, in which the action is carried forward through quick dialogue barely sung, with arias and vocal ensembles such as trios and quartets, in which characters make lyrical and contemplative statements or react to what has just happened. Knowing this tells us something about the aesthetics and, if you will, the attention span of the patrons. But it also tells us about the relationship of opera to spoken drama, about the way Mozart and other composers of his time, and their audience, perceived the relationship of music and language.

The fact that this is an opera with Italian words about events in Spain perhaps a century earlier, composed by a German-speaking Austrian for a German-speaking audience in Vienna, speaks to this relationship as well. The well-educated audience of patrons for whom *Figaro* was composed presumably understood Italian and felt that this knowledge set them off from the general population, which would have wished for operas in German, and so we see this work as directed toward an elite segment of society. But this elite also comes in for criticism in the content of the opera, because the plot actually depicts a kind of social revolution. *Figaro*, the lowly but clever barber, wants to protect his fiancée from having to spend the night before their honeymoon with his boss, the count; this was, at the time the opera took place, part of the contract between landowners and their employees. *Figaro* succeeds, of course, without violence and through his wit, and everyone lives happily ever after, but when this opera was first presented, it definitely raised the eyebrows of the Austrian aristocracy.

Mozart was not widely regarded as a great genius in his own day, but now he holds that status among classical music historians. In his lifetime (1756–1791), the concept of “great master” of music had not really been developed, and when they were writing music, composers did not expect it to become great art for all times. Today, *Figaro* is considered one of the great musical works of all times, but in its day it was seen, at best, to be fine entertainment. In

Mozart's time, the difference in musical style between academic music and music for popular entertainment wasn't all that great; the two sounded rather alike. Around 1800 this began to change, and today we expect academic music, what we call "classical" or "art" music, to sound quite different from popular music.

By now Mozart has become a deity among composers, and much is said and written about the greatness of *Figaro*. In today's American society, the concepts of genius and talent, innate abilities that set an artist apart, are important to musical culture. Underlying these beliefs are the oft-repeated stories that Mozart already composed acceptable music at the age of seven and that he composed masterworks with enormous speed, as if they sprang ready-made from his brain. We have developed, it seems, a kind of athletic view of music: We are impressed when something takes many hours to accomplish, or when someone can carry out significant work quickly, or when a composer or performer can accomplish an extremely difficult task of memory or dexterity. A quick look at *The Marriage of Figaro* tells us certain essential things about the culture of Mozart's time, but more significantly, because this opera is an important component of musical life today, it also conveys the musical values and attitudes of the musical culture of at least some North Americans.

But these observations raise several questions. For one thing, the members of one society such as those of the United States don't necessarily share musical identities and values. Those of us for whom classical music is the "home" music have different criteria for judging music than those whose normal musical experience is rock music, or country music, or hip-hop, or church music, or some of the many genres of African American or Hispanic music. And of course, the attitudes that make some of us extol Mozart and *Figaro* may not be the attitudes of other societies. For example, possessing great technical skill may not have been a criterion for judging a song in most Native American societies, and the concept of the musical work as something that may not be altered and must always be performed as the composer intended it is not relevant to understanding the music of India.

But it also would be a mistake to see the musical world as bifurcated, the classical tradition with its masterworks such as *Figaro* on one side and the rest of the world's music on the other. *Figaro* actually fits well into the world's musical picture. Many societies have drama rather like opera, in which the characters sing; many have forms of communication that, like Italian recitative, fall between ordinary speech and song; in many societies, music is used to express criticism of society. Social elites everywhere have musical ways of symbolizing their superiority: artistic resources such as the orchestra, linguistic techniques such as having opera in a foreign language. And we will need to remember that just as the European view of Mozart has changed since his death, all societies change in their views of music as well as in their musical styles. And, further, although Western academic musical culture requires constant innovation and rapid change as a hallmark of its series of masterworks, other societies may restrict and inhibit change as detrimental to the

function of music. The ideas about music that a society has, and contexts of creation and performance, help us to understand the music itself, which in turn provides insight into the values that led to it and the culture of which it is a part.

CERTAIN BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In presenting the world's musical cultures, these chapters employ certain basic assumptions.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

- A relativistic view (no musical style is “better” than another)
- World music embraces a group of musics
- The three-part model: Sound, behavior, and conception or ideas

A Relativistic View

If *The Marriage of Figaro* is a great work of music, this must be because for its consumers—Europeans and Americans who listen to operas—it satisfies certain criteria: It is a work of great complexity; its structure has internal logic; it has harmony and counterpoint, whereby several simultaneous melodies are both independent and united; the composer shows an ability to write music particularly suited to voices, instruments, and orchestra, and facility in relating words and music; the work carries a particular social and spiritual message; and so on. Using these criteria to judge the musics of other cultures would quickly lead us to conclude that Western music is the best and greatest. But from the viewpoint of an Indian musician, whose task is improvising within a framework of melodic and rhythmic rules, the performers of *Figaro* might not come off so well, because they must reproduce an existing work precisely and rely on notation to keep them from deviating, thus finding little opportunity to be creative. A Native American who considers a song to be a way for spirits to communicate with humans might marvel at the counterpoint of Bach, but he might also feel that this whole notion of what is “good” or “better” (or “lousy”) music makes no sense. Performers in a West African percussion ensemble might find the melodic and harmonic structure of *Figaro* interesting, but its rhythms simple-minded.

As students of all the world's music, we cannot reconcile these divergent viewpoints. We are better off taking a relativistic attitude. We—the authors—believe that each society has a musical system that suits its culture, and although we may compare them with each other in terms of their structure and

function, we avoid making these comparisons the basis of qualitative judgments. Instead, we recognize that each society evaluates its own works of music by its own criteria. In American society, we take it for granted that music should be an enjoyable auditory experience; elsewhere, the musical ideal may be quite different. We want to understand each music as an aspect of its own culture, and we recognize that each human community creates the kind of music it needs for its particular rituals and cultural events, to support its social system, and thus, to reflect its principal values.

World Music Is a Group of Musics

We see the world of music as consisting of a group of *musics*. It makes sense to think of *a* music somewhat as if it were something like a language. Each society—a people or nation, but more typically an ethnic group—has its own principal music, and the members of a society know and respond to their music with a kind of common understanding, in the way they communicate through their language. But whereas few people know more than a couple of languages, many people learn to appreciate and respond to musics other than their “own.” Still, most individuals have one music in which they feel most at home.

But just as languages borrow words from each other, musics also influence each other. Indeed, as mass media and the Internet facilitate worldwide communication, most people of the world have access to the same body of popular music. And just as a society sometimes replaces one language with another (the Anglo-Saxons learned Middle English after the Norman invasion in 1066, and native peoples of South America took up Spanish after 1500), a community of people may cease using their tradition of music and replace it with another. Some individuals and some entire communities are bilingual; this is true of many North American Native American peoples today. Similarly, many Native American communities are “bimusical,” using traditional Native American music and Western music equally but for different purposes, considering both to now be their cultural property.

If the world of music can be seen as a large group of *musics*, each music can be interpreted as a system, in the sense that when one component is changed, that causes changes in the others as well. A couple of imaginary examples: If a society begins using the Western piano to perform its traditional musical repertory, its melodies might be affected by the ubiquity and multiplicity of chords, easy and normal on the piano, but unusual on the older instruments. Bringing in the piano might also cause performance contexts to change. Consider, for example, a kind of music performed by traveling street musicians. If this music were taken up by the piano, it would no longer be possible to perform it while traveling, and if the piano were located in a concert hall, the idea of what this music should be and do would also change radically. Or, imagine a culture in which most music is improvised and transmitted orally. Bringing in the piano with its notated exercises for learning virtuosic technique might make musicians increase their respect for the performance of complex composed pieces that are best transmitted through notation and decrease their interest in improvising.

The Three-Part Model

This leads us to the third basic assumption. Using a model suggested by Alan P. Merriam, we look at music as a phenomenon that has three sides to it: sound, behavior, and conception or ideas. These three are closely interrelated, as each plays a role in determining the nature of the others.

Let me illustrate. At a concert, we sit to hear musicians make sounds, and that to us is music. But if it's a classical piano recital, the performer usually plays as if she were alone and acknowledges the audience only when bowing before and after the numbers. If it's a folk concert, the singer always addresses the audience, makes jokes about himself, and sings "at" the audience. If it's an orchestra concert, the audience sits quietly; if a rock concert, members of the audience may make all sorts of sounds or get up and dance. These different kinds of behavior are really just as important to the music as a social and aesthetic event as are the sounds.

Now imagine a church service. The congregation sings a hymn, but the minister doesn't think, "My, they sang that hymn badly today; last week it was much better." The idea behind this music is that the congregation communicates with God, and musical virtuosity isn't an issue. But at the same service, the organist improvises on a theme by Bach during the offertory and does this so well that each of the members of the music committee, listening in the congregation, determines to renew the organist's contract and give her a raise.

Imagine now a Native American medicine man. He has experienced a vision in which he was visited by his guardian spirit, Muskrat, who sang a song for him. The man does not say to himself, "This was a particularly beautiful song I learned," but rather perhaps, "This song has a lot of power," and he

Close view of peyote cacti (*Lophophorus williamsii*) being held by a Native American medicine man. Source: National Geographic Image Collection. Ira Block/National Geographic Image Collection.



would be sure to remember it precisely and not forget a note of it. But Mozart, suddenly inspired with one of his grand themes, may have said to himself, "This tune that came to me is really fine, I had better change it, fix it, work it out so it will be just right." To be properly understood, music should be studied as a group of sounds, as behavior that leads to these sounds, and as a group of ideas or concepts that govern the sound and the behavior.

So, in considering the music of the world's societies, the following chapters will concentrate on music as sound, or "the music itself" and also on the kinds of activities music accompanies that go into music-making and the consumption of music by audiences and communities, and also on the ideas about music that a society has. It is actually this third area that seems to be paramount, because it is the basic ideas about music—what it does for human society and how it relates to other components of culture such as religion, economic life, class structure, relationship of genders—that determine in the end the quality of a society's musical life. The ideas about music determine what the contexts for music will be and how the music will sound. If, for example, innovation is an important component of the system of ideas about music, the music will change frequently. If the notion of masterworks is present in the culture, great technical complexity and stylistic uniqueness may characterize its pieces. If the idea of conformity is important, well-disciplined orchestral performances may result. If individualism is important, then solo performances or improvised jam sessions may be the musical counterpart. If a society has complex music, then the notion of virtuosity in the realm of ideas may be reinforced, and social contexts for performances by virtuosi may be established.

UNIVERSALS OF MUSIC

Throughout the following chapters, the reader will be struck by the great differences among musics. Each society has a unique musical system related to the character of its culture. The most important thing that the reader should take away from this book is the enormous diversity in the world's music in sound, behavior, and ideas. But are there not some things about music that all, or

UNIVERSALS

- All societies have music.
- All people sing.
- Music is used in religious rituals to experience the supernatural.
- Musical genres occur in all societies (such as songs associated with the seasons; children's songs; work songs).
- "Songs" or "pieces" are identified and distinguished from each other as a common musical "unit."

virtually all, societies share? There surely are, and we use, for them, the term *universals*.

The most obvious universal is music itself: All societies, to our knowledge, at least have something that sounds to us like music. Not many societies have a concept of music for which they have one word, like our “music.” In the Persian language (spoken in Iran), there is one word for instrumental music and another for vocal. The Blackfoot language has a word for “song,” but it includes dancing and ritual as well as music-making. Certain African languages have no term for music but a separate term for each of many genres of song. But all societies do have music in the sense that all have some kind of vocal production (to us it may sound like song, or chant, or ceremonial speech), which they themselves distinguish from ordinary speech. So, we are justified in identifying music, and especially vocal music, as a cultural universal. But the matter is complicated. For Americans, music is a broad concept—it may be vocal or instrumental, sacred or secular, solo or ensemble—and it has its metaphoric extensions, such as the notion that a “pleasant” sound is said to be “musical,” that birds sing and elephants trumpet. But actually not all societies share our idea that all of these sounds—singing and instruments, ritual and entertainment, human and animal—can be brought together under one conceptual umbrella.

The first musical universal, then, is singing. All peoples sing. Virtually all peoples also have instruments, though in some instances they are very rudimentary. And in the realm of instruments, virtually all peoples have percussion instruments. The most widespread are rattles and notched sticks that are rubbed, with drums actually not quite so universal. Virtually all peoples, even the most isolated tribal societies, have some kind of flutes. And everywhere one finds singing that is accompanied by percussion.

There are universals in the way music functions in societies—the “behavior” and “ideas” part of our three-part model. In all societies, music is used in religious rituals—almost everywhere it is a mainstay of sacred ceremonies—leading some scholars to suggest that perhaps music was actually “invented” for humans to have a special way of communicating with the supernatural. And, too, it seems that in all cultures music is used in some sense for transforming ordinary experience, producing anything from trance in a ritual to ecstasy or edification in a concert. Everywhere, dance is accompanied by musical sound. And everywhere, too, an important function of music is helping society to reinforce boundaries between social groups, who almost universally view their music as an emblem of identity. Music is used to integrate society and to provide a way of showing its distinctiveness.

Most societies, urban and rural, traditional and modernized, share some important genres of music. These include ritual and religious music; ritual calendric music (music appropriate to certain times in the year’s cycle, such as winter solstice, spring, harvest songs; and music appropriate to rituals in the course of life, such as songs for adolescent ceremonies, wedding music, and funeral music); children’s game songs; songs somehow involving love and romance; narrative music (everything from folk ballads to music for dramas and

Bermudian Gombey dancer with a mask covering his face.
Photographer: Doug Traverso.
Source: Robert Harding World Imagery.



operas); music for entertainment (evening family sings or concerts); and music to accompany labor (work songs or factory background music).

Returning to universals in musical sound, music everywhere is presented in units that can be identified as “songs” or “pieces,” with some kind of identity, a name, opus number, ritual designation, or owner. Nowhere do people “just” sing; they always sing *something*, and in this respect, music contrasts with some other art forms, such as dance. And everywhere, people can recognize and identify a tune or a rhythmic pattern, tell whether it is performed high or low or sung by a man or a woman.

There is then the question of the innate musicality of humans. We know that all normal humans inherit the ability to learn language—it is somehow “hardwired” in the human brain—but whether the same is true of music, whether all humans are basically musical is not clear, in part because cultures differ so much in their conception of “singing.” Yet it seems likely that (with the occasional exception of individual handicaps) all humans can learn to sing minimally, to beat rhythms accurately, and to recognize simple pieces. Not all can attain professional proficiency; but then, although all humans can learn to speak, not all can become great orators. The world’s societies differ in the degree to which they encourage individuals to participate in music. In some rural societies, most people are considered about equally good at singing, and everyone participates in music-making at public events. In many urban societies, musical participation is largely limited to listening to live music and even more to recordings, whereas performance is left professionals with training and with the ascription of special talent.

The world’s societies also differ greatly in the participation of men and women in music. In earlier times in Europe and North America and in certain devout Muslim nations of the Middle East, public performance by women was discouraged, and in some Native American societies, women were traditionally thought to lack musical ability. By contrast, in some traditional rural European cultures, women were the main transmitters of music and the prime participants in folkloric activities. In virtually all the world’s societies, the late twentieth century saw a significant trend toward equalization of participation by gender, and musical roles that were once reserved for men (e.g., playing trumpet or singing in a Native American powwow group) are now filled by women as well.

If music is a cultural universal, it is not a universal language. Language is a human attribute, but humans speak many mutually unintelligible languages. Music is found in all cultures, but the world of music consists of musics that are not mutually compatible.

MUSICAL TRANSMISSION, HISTORY, AND CHANGE

It is tempting to think of Western music as dynamic and all other musics as static. We often hear about the “Stone Age” music of tribal peoples and that the music, say, of China and India is very ancient. But all musics have a history,

MUSIC TRANSMISSION, HISTORY, AND CHANGE

- Different cultures' music are affected differently when they come into contact with other musical cultures.
- In many societies, music is often transmitted aurally (by being heard).
- Western music favors notation for preserving musical compositions.
- In the twentieth century, Western music has spread throughout the world with profound results.
- Today, all kinds of music seem to be available to everyone everywhere, leading to new musical styles.

and all music changes, has always been changing, though at various rates and not always in the same direction. It would be foolish to assume that the music of India, because it is largely melodic and without harmony, somehow represents an "earlier stage" through which Western music has already passed, or that Europeans, in the days when they lived in tribes, had music similar to that of Native Americans. Musics do not uniformly change from simple to complex. Each music has its own unique history, related to the history of its culture, to the way people adapt to their natural and social environment. The patterns we may discern in the world's music history usually have to do with the relationships of cultures to one another. Thus, in the twentieth century, as Western culture has affected most others, most non-Western musics now show some influences of Western music. However, the results of this influence vary from culture to culture.

For example, when (shortly after 1800) the violin was introduced into the music of South India, it was incorporated into the Indian soundscape and began to be used in imitation of the Indian singing style. The same instrument, when introduced to Iran, brought with it the Western sound of violin playing, thus effecting changes in the Iranian notion of how music should sound. Brought to Amerindian peoples in the southwestern United States, it motivated the Navajo and Apache to develop the single-string "Apache fiddle," combining aspects of the violin and the traditional hunting bowlike musical bow.

One of the things that determines the course of history in a musical culture is the method of transmission. In most societies, music lives in oral (or better, "aural") tradition; that is, it is passed on by word of mouth and learned by hearing live performance. It is often assumed that this form of transmission inevitably causes songs to change; each person inevitably will develop his or her own variant, because there is no "notation" (either in print or a sound recording) to remind them of the "original" or "correct" version. Societies differ, however, in their attitude toward musical stability; to some it is important that a song remain stable and unchanged, whereas in others individual singers are encouraged to have their personal versions. In aural traditions, music perhaps cannot go beyond a certain degree of complexity, because limits of memory and

the number of different “hands” through which the music passes will probably eventually lead to some change; add to this different performing situations, with more or fewer singers and instrumentalists, and the difficulty of preserving an “original” version increases.

Western academic music is traditionally notated, and there are also notation systems for some Asian musics, although these are usually not as detailed as the Western style and are not normally used by performers while they play or sing. Notated traditions also may be divided into written and printed. Musical notation appeared in Europe long before the development of music printing in the late fifteenth century, but the number of handmade copies of one piece was inevitably small, and they could differ. The change from written to printed music surely led to a different set of ideas about the nature and stability of a musical work. The development of sound recording has affected both aural and written traditions, as a recording allows someone learning a piece to hear it repeatedly in identical form, incorporating those aspects of music often inadequately represented in Western notation, such as tone, color, ornaments, and phrasing. The nature of a musical tradition is affected greatly by the way it is transmitted and by the way its content is taught and learned.

If music has always been changing, it has surely changed more than ever before since the late nineteenth century, especially in the period since 1950. Among the reasons are

1. The colonization of most of the world by Western nations and, after 1945, the increased political and economic integration of nations that were formerly colonies into a global system
2. The incredible advances in communication by mass media, airlines, and computer networks
3. The dissemination of Western and Middle Eastern cultural values through the diffusion of Christianity and Islam throughout much of the world

The musical world in the late twentieth century is much more homogeneous than it was some three hundred years ago. Musical styles everywhere have begun to partake of the sounds of Western (and often Middle Eastern) music. Western-style harmony, synthesizers, and instrumental ensembles have come to pervade much of the world's music, as have Islamic singing styles and African-derived percussion rhythms. Much of this is a layer of music added to the older traditions, and so the diversity of musics available within each society has increased. One may argue that the musics of the world are becoming more alike, and that a cultural gray-out is developing, but we also need to recognize that because of the globalization of communication, the variety of music available to each individual has increased enormously. Each society maintains, and correctly, that it has a music with at least a certain degree of uniqueness.

For most of human history, the world's musics lived in relative isolation from each other. True, Christianity and Islam spread Western and Middle Eastern musical sounds throughout the world, African musical sounds were spread through the Americas as a result of the slavery system, and in the twentieth century,

composers of art and popular music made increasing use of inspirations from the world's musics. Instruments have always traveled from country to country, continent to continent. But these kinds of exchange are modest compared to the ways music from everywhere has become available throughout the world as a result of the ubiquity of CDs, computer technology, and the Internet and also through the increase in international diasporic migration and large-scale tourism. It would seem that virtually all kinds of music are available to peoples everywhere, at least in urban societies, and thus that the musical distinction between peoples is receding to a point at which all cultures begin to be musically almost alike. At the same time, the diversity of musical experience of each person has increased enormously, as all of us can hear recordings (and often live performances) of all musics. It used to be mainly peoples who differed from each other; now it is just as much the differences among the musical experiences and lives of individuals that characterizes the world's music.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Virtually all cultures have musical instruments. In one sense, there is an infinite variety of instruments, but there is also a good deal of similarity among instruments across cultures. Bowed, stringed instruments held vertically, such as the cello, appear throughout Asia, Europe, and parts of Africa. As we have just seen in the case of the Apache fiddle, they probably developed in the native cultures of the Americas as a result of culture contact with Europeans. Xylophone-like instruments were highly developed in Indonesia, Africa, and Central America. Flutes, drums, and rattles are found throughout the world. Yet each culture has its own version of an instrument type, its own set of ideas about it, and its own terminology. Thus, the African instrument sometimes known as “thumb-piano” or “finger-xylophone”—its metal or reed keys are actually attached to a bridge and plucked, and therefore it is neither a piano nor a xylophone—is known in African languages as mbira, sansa, kalimba, likembe, kasai, and many other names.

What to call such an instrument in scholarly literature or even in this book? Whenever possible, we use the native designation—*sitar* instead of “North Indian lute,” *erbu* instead of “Chinese spike fiddle.” In some cases of terminological variety, one term has come to be widely used; for the thumb-piano, for example, *mbira* is now the most common term. But for more general groupings, it is useful to draw on a classification of instruments.

Musicians in Western culture use a fourfold grouping—strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion—that is actually derived not from the nature of the instruments themselves but from their roles in the eighteenth-century orchestras of Mozart and Haydn, as each group fulfilled certain functions in the music. This is a European kind of classification that one needs to know to understand European ideas about music, but most of the world's cultures have their own ways of classifying instruments. To talk about instruments of different cultures comparatively, however, students of world music commonly use a



African San women playing lamellaphones (thumb-pianos known in Africa as mbiras or sansas) on the ground.

Photographer: Anthony Bannister/Gallo Images.

Source: Corbis/Bettmann.

classification system that divides instruments into four main groups on the basis of the way in which the sound is produced. Developed by two prominent German scholars of the early twentieth century, Erich M. von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs, it is actually based on the way a Belgian museum curator, Victor Mahillon, arranged a large and varied instrument collection in Brussels in the nineteenth century, and ultimately it goes back to a way of grouping instruments in philosophical treatises of India.

One of the four classes consists of aerophones, basically wind instruments, subdivided into flutelike, trumpetlike, and reed instruments, among others. A second is chordophones, or stringed instruments. These are divided principally into zithers, which consist of sets of strings stretched in parallel fashion along a board, and lutes, on which strings are stretched along a fingerboard and its attached resonator. Most of the stringed instruments of Western culture—violins, double basses, guitars, and mandolins—are “lutes” that are bowed or plucked. A third group is idiophones, instruments whose bodies themselves vibrate. Among these are rattles, xylophones, bells, gongs, and many other instruments that are struck or rubbed. This is actually the largest group of instruments by far, and there are societies that have representatives of this class only and of no other. Fourth, there are membranophones, instruments in which a membrane vibrates—basically the drums.

Each of these classes is elaborately subdivided, so that the system provides a space for each of the world's instruments and perhaps even for instruments not yet discovered. A fifth category, developed long after Hornbostel and Sachs published their scheme, has been suggested: electrophones, instruments that depend on electric power for producing and synthesizing sounds and for

CLASSIFICATION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Aerophones (Wind instruments)

- Fluelike
- Trumpetlike
- Reeds

Chordophones (String instruments)

- Zithers
- Lutes

Idiophones ("Self" vibrators)

- Rattles/shakers
- Gongs
- Xylophone

Membranophones (Membrane instruments or drums)

Electrophones (Electronic instruments)

- Synthesizer
- Computers

amplification. These would include modern synthesizers and computers, as well as electric guitars and electric organs, and also older developments such as the Theremin, invented in 1920, whose performer moves the hands above the instrument without touching it.

WHY DIFFERENT CULTURES HAVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MUSIC

Why do different cultures favor different types of music, and what is it that determines the particular music that a culture has? Why indeed did Western music develop its pervasive system of harmony, and why do Native Americans of the North American plains sing in a harsh and tense manner, and why do sub-Saharan African peoples stress rhythmic complexity and the concept of improvised variation? Though these are the questions that we may wish ultimately to answer in this book, we will not be able to do so definitively.

But we can suggest some answers. Some factors should be eliminated from serious consideration at the outset. One is the genetic. There is no evidence that the musical style of a society is determined by heredity. It is true, for example, that black societies in Africa and the New World share certain musical traits; these are not, however, the result of the same factors that determine their physical similarity, but come rather from their common African cultural roots. After all, it has been amply demonstrated by such artists as

Zubin Mehta, Yo-Yo Ma, and Seiji Ozawa that members of non-Western societies can become leading musicians in the sphere of Western music, and despite the problems occasioned by exposure delayed until adult life, some Americans and Europeans have become accepted as excellent performers of African and Indian music. As is the case with language, anyone can learn any music, but to become as much at ease and as proficient as a native, to speak musically without accent, requires exposure early in life or special talent and effort.

We should also eliminate the notion that all musics pass through a set of stages, and that we can explain the variety of world musics by suggesting that we are observing each of them at a different stage of the same development. It is possibly true that musics evolve in a sense similar to that of biological species. But just as it was not inevitable that “lower” species would eventually lead to humans, it is not inevitable (or even likely) that a non-Western music would gradually change to become like Western music. Rather, the concept of evolution suggests that musical systems change in accordance with the needs of the social environment to be able to survive.

Take, for example, the role of music in human migration. In the late nineteenth century, many European peasants moved to North America in search of jobs and a higher standard of living, settling in cities and becoming factory workers. They brought with them their rural folk songs from Poland, Italy, Rumania, or Greece to Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago. But in these cities they no longer needed ritual songs to accompany agricultural festivals, social songs to sing on the village square while courting, or narrative ballads to entertain on evenings, because instead they worked in factories, went to high school dances, and watched television. They did need music, however, to help remind them of their European heritage and of their special origins. Therefore, folk songs passed down in aural tradition became national songs learned from songbooks and taught in classes on Saturday mornings and sung at special Polish or Hungarian concerts. In the course of these kinds of performances, they changed from melodies sung unaccompanied to choral settings with harmony, and from songs that existed in many variants to standardized versions. In this way, the music changed to satisfy a new social need. (This, however, is only one of many types of process that occurred. For example, some immigrants maintained their older song styles/tunes despite the new lifestyles into which they had entered. We may say that in this case, music was used to contradict and balance the prevailing changes in sociocultural organization.)

This suggests that a society develops its music in accordance with the character of its social system. Although such a statement surely does not account for all the aspects of a music or all the differences among musics, it may come closest to answering the general question previously raised. A typical ensemble in South Indian classical music has a clear hierarchy, somewhat along the lines of the Hindu caste system. The solo vocalist is highest and most prestigious, socially and musically; the accompanying drummer is next, followed by the accompanying violinist, the second percussionist, and finally the player of the drone instrument. Among the Mbuti pygmies of Zaire, an egalitarian society

with no formal leadership, musical ensembles also have no formal leaders, and the singers in choruses blend their voices.

The Western symphony orchestra began to develop seriously about the time of the Industrial Revolution. It is in effect a factory for producing music, in which group precision plays a great role, as does specialization. Each section has its boss, the concertmaster is a kind of factory foreman, and the conductor, who is symbolically different, making no sounds but standing on a pedestal and getting his or her name on the recording package, represents management. In those societies in which the social roles of men and women are extremely different, the genders have separate repertoires and different ways of using the voice. It has been suggested that those societies in which there is good cooperation and relative equality create large ensembles in which this cooperation is reflected, whereas others in which a part of the population is dominated by an elite develop soloistic music.

Let's not carry the argument too far. Surely music is created in part to support and symbolize important aspects of culture, but it also has other functions; for example, it may counteract rather than support the dominant cultural characteristics. There are societies in which one may say in music what one may not express in words and cultures in which music and musicians represent deviation from societal norms. And yet, if we wish to identify what it is that determines the nature of a music, we should look first to the general character of its culture and particularly the types of relationships among people within its society and to the way the society relates to other societies.

THE FIELD OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The subject of this book properly belongs to the field of ethnomusicology. Ethnomusicology is not the study of particular musics—such as “ethnic” musics—but of all music, from particular perspectives. On the one hand, ethnomusicologists look at any musical culture from a world perspective; they consider the world of musics as a context for the study of any particular music. They are interested in music as it fits into human culture, and as it relates to, affects, and is affected by the other domains of human culture. But in recent times, ethnomusicologists have paid particular attention to music in political contexts, in music and racial and ethnic identity, music and gender studies, in intercultural relations, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and globalization. (Examples of these approaches are presented in the following chapters.) Ethnomusicologists have also participated in important developments in the biological evolution of music, in psychology of music, and in music education.

Ethnomusicologists customarily regard themselves as either members of the discipline of musicology (the scholarly study of music from historical and social viewpoints) or of sociocultural anthropology (the study of humans with emphasis on culture). Some have, therefore, defined ethnomusicology as the anthropological study of music. But most ethnomusicologists, even the ones



Ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore recording an interpretation of a Blackfoot song performed by Mountain Chief. Source: Corbis/Bettmann.

who consider themselves to be anthropologists first, are musicians of some sort; that is, they have studied music formally or informally and have some background as performers of classical or popular music.

How and why do people enter the field of ethnomusicology? Typically, because they came into contact with the music of some “other” culture, and fell in love with it and determined to learn how to perform it, study the society from which it came, and figure out—if we can put it that way—how it functions in its society and how it is created and transmitted. Most ethnomusicologists are specialists in one culture, but many eventually study a second culture, in part for comparative perspective. Virtually all who pursue graduate study specializing in ethnomusicology take equal amounts of work in music departments and in departments providing training in the study of culture, history, and the analysis of musical life from the viewpoint of social sciences, such as anthropology and area studies, and it is important for them, as well, to attain proficiency in the languages of the cultures in which they will do research. Fieldwork is the most characteristic aspect of ethnomusicological research, but much energy is also devoted to transcribing music from recordings to notation, analyzing interviews, and explicating musical life in the context of theories derived from anthropology and other social sciences.

Fieldwork is a very personal activity, but all fieldwork depends on close interaction with members of a society—musicians and others—who become one’s teachers and informants. The quality of the interaction depends on the type of project and on the fieldworker’s personality—whether it is shy or outgoing—the person’s gender and age, ethnic background, family status, and much more. But there is no doubt that ethnomusicological research as a whole owes an enormous debt to the musicians of the world who have undertaken to teach their musical system to outsiders, hoping that their students will “get it

right” and represent them properly. Field projects vary enormously. Many students of Indian music spend most of their time with one teacher, becoming disciples and learning the musical system through one musician’s perspective. Others survey by making large numbers of sound or video recordings. Others spend most of their time interviewing intensively. Detailed description of events such as rituals or concerts may be the focus. Most typically, a fieldworker does all of this. These activities must be carried out at the convenience of the teachers, who have their own lives to lead. At the same time, the fieldworker must cope with practical problems of keeping house, dealing with medical, bureaucratic, and equipment problems, while striving to learn the nuances of a foreign language. Gathering the kinds of information provided in this book required much hard work on the part of many. Yet direct experience in the field provides a depth of understanding unavailable through secondary sources.

In the most recent two or three decades, a few important developments have caused fieldwork to change. Most nations and ethnic groups now produce and market recordings, videos, and DVDs of their own music, and this has changed the role of field recording from broadly documenting everything that may be available to one for accommodating special projects (see the project for Persian improvisation described in Chapter 3). Increasingly, ethnomusicological research is also carried out by scholars who come from the cultures they study, and there are now ethnomusicologists in virtually all of the world’s nations, carrying out studies in their home territory and abroad.

Before c. 1970, most ethnomusicologists—and they were largely North American and European—concentrated on traditional music of non-Western and folk cultures, which had been unaffected by Western music and musical practices. They avoided the many kinds of music in which style elements from various cultural sources were combined; for example, they might avoid Middle Eastern music performed on the piano, or African music using European chordal harmony; as a result, they avoided the study of popular musics in the world’s cultures. But now, realizing that most of the world’s music is, in fact, the result of cultural mixes, ethnomusicology is perhaps more concerned with popular musics of the whole world than any other music. And finally, North American and European ethnomusicologists have begun to look at their own musical culture, trying to see what they would learn if they addressed to their own institutions and organizations the kinds of questions that had been helpful to them in learning to understand foreign cultures.

Courses in ethnomusicology in the United States and Canada are most commonly offered in music departments (but in a few cases in anthropology), and most ethnomusicologists who are university teachers serve in departments or schools of music. Since about 1980, ethnomusicologists have begun to participate in recent developments of academic work such as gender studies, critical and interpretive theory, and the study of popular culture, and they have begun, increasingly, to examine their own cultures and to look analytically at the relationship between themselves as scholars and the culture they are observing, realizing that the identity and position of observers are major factors

in the resulting interpretation. And although direct analysis of music, beginning with the transcription of recordings into notation and the study of performance in the field, continues to be important, the mainstream of ethnomusicological thought has moved increasingly to the understanding of music and the role it plays in the world's societies and cultures.

With their variety of backgrounds and interests, ethnomusicologists comprise an extremely diverse population of academics. They do have this in common: They try to combine their own detached observations as cultural outsiders with the views of a society about its own musical culture. The following chapters attempt to maintain this combination of perspectives.

SUMMARY

- World music is made up of a diversity of musical cultures.
- No music is *intrinsically* better than any other (relativistic view).
- Music should be studied as sound, behavior, and idea/conception (Merriam's three-part approach).
- In virtually all of the world's cultures, music is normally transmitted orally/aurally.
- Change may occur as music travels from culture to culture, or country to country.
- Western music has had a profound impact on world music in the twentieth century.
- Musical styles appear to develop in relation to the social organization of each culture.
- Ethnomusicologists study world music, from the *perspective* of both music and culture.
- Fieldwork—recording and studying, and even learning to perform the music where it is made—is an *essential* part of the study of ethnomusicology.

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