

# Music Education and Cultural Identity

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## Abstract

*Renewed interest in the relationship between music education and cultural identity draws its vigor from strongly divergent sources. Globalized education and globalized musical culture supply new paradigms for understanding the central tasks of music education and their responsibility to a multicultural ethic of diversity, hybridity and difference. Yet recent anthropological studies of musical cognition and development emphasise both the centrality of ethnic and cultural particularism to the formation of musical awareness and the transcultural, factors in which such particularism is embedded. These seemingly contrasting perspectives on the relationship of music to culture and identity offer a fertile context for redefining the place of music education in the curriculum.*

Keywords: culture, globalization, identity, infancy, music, song

The links between music, education and the variegated discursive formations of cultural identity may appear to be unreflectively obvious, even intuitive, to the contemporary educator. Yet the easy conceptual identification of the relevant terms disguises deep fissures in the relationship between at least three mutually antagonistic perspectives on both the meaning of culture and the place of education in its ongoing legitimation. In the ideological struggle for control of the modern curriculum and its governing pedagogies, the expressive arts in general—and music in particular—have for the past fifty years been caught up in the rival claims of the nineteenth century *Kulturkritik* tradition, the Interculturalist movements of the post-imperial period (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 53–60) and the recent, aggressive, state-sponsored emphasis on economic instrumentalism and the performative calculation of educational value (Blake *et al.*, 2000, pp. 30–54).

*Kulturkritik*, in its classic European form, first arose in the later eighteenth century as a normative and effectively negative commentary on the emerging symbolic universe of capitalism, democracy and the embryonic institutions of mass industrial society, most especially education. Germany was the continental crucible of the *Kulturkritik* movement, with Herder the first public intellectual to call for the interrogation of *Zivilisation* by *Kultur* (Herder, 1774, pp. 179–224). England, Germany's major economic rival, swiftly became the second important centre, its efforts crystallized around the writings of the poet, critic and schools inspector Matthew Arnold. For Arnold, 'culture' held an intrinsically developmental moral

interest and application. Directed towards the ‘cultivation’ of all that was distinctively human in humanity, education in ‘culture’ provided for the formation of the ‘best self’ that might qualify and overrule the ‘ordinary selves’ of everyday class and sectional loyalty in an increasingly stratified society (Williams, 1961). Replacing religion, culture, as promulgated by Arnold, constituted the spiritual infrastructure of a renovated civil order and the governing principle of a good society, as binding in its domain, and as potentially commanding, as the apparatus of the state itself (Arnold, 1869). Arnold’s advocacy of this dogma became foundational in English-language educational thought in the early twentieth century and exercised a particular influence over the elaboration of the role of the expressive arts in the modern curriculum. The assumptions embedded in Arnold’s manifesto, with their adherence to the view that the norms of culture were self-evidently those of a generalised humanity, departed sharply, however, from the European idealist *Kulturkritik* traditions from which they originally derived. Despite a lingering Enlightenment attachment to the claims of *Humanität* and its advancement, Herder’s resolute defence of the mediating role of culture was always in reality avowedly plural and rigorously historicised. Cultures were, for Herder, the organic expressions of localised human communities, shaped in specific historical conjunctures and developing in response to the pressures of each unique environment and circumstance. The civilizing work of education could not ignore or smooth out such difference, but, instead, held forth the prospect of its institutional synthesis and affirmation in a higher form of celebratory organisation such as the tribe or nation: ‘Human nature is not the vessel of an absolute, unchanging and independent happiness ... Even the image of happiness changes with each condition and climate ... each nation has its centre of gravity within itself ...’ (Herder, 1774, pp. 185–6). Herder’s romantic counter-Enlightenment emphasis on culture as communal property and as the organic virtue of a clearly-defined people redraws the boundaries of Arnold’s essentialised humanism and in important respects anticipates the Intercultural aesthetics of the postcolonial period, providing them, indeed, with some of their important ethical and political bearings.

Music is central to Herder’s valorisation of an anterior indigenous ‘culture’ on which the work of education can perform its humanising tasks (Norton, 1991). It is soon obvious that his interpretation of the actual dynamics of musical exchange in primitive societies has little to do with preliterate or oral civilizations in the scientific or anthropological senses of these terms (Zammito, 2001). It is, nevertheless, Herder’s cultural imaginary, and the place of music within it, that exercises such a decisive influence over the critical history of music education in the nineteenth century and helps confirm the place of music in the curriculum of the post-Humboldtian schools and universities of Europe and, later, North America. Herder’s aesthetics illustrate the often unrecognised, and sometimes troubling, continuities between the *Kulturkritik* traditions of twentieth century expressive arts education and the radical Interculturalism from which so much contemporary music education draws its present vitality and with which it tries (naïvely perhaps) to resist the homogenising encroachments of a globalised, technocratic world. In a series of seminal works—most especially his *Volkslieder* of 1778–9 and *Calligone* of

1800—Herder articulated a vision of the primordial musical experience in which ‘living singers and hearers’ (Herder, 1830, 25: 314) participate in the formative mystique of cultural identification mutually nurtured by the self-transcending solidarity of communal song. There is no mention in Herder’s analysis of song of the noisy give and take of genuine preliterate cultural production; of precisely those vexatious features to which the structuring processes of music education are required to respond—the problems of memory and storage, the necessary redundancies, the laborious construction of a musical tradition. The voice of Herder’s archetypal singer is no real voice burdened by limitations of volume and projection, and his listeners are no real bodily assembly, galvanized by physical proximity. Above all, there is no mention of the rigorous educational discipline, the mnemotechnics, the schooling of the voice, the training in set forms characteristic of the music of authentic oral cultures. Music is not, for Herder, a technology of voice and performance, but rather the absolute internality of attentive absorption in singing and listening in which the imagined collectivity, in the inwardness of its audition, hears and submits to the originary song of its cultural imprint: ‘boundless and tireless, it flows in tender cascades, in repeating phrases and cadences, just as the ear of the people longed for’ (Herder, 1830, 25: 315; Booth, 1981)

Two complimentary procedures sustain the operation of primordial music that Herder’s thought endows with such overarching mythic dignity: the embodiment of the collectivity and the internalisation of musical sound. The group is unified as an individual subject absorbed in the phantasmatic effects of the voice that resonates within it, inscribing and reinforcing its interior life. The intimacy of the resultant emotional bond is captured in a powerful Herderian metaphor for the circuitry of voice and ear. The singing voice, ‘at the end of every line, closes our eyes and lays our heads in sleep so that they might awaken to new visions’ (Herder, 1830, 25: 315). The primitive rhapsode’s atavistic song before his rapt assembly of listeners—which is for Herder the primal scene of cultural performance and initiation—becomes a lullaby sung to a child and the donation of cultural identity is seen to emanate from an inherently maternal source. The work of music as the bearer of culture reproduces the salience of the mother-child dyad and shapes the template for all subsequent musical learning, requiring music almost uniquely among the arts to be configured as a vehicle for the communication of care, sympathy, intimate feeling and the emotional grammar of the fully affective, inculturated self (Nisbet, 1985).

Discharging this responsibility became, of course, enormously problematic for the nineteenth century Western classical tradition, the consolidation of which was to parallel the rise of mass education. The imbrication of European art music in the various ethnic, racial and nationalist liberation movements of the high imperial period, publicly proclaimed in the works of canonical composers such as Liszt, Smetana, Dvorak, Tchaikowski, Sibelius and—most notoriously—Richard Wagner, embroiled the processes of composition, performance and musical learning quite explicitly and irreversibly in the volatile politics of identity (Dahlhaus, 1998). The methodological backdrop to music education in both the metropolitan centres of European cultural production, such as the major conservatoires and music schools,

and the provincial teaching academies came swiftly to embody post-Herderian idealist concepts of ethnic particularism and folk belonging. As a result, the practice of music instruction assumed a central role in the formation and intensification of local and national cultural allegiance, vigorously supporting in the tuition of children the appreciation and reproduction of supposedly indigenous and ancestral musical forms (Labuta & Smith, 1997, pp. 24–48). The nature of these forms reflected the pervasive Romantic nostalgia for the rural, the pastoral and the feudal as the defining sources of unitary and binding cultural authenticity. Nineteenth century European orchestral music abounds in motifs of the hunt at just the point at which the practice of hunting was shifting from subsistence economics to recreation and artifice. The widespread elevation of the music of an imagined agrarian past, especially in the instruction of the young, underlined a growing belief in music as the key to the recovery of lost cultural patrimonies malignly submerged by the combined effects of imperial oppression and the dislocating yet homogenising forces of industrialisation. This movement in the history of European musical thought was destined to culminate in the hypernationalist catastrophe of Nazi musicology, with its spuriously racialised contrast of the allegedly Dorian mode of ‘Aryan’ music with repellent and alien chromaticism of ‘Jewish’ music. Nazi intellectuals invoked as precedence for their views Book 3 of the *Republic*, in which Plato describes the musical education of the leaders of his ideal society: an education to be based upon the severity and virility of the Dorian diatonic scale (Riethmuller, 2002, pp. 183–85). Specious though this reading was, the racialisation of Plato’s thought by Nazi musical eugenics, and the ease of its appropriation, revealed some of the contradictions and perils lying at the heart of the German idealist project and the ethical vulnerability of music and music education within it.

Recognising that the patterns of association linking together concepts of music, education and the possession of culture are invariably imaginary, interacting in complex forms with the material conditions of historical experience, goes some way towards releasing music education from the confines set by reified notions of identity and affiliation. Indeed, just such a process of emancipation has figured as an enabling ethic in many of the narratives of modern music education (Mark, 2002, pp. 287–291). The genealogy of the Western classical tradition and its complex relations with the teaching and learning of music continues to reveal, nonetheless, the enduring and perhaps insidious influence of representations routinely exposed as the discursive constructions of ideology and power. To this day, it remains unclear why the ancient Greeks labelled the various scales or melody-types with which they were familiar from tribal names (Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian etc). It is nevertheless apparent that these names were firmly associated by the Greeks with a series of supposed ethnic traits or dispositions of character believed to be embodied in the modes themselves (‘excitable’, ‘vigorous’, ‘ordered’ etc.) (West, 1992). This abiding association of musical forms with ethnicity may find a particularly elaborate formulation in the writings of Herder and his contemporaries, but the important strategic manoeuvre in both cases—and possibly recurring wherever Western musical thought has achieved dominance—is the rapid assimilation of seemingly

Interculturalist attitudes to an uncompromisingly *Kulturkritik* educational agenda. In the nineteenth century, the revolutionary revaluation of the music of the folk prompted idealistic efforts across Europe to retrieve fading vernacular musical and folksong traditions in which it was hoped the signatures of marginalised peoples or nations might be rediscovered. The undertaking began—regardless of its naïve or defective methodology—as a sincerely high-minded intercultural endeavour, an important act of resistance and renewal, contesting the bourgeois cultural hegemony of the great empires. It was quickly domesticated, however, as simply another expression of that same post-Kantian cultural regime it originally wished to question, universalised through the rationalist criteria of ‘taste’ as merely another standard of judgement by which all musical merit and ‘originality’ were to be measured. Shedding its affinities with the local and the organic, losing its roughness and inconsistency, it assumed the status of a transcultural aesthetic on which formal education in music, its performance and its appreciation, was to be based. Cultural distinctiveness was either erased or exoticised in this process, as the plethora of indigenous European musics first championed by Herder and his contemporaries lost even their imagined histories and merged into the totalizing discourse of the Classical and Romantic stylistic repertoires. An intervention in the forms of musical life that began as an assertion of difference became party to the institutional effacement of difference by the twin recuperative forces of art and education (Kramer, 1990).

This integral and longstanding reciprocity between the *Kulturkritik* expectations of European art music and the progressive, even subversive, aspirations of musical Interculturalism complicates the seeming divergence of outlook and purpose of the two perspectives, while problematising still further the tasks of contemporary music education, which is heir to both. The nineteenth century moment of innovation and recuperation has been several times recapitulated in the recent history of music education, exposing the permeable boundaries of apparently fixed or irreconcilable views of cultural life in the activities of the educated polity. Current controversies surrounding the role of music education in the promotion or interrogation of cultural identity have witnessed a Herder-like return to the fundamentals of musical apprehension and cultural fidelity—with uncertain results. The pursuit of an incontrovertible basis for a culturally coherent yet liberally inclusive music education has been drawn recently to the frontiers of ethnomusicology and cognitive psychology for its intellectual validation, searching out in the primary domain of Herder’s mother-child dyad a programmatic understanding of musical development that might ratify the claims of cultural specificity while avoiding rigidly hierarchical or dangerously essentialist correlations of musical awareness and ethnic or linguistic identity. Refuting the ‘blank slate’ social constructivism of the 1960s, psycholinguists have known for some time that every newborn human infant has a preference for the mother’s voice over any other woman’s voice, and equally over the father’s voice. Accepting that babies generally have a preference for low-frequency sounds, it seems clear that the baby’s exposure to the mother’s voice *in utero* accords mothers an adaptive advantage for their subsequent vocal and intersubjective engagements with their neonates (Spelke, 1999). The apparatus of the cochlea and

the transductive nerve cells of the sense of hearing become active in the foetus at about the seventh month, exposing the unborn child to a level of internal and environmental sound comparable to the acoustic envelope of an airfield. Recent research has shown that the conduction of the mother's voice down her back to the pelvic area not only leaves the fundamental vocal harmonics of her voice intact but also amplifies them into the human range of perception (DeCasper & Spence, 1986; Smith *et al.*, 2003). As the pregnancy nears term and the baby's head is finally engaged, the mother's pelvis, as a result of bone conduction, acts like a vibrating speaker resonating with the ivory-hard, crystalline structures of the baby's inner ear.

At birth, the baby's immediate auditory environment is much quieter than that of the womb. The low-frequency noises that dominate the womb have faded. At the same time, it is also evident that the hearing of newborns is significantly worse than that of adults. Owing to the immaturity of the outer ear and, particularly, the pre-pneumatised and subcalcified condition of the middle ear, babies have hearing thresholds that are of the order of 30 to 70 decibels higher than those of adults. Sounds therefore conduct to the nerve cells of the baby's inner ear far less efficiently than they do in an adult. In this partially deafened condition, newborn babies find themselves nonetheless suddenly exposed to a much wider range of frequencies than previously in their sensory experience. Non-nutritious suckling experiments have demonstrated that from as early as twelve hours after birth babies can differentiate their mother's voice from a stranger's voice (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980). Babies also have a preference for human voices over other sounds of a similar pitch and intensity and a bias towards generic sounds from within the human vocal range rather than those outside it (Eisenberg, 1975). Evidence for prenatal hearing is further manifest in infant crying. Analyses of the cries of babies born of English, Moroccan and Chinese mothers have shown that baby cries are ethnically and geographically specific, tuned as a result of *in utero* exposure to the intonations of their native languages (Moon *et al.*, 1993). These factors are of course crucial in subsequent language acquisition. The ability to hear differences between speech sounds appears to develop as early as the fourth day of life, by which time infants can differentiate the plosives *b-* and *p-*, the expressive registration of which is separated by one twenty-thousandth of a second. Comparisons of English and Chinese babies in the first month of life, exposed to the salient acoustic profiles of their native languages, show the babies able to detect semivowel sound-shifts from liquid *l-* to *r-*. By six months, the Chinese baby, immersed in Chinese home language, hears the two sounds as the same, while the English baby, for whom the difference is aurally contrastive and linguistically constitutive, hears them as distinct (Clarkson & Berg, 1983). The babies are already categorising sounds into the speech patterns they will have to learn as the building blocks of their, aptly named, mother tongues (Werker & Desjardins, 1995).

There is also now widespread acceptance that what are termed 'proto-musical' predispositions may help intensify the infant bond with both the biological mother and the native culture transmitted through the medium of her speaking and singing (Papousek, 1996). The acclaimed work of Sandra Trehub and her associates

powerfully suggests that the human infant is hardwired not only for the experience of music itself, but for the intersubjective response to the indigenous music subtly interwoven with the fabric of the mother's prenatal and immediately postnatal communications (Trehub *et al.*, 1997). In a remarkable echo of Herder's cradle-song trope, Maya Gratier's study of immigrant mother-infant dyads has demonstrated that the properties of the proto-musical interactions between mother and baby—the patterns of which remain remarkably consistent across cultures—can be destabilised as a consequence of the 'identity confusion' that immigrant mothers experience when marooned in unfamiliar societies where their vocalisations to their infants may become disorientated (Gratier, 1999). It appears that the communication of cultural rootedness, or its lack, penetrates the psychoacoustic cocoon of the instinctual musical exchange between adult and child, reinforcing the bonds that tie music to the emergent phenomena of personal and cultural identity. Theorists of music education have seized on findings of this kind to argue that those children who capitalise on their proto-musical capacities and study music from an early age show greater psychological and cultural adaptability when compared to those who are left untrained (Imberty, 2000). Musically literate adults, it is claimed, have stronger and faster neurological responses to multilateral and linguistic tasks associated with complex cultural negotiation, and certain parts of their brains, related to synthetic judgement and language processing, may well be larger or more responsive in many different categories of cognitive competence (Flohr *et al.*, 1996; Schlaug *et al.*, 1995; Gembris, 2002). Moving beyond the reductionism of the so-called 'Mozart effect', the weight of educational research strongly suggests that, as Herder first indirectly proposed, early musical experiences etch themselves indelibly on the templates of subjectivity, signalling the potential for music to alter the ratios of culture and identity across a range of emotional indices, from the individual through the interpersonal to the social (Dissanayake, 2000).

The cultural politics supported by ethnomusicological interpellations of this kind in the philosophy of music education remains imprecise and ambiguous. Evidence indicating even a weak form of biologically deterministic relationship between music and culture can be used to defend minority or marginalised musics from the hegemony of dominant musical and aesthetic regimes. Equally, it can be employed in the erection of ethnocentric barriers to multicultural interaction, diasporic hybridity and difference. Bhabha warns that the 'problem of cultural interaction emerges only at the signifiatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated.' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 121). Hybridisation unsettles univocal systems of authority, defamiliarising and disempowering the cultural centre by exposing its prior contamination by those forces of the periphery that it purposes either to subordinate or expel, and upon the exclusion of which its own coherence depends. At the same time—and most especially in a world vacillating between globalising uniformity and a countervailing ethnic primordialism—hybridisation intensifies the threat of cultural dissipation: the disintegration of those fundamental properties by which an endangered culture defends itself from plunder and annihilation inflicted in the name of multicultural syncretism (Constantin & Rautz, 2003). In their important essay '1837: Of the Refrain'

from *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain this function of music in protecting territory and group: ‘Now we are at home. But home does not pre-exist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space ... marking out a wall of sound, or at least a wall with some sonic bricks in it’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p. 311). They go on to argue that chants, snatches of song, Muzak, humming, putting the radio on, serve to mark the boundaries of a coherent individual or collective presence. Like Trehub, they cite lullabies in their inventory, for these are often the first way the edges of the world are fuzzily defined for a newborn child by a mother or nurse, and they take their title ‘Of the Refrain’ from the premise that familiarity through repetition defines this terrain until it is learned by heart. The thread of a tune extends indefinitely, they argue, the secure interiority of the home, allowing the singer or listener to venture into the dark, chaotic world of the ‘unhomely’ in the confidence that the reassuringly validating conditions of home inhere in the transferable musical reiteration of remembered songs and cadences, and through the performance of which the unfamiliar is mastered and made safe.

As well as enhancing the claims of those excluded or minority musics now so often seen as morally central to the work of music education, the promotion of home risks courting an oversimplified, even dualistic, construction of the Other in the processes of musical recognition. Trehub’s highly-prized lullabies encode this unsettling feature quite directly in their sometimes ominous demonization of the foreign and the unknown, where figures embodying outlandish exaggerations of racial or ethnic difference are represented as the central menace to the child who refuses to go to sleep (Warner, 1998, pp. 217–19). Far from facilitating uncomplicated initiation into the consoling verities of a unitary culture, such lullabies betray the frustrations associated with the diurnal work of parenting—which may itself be the ‘universal’ social attribute isolated in such music—and demystify by the light of everyday life the supposed certainties of every seemingly self-sufficient or idealised cultural inheritance (Bowman, 2002). Two conspicuous features impact directly on the music educator’s perception of a genre such as the lullaby in the cultural curriculum of music education: the fact that any and every teaching of a lullaby must necessarily involve wresting the text from its original context of production and reception (babies are rarely admitted to the music room); and the fact that the fundamental purpose of the lullaby—to induce sleep—also scarcely impinges on either its educational use-value or its anthropological cachet. It is this inveterate deferral of home, this constant reminder, enclosed in the musical experience itself, that—in the words of Adam Phillips—‘To be at home in the world, we need to keep it inhospitable’, that restores the lullaby’s uncanny sense of estrangement, even from those closest to it (Phillips, 1993, p. 19). When music education engages with a superficially fixed, culturally talismanic form such as the lullaby, the dialogic processes of education inevitably reconfigure the cultural meanings of the musical object, relocating it to a symbolic order of acquisition and performance where its underlying remoteness from the discursive systems of cultural initiation are paradoxically revealed. ‘What makes the Other *other*’, observes Santner,



is not his or her spatial exteriority with respect to my being but the fact that he or she is *strange*, is a *stranger*, and not only to me but to him or herself, is the bearer of an internal alterity, and enigmatic density of desire calling for response beyond any rule-governed reciprocity; against this background, the very opposition between 'neighbour' and 'stranger' begins to lose its force. (Santner, 2001, p. 9)

The lullaby dramatises Santner's false dichotomy of neighbour and stranger. It presents itself as evidence for two rival and seemingly incompatible claims: a socio-biologically derived universal humanism, based on a naturalistic and normative reading of shared human destiny, and a cultural particularism in which ownership of specific musical and linguistic idioms delineates the parameters of ethnic identity. Each view proclaims itself the vehicle of a progressive cultural and educational politics. Deleuze and Guattari point out that the refrain is, in this respect, essentially territorial, repetitively recoding sound in order to constrain and regulate variation, subject to the fearful anxiety that only repetition, imitation and substitution materialise an otherwise elusive and endlessly deferred identity. In its realisation of polyvocality, by contrast, music deterritorializes the refrain: 'music uses anything and sweeps everything away ... Childhood scenes, children's games: the starting point is a childlike refrain, but the child has wings already, he becomes celestial ... Produce a deterritorialized refrain as the final end of music, release it in the Cosmos—that is more important than building a new system' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, pp. 349–50). Music education as a location for exchange, composition, improvisation, interrogation of received traditions and unpredictable creativity fosters healthy distrust of singularised concepts of cultural identity because it uses the resources of culture to foreground the *aporia* at the heart of all territorialized constructions of identity, most resolutely those with which it is itself directly implicated.

At stake here is not merely a debate between modes of musical signification, but rather the idea that there is such a thing as the transcendental signified of 'identity' in the citation of which music and music education play a part. The issue is not only a particular relationship between music and culture that education might be required to safeguard or indeed question, but also more dangerously and disturbingly the power of music as a signifying system to make realities, to conjure into presence things that might not exist apart from signification. Moving out from the primal scene of the lullaby and the mother-child dyad, music education's more general historic attachment to the teaching of singing continues to figure prominently in debates about the nature and promotion of 'ethnic' music. Reimund Kvideland has suggested that songs are the ideal type of cultural expression and that the observable and universal phenomenon of singing is a defining benchmark of cultural solidarity, the dialectics of performance creating the shared consciousness and transcendental mystique of belonging upon which the whole notion of culture depends (Kvideland, 1989). In his controversial concept of 'group song', Ernst Klusen has gone further, isolating what he interprets as two functions of song in the life of communities: participation and spectacle. Klusen argues that modern music education's elevation of a classical song repertoire as the standard of

technical excellence, for both listening and performing, has colluded in the displacement of participation by spectacle, robbing song of its integral relationship with the forms of life out of which its musical and cultural meaning, and its claims on preservation, arise (Klusen, 1986, pp. 185–90). These and other perspectives of music educators championing minority or folk musics perhaps understandably protest the increasing intrusion of the US-controlled corporate entertainment industries, classical and commercial, on the worldwide production and consumption of indigenous song; its steady occlusion by the commodification of otherness and the flattening of a diverse international musical landscape. In heightening the prestige of song as a touchstone of cultural authenticity it also understates, however, the *resilience* of local, vernacular musics and their potential impact on the music education curriculum. Precisely because of the ‘rootedness’ of group and individual singing, and its organic involvement with the interwoven textures of lived cultural experience, popular song can be mobilised in the active negotiation of cultural resistance and change—factors that functional ethnographic accounts of indigenous song have historically underestimated (Merriam, 1964, pp. 303–19). Studies of children’s singing in traditional African societies now frequently highlight the interactive character of the children’s engagements with international pop music, folksong and the formal disciplines of practice and appreciation demanded in their music education. The school playground regularly functions as a locus for musical invention and synthesis, anchored not in some attenuated concept of children’s ‘play’, but in the complex ‘musicalisation’ by the children of their tribal customs, their (often irreverent) relations with their social and natural environments, and their creative responses to the ongoing pattern of events in their lives (Dzansi, 2002; Rasolofondraosolo & Meinhof, 2003). Against Campbell’s solemn insistence that the music teacher must operate as a custodian and transmitter of inherited song, it is possible to posit a pedagogical practice where the relations between children, their playground spaces and their classrooms are dynamic, imagining a community of learners united more by an awareness of cultural osmosis and evolution than by fixed axes of identity and territory (Campbell *et al.*, 1996).

Of course, the principle of permeability lends itself to appreciation of other important features of the globalised condition of the twentyfirst century that inevitably inform the search for a viable postcolonial music education. Far-reaching and historic geopolitical processes such as decolonisation, economic migration and the flight of refugee populations from a multitude of conflict zones have resulted in increased cultural diversity *within* established territories and nations leading, in turn, to significant numbers from minority ethnic and cultural groupings entering the institutions of Western education (Campbell, 2000). As well as altering the educational policies of these institutions, and challenging some of the supposed categories of fixed cultural identity on which their previous practices rested, the presence of students from non-mainstream cultural settings has enhanced the ethical and educational status of intercultural accommodation and encounter in its own right. The clearest manifestation of this in arts education has been the acceptance into the classroom of the phenomenon of ‘World Music’, in which is recognised the integrity and equality of clearly distinguished and living ethnic musical

traditions with an appeal to highly differentiated international audiences. The rise of the World Music movement, with its close affinities to multicultural education, has been accompanied by a vigorous educational and moral polemic on behalf of its originators and consumers, insisting upon guarantees for its position in the curriculum and closely aligning its advocacy to initiatives in antiracism and positive discrimination (Kwami, 1996). The classroom appeal of World Music epitomises two contrasting influences in contemporary educational thought: the allure of ethnic identification and the global penetration of certain mass cultural styles of fashion, communications and entertainment into the common cultural vocabulary shared by the youth of many different ethnic groups, especially in the capitalist economies (Burgoyne, 2000).

The juxtaposition of these forces has encouraged networks of music educators in both the industrialised and the developing nations to press for the promotion of a radically redesigned music curriculum in which the multicultural eclecticism of World Music reflects the multidimensional identity of highly mobile and heterogeneous student populations (Thorsen, 2002). The arguments in favour of such innovation, in particular the calls for the decentring of Western art music from the music syllabus and the endorsement of popular, postmodern and avant-garde musics in the acquisition of musical literacy, represent, in important respects, a persuasive response to the quest for cultural capital in a globalised society. The educational and musical analyses offered in support of these views, however, often recuperate the hegemonic discourses and the older aesthetic categorisations they superficially purport to reject. Concepts of 'classic', 'serious', 'authentic', 'definitive', 'excellent' etc., strengthened by the regulatory hierarchies of cultural production, recapitulate the post-Kantian disciplinary rhetoric of art music ideology, cordoning the various 'musics' of World Music within strictly-bounded and ethnically pure 'traditions', policing their performance procedures and limiting the interactions between them. Ethnomusicological fieldwork from various areas of the globe has highlighted the potentially damaging effects of this approach to music education, drawing attention to its impaired understanding of cultural identity and its diminished appreciation of other factors such as the dynamics of teacher-pupil relationships in diverse contexts of musical learning and teaching (Barton, 2001). The advent of World Music in the environments of music education invites much closer inspection than has hitherto been common of the contrasting modes of learning and teaching associated with those musics—the nature of diverse instructional paradigms and contrasting concepts of the 'teacher'; the influence of wider cultural, artistic and even religious and spiritual factors on the pedagogical experience; the role of musical performance and appreciation in the shaping of social, cultural and personal identity. As Estelle Jorgensen comments, these processes are multidirectional. A culture does not simply determine and seamlessly transmit its music to its members, generation upon generation. Music is dialogically involved in the creation and renewal of culture:

It is a commonplace that music ... is part of culture and profoundly influenced by the particular places and times in which it is created and

performed ... What is less often stressed is that society is as much shaped by music as music is shaped by society. Through singing and playing musical instruments, people create a corporate sense of their identity. The texts their songs employ and the values their musics express reinforce their beliefs and practices and educate their young ... The ancients understood that music is interconnected with spiritual and political life. Not only did they teach their wisdom to their young through songs and rituals, but their ... singers, instrumentalists and dancers looked for inspiration to an imagined future as much to an imaginatively reconstructed past, thereby helping to subvert and transform society as they also conserved and transmitted traditional wisdom. (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 30)

Any reproach by ethnomusicology to the appropriation of World Music by schools and academies moulded in the Western image is really a criticism that they do not allow music to go far enough in the exploration of cultural identity. As an alternative to the conventional support of educational pluralism, and the submerged polarities on which it is often predicated, a radicalised concept of World Music that acknowledges the complex systems of feedback and hybridisation between and across globalised music communities offers music education unprecedented and potentially transformative access to indigenous musical ontologies (Bohlman, 1999). Replacing unitary musicological frameworks implicitly derived from Western metaphysics, even where such metaphysics are expressly disavowed, with multiple and fluid hermeneutics can open music education to experimental, heteronomous systems of organisation and practice grounded in the actual materialities of different cultures and societies. The heuristic value of this method can be discerned immediately in the interrogation it enables of core concepts immovably entrenched at the heart of Eurocentric constructions of both music *and* culture. Veit Erlmann has gone so far as to suggest that 'musicology could have only emerged in relation to colonial encounters' (Erlmann, 1999, p. 8), arguing that it is only ever against the Other that Western imperial society was historically able to define itself and its musical epistemology. If musicology is intrinsically a mode of knowledge about (primarily) Western musical models, then it necessarily defines itself in contradistinction to the study of the musical practices of pre-modern societies, muting or mythologising otherness and universalising its own culturally specific taxonomies (Huggan, 2001). 'Foreign' musical discourses become redefined, disembedded from indigenous social and political contexts and eventually resituated within the dominant cultural system, becoming, in Graham Harvey's words, 'hybrids of modernity' (Harvey, 1996). The music education emerging out of this ideological nexus of reproduction, tends, in even its most culturally enlightened forms, towards the reinforcement of oversimplified notions of ethnicity, superimposing on the predetermined categories of race, nation, language and culture the vocabulary of Western musical value, including its technical classifications and its criteria of judgement (Green, 2003).

The scope for innovative visions of music education remains considerable, even at those points where the discourse of Western musicology and aesthetics seems

least negotiable. If the contours of Western history regulate musical texts and genres from across cultures and periods, then the role of World Music, in all of its diversity, becomes crucial in unsettling the presuppositions of musical knowledge. Anne McClintock has described an imperial geography of the Western sensibility that conflates temporality with global space. Western civilization is poised at the pinnacle of cultural development, situating other cultures at lower levels of progress. Time, in this metaphor, becomes a linear track moving from underdeveloped peoples towards civilization. McClintock cautions that this temporal construct authorises strategic modes of organising culture and structuring ethnic and national groups: 'Imperial progress across the space of empire is figured as a journey backward in time to an anachronistic moment of prehistory. Geographical difference across space is figured as historical difference across time' (McClintock, 1995, p. 40). The logic of this view nourishes current attitudes to economic and social progress, which are concentrated on a white, Euroethnic normative centre and which serve to exonerate commercial, cultural and even military domination of the 'developing' world by the 'post-historical' Western powers. Music in all its forms, from the cunning simplicities of the lullaby to the abstraction of the twelve-tone row, and forever classified as a cultural universal, occupies a nonraced and depoliticised space within this economy of human behaviour, masquerading as the innocent soundtrack to a progressive humanism ineluctably bound to the enlightened dissemination of Western liberal-democratic values. One of the central tasks of a 'postmodern' music education philosophy genuinely attuned to the transformative effects of revitalised Interculturalism is to undo the assumptions supporting this prejudice, re-establishing the radical credentials of music education as an experience dissatisfied with the performativity of cultural competence, no matter how broadly conceived, and unwilling to be a passive instrument for the mere reception or transmission of culture (Stock, 2003). Instead, by prizing the agency of the cultural actors to whom it is morally responsible, music education lays claim to a much more active and self-fashioning involvement in the making and breaking of culture. Elmann summarises this aspiration as the recovery by music of a 'global imagination', and urges educators to the view that:

Unlike any other aspect of mass culture, music organizes social interaction in ways that are no longer determined by the primacy of locally situated practice and collectively maintained memory. The new role of music in global culture is based on the fact that music no longer signifies something outside of itself, a reality, the truth. Instead, music becomes a medium that mediates, as it were, mediation. In other words, music in global culture, by dint of a number of significant shifts in production, circulation and consumption of musical sounds, functions as an interactive social context, a conduit for other forms of interaction, other socially mediated forms of appropriation of the world. (Erlmann, 1999, p. 6)

*Music becomes a medium that mediates, as it were, mediation.* There can be, if this analysis is correct, no single historicised discourse of music education. The

relationship between music and identity becomes one of circulation, exchange and iterativity rather than jurisdiction or reflection. It is the responsibility of the music teacher to trace out the multiple and complexly contested identities that make up the cultures in which music is implanted. While the connections between music and materiality occur through representational encodings and refigurings of social energy and cultural imagery that are not reducible to the terms of ethnic determinism or naïve referential correspondences, they can nonetheless be seen as the symbolic reproduction and circulation of mimetic capital. A culture in part consists of the stockpile of accumulated meanings upon the repetition of which educators rely and which are germane to the constitution and materialisation of power within the culture. Music education is itself a mimetic relation of production in that it is intimately connected to status hierarchies, resistances, and conflicts elsewhere in the culture. If committed music educators indeed eschew the Western myth of an overarching historical or aesthetic metanarrative, they nevertheless also dispute the suspicious ideal of a purely local, discontinuous knowledge. Cultural identity, wherever it appears to be momentarily objectified, is nowhere an external referent of music education; instead music education is itself a move within cultural identity.

It is a precondition of this reinvigorated portrayal of the activities of music education that it does not stop with a benign approbation of the twentyfirst century world's instantaneous musical diversity and the complacent celebration of all young people as music makers. As Jorgensen hinted, the inner dynamic of music education emancipated from the disabling accountability to both *Kultur* and consumption radiates multilaterally, authorising an ongoing reappraisal and reimagining of the Western tradition, most acutely where the faultlines of that tradition open it out to its own suppressed histories. The encounter between the canonical art-music systems of classical music—which continue to play such an important part almost everywhere in the pedagogy and prestige of music education—and the 'musics' of a globalised world blur the long-established hierarchies and genre boundaries of the classic tradition itself. The orientalisating axiology of Western thought, which in the past repeatedly thematised the music of peripheral cultures as a repository for those elements inadmissible in its own dualistic aesthetics, was all along looking in the mirror of its own 'surrogate and even underground self' (Walder, 1990, p. 236). In its construction of the Other, it evaded its own deepest investments in pleasure, desire, the dancing body, sexuality, moral ambiguity and the dispersed materials from which subjectivity itself is wrought. Kierkegaard came to see this process not simply as the hidden subtext of Western musical greatness, but also as its enabling condition: the occluded basis of its capacity to communicate. Gripped by the powers in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*—for the effects of which his conventional education, with its division of mind and body, spirit and flesh, had left him entirely unprepared—Kierkegaard attempted to isolate the source of the opera's canonical status and found it unexpectedly in its 'musical erotic' appeal—a quality for which the epistemology of classical appreciation afforded him no language:

In *Don Giovanni* ... desire is absolutely qualified as desire ... absolutely genuine, victorious, triumphant, irresistible and demonic ... Don Juan ... is

a downright seducer. His love is sensuous, not psychical, and, according to its concept, sensuous love is not faithful but totally faithless; it loves not one but all—that is, seduces all. It is indeed only in the moment, but ... that moment is the sum of moments, and so we have the seducer. ... But its faithlessness manifests itself in another way also: it continually becomes only a repetition. (Kierkegaard, 1843, pp. 84–85, 90)

Kierkegaard's intention is to reinstate the 'sensuous' at the centre of response to the classic work of art, but also to recognise that Mozart's opera itself is a cultural (indeed religious) artefact always already dramatising, exposing and endeavouring to assuage the 'psycho-sensuous' contradiction at the heart of the culture that has produced it. The educative goal of Kierkegaard's essay is to move beyond arbitration of the definitive musical interpretation of *Don Giovanni* and to accept, instead, its disclosure of vital elements whose presence in culture is either scarcely acknowledged or actively repressed. In one sense, this is the familiar Romantic view that *Don Giovanni* reveals the irrational smouldering behind the façade of civilized behaviour. In another it is an act of homage to Mozart for restoring to the proper appreciation of canonical music 'the energy of desire, the energy of the sensuous' that occupies its cultural unconscious all along (Kierkegaard, 1843, p. 119).

Kierkegaard's audacious rereading of Mozart is a reminder that any music education that allies itself to 'the energy of desire' and that sees individual and cultural identity permanently reinvented in the play of difference will esteem not only the otherness of unfamiliar musics, but will vouchsafe the underlying strangeness of the productions and practices that appear most central to the elite 'Western' musical tradition, problematising even its apparently sealed 'musical ontology'. Musical futures that include a reengagement with the past fuelled by the musical plenitude of the twentyfirst century present will encounter the uncanny familiarity of a living heritage, one heard anew in the sound of its fractures and splits, its joys and its obsessions, as if for the first time.

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