

A Study of Ethnomusicology and the Influence of Western Cultural Ideas on the  
Realm of Native American Music

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## **PART ONE: History and Background of Ethnomusicology**

### **History and Background**

The field of Ethnomusicology has taken a great journey since it began over 120 years ago. The expansion of the field has been greatly helped by the advances in musical recording devices and, as in any field, time has brought increased understanding.

The field blossomed in the 1880's under the name of Musikologie (Nettl 1983). Some of the forefathers included Alexander Ellis, Carl Stumpf, and Guido Adler (Kendrick 1989). The name musikologie did not last long because Guido Adler renamed the field in 1885, and Comparative Music was born. Guido defined the field as dealing with folksongs of different peoples for ethnographical and comparative purposes. Later the definitions were adapted to focus only on the music of non-western cultures (Merriam 1977).

Music is commonly broken into two overlapping categories, western and non-western. Western music reaches back to the split of Rome. When the Roman Empire split, it created a separation between Western and Eastern Europe. The constructions of music that developed throughout time in Western Europe became known as western music. The cultures that then sprouted from the musical styles that were created in the West also follow the same understandings of music. Ideas of tonality and an emphasis on a diatonic scale separate western music from the non-western music. Obviously, non-western music is focused on all other music that did not grow out of the concepts and structures of the western traditions.

Alexander Ellis has been dubbed the father of Ethnomusicology because he was the first to recognize that music was not simply an acoustical element. Ellis realized that music was a social fact. Americans did not lose a foothold in the field, and certain researchers entered the

field at an early time. For example, Frances Densmore was a key character in advancing fieldwork through her work with Native Americans (Kendrick 1989).

Originally, the field was based on comparisons of music between the “primitive” non-western music and the constructs of western music. Music was considered in quantitative and comparative degrees by many researchers in the field. Comparative music dealt with music as a trait of human existence. Also, following the lead of Darwinian thought, and later that of Herbert Spencer, researchers attached concepts of musical evolution to their studies. One can recognize that believing that any music is lesser or greater is an inherently ethnocentric view. Instead, one can realize that musical styles and types differ and study the differences that exist between these styles.

The comparative musicologists also focused on transcribing and analyzing the musical content of the piece, such as the notes and tonality (if there is a tonality). As a whole, comparative musicology made great advances, but still struggled with the need to compare all types of music to that of western society.

As time progressed into the 1950’s, the term ethnomusicology was coined by Jaap Kunst (Merriam 1977). Kunst’s definition did not include western art or the music of popular culture as part of the field’s study. Like earlier researchers, Kunst addressed the topic of defining music. He felt it was important to recognize that music is only sound produced by humans (List 1979). The definition of music will be addressed in more depth in a following section of this paper.

The field transferred to a new name, but the discussion of this change was continued until the 1970’s when the arguments finally ceased. The primary discussion centered on the word comparative. Many researchers felt that the field was no more comparative than any other, so it seemed illogical to have the word as a defining characteristic. Also, not all aspects of the field

are comparative in nature (Merriam 1977). Anxiety was created by the old name, and the new name produced a more realistic title for the field, but overall, the field itself did not take on any new facets or morph significantly with the new title of ethnomusicology.

Merriam broke the definitions of the field into three subtypes. One, it is a study of music and the instruments that these “primitive” societies are using. Two, it is a study that focuses on oral traditions and comparative ideals. Third, it is a study that focuses on music outside of one’s own culture. Out of the three definitions posed, the third was the weakest and faded quickly after this point. Also, the first two definitions, though somewhat ethnocentric, focused on different parts of the same idea. Basically, the new definitions were a continuation of the same field (Merriam 1977).

Since the renaming occurred, the focus of the field has changed. The focus has continued to move towards a greater emphasis on observations of human behavior. It is important to recognize the cultural uses of the music one is studying. If one loses the cultural context of any music, then how can he or she believe a comparison is possible? A musical recording is only half of the story. One’s notes about the actions that accompany the music and its importance within the situational context contain the other half of the story. To observe a hammer lying on the ground does not convey its function, but to see someone pound a nail using the hammer shows the complete story. The same idea is applicable to music because how a person performs a piece is important for understanding the structural importance of the music that is produced.

Today, the Society of Ethnomusicology defines ethnomusicology as the following.

“The field of ethnomusicology explores human music-making activities all over the world, in all styles, from the immediate present to the distant past. We study music, the people who make it, the instruments they use, and the complex of ideas, behaviors, and processes that are involved in the production of music (Society of Ethnomusicology 2005).”

The realization of music as a part of culture has allowed Ethnomusicology to become its own field apart from musicology, and the skills of transcription and musical analysis accompanied with observations have separated the field from traditional anthropology. Ethnomusicology still struggles to throw off the constructs of classification. The combination of ideas and concepts from numerous fields are manipulated to define the structure of ethnomusicology. It is important to understand that concepts and even paradigms have been borrowed from the different fields, but it must be recognized that ethnomusicology is not a subfield. Neither musicology nor anthropology can lay claim to the field because it was the mating of the two that created ethnomusicology.

Music is a cultural issue. Through cultural transmission, one creates a concept of sound and music that is inherited. In other words, one's concept of music is created and nurtured by his or her upbringing within a culture. The same muscles are used to produce music in all types of vocal songs, but the way one sings and the meaning that songs hold differ among every culture.

It is important to recognize what ethnomusicology is not. The field of ethnomusicology does not encompass the performance of non-western music for western audiences. In other words, a concert of Indian music played at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia is not a performance that would be used in a study of ethnomusicology. Instead, it is a way for ethnomusicologists to share a part of a differing culture. One may suppose the concert is an attempt to expand the intellectual understanding of music and culture.

Some of the most prolific work in ethnomusicology has been done with Native Americans. The beginning of work on American music began in 1889 with the recordings made by Walter Fewkes of the Zuni's music. The migration of Native Americans to reservations created a rare condition of access for study by ethnologists. The recordings were made quickly

since the culture was viewed as disappearing (Browner 2000). The acts of genocide against the Native Americans did greatly reduce their population, but the cultures and people have not all vanished. Continued research has been performed with Native Americans, including Alice Fletcher's large number of recordings and her fieldwork used in *A study of Omaha Indian Music* (Browner 2000). Frances Densmore and James Mooney created other great works, and together these four ethnologists gave the bases of musical research on American Indians for the coming century.

The concepts of anthropology have carried over to many aspects of ethnomusicology. The theory of social Darwinism was not spared from the transfer of ideas. While the ethnocentric nature of social Darwinism has left its theories debunked, it has not negated the work of early ethnomusicologists.

As time has passed, the field of Ethnomusicology has grown and developed with every passing generation of scientists. The field will continue to change as new theoretical ideas and methodologies are introduced.

### **Society of Ethnomusicology (SEM)**

The society began in 1953 at the American Anthropological Association. The cofounders included Willard Rhodes, David McAllester, and Alan P. Merriam. The first action that united the society was the creation of a newsletter. They did not anticipate that the society would expand and grow; it was created to fill the void left by the recently defunct American Society for Comparative Musicology. The original three enlisted the help of a former president of the American Society for Comparative Musicology, Charles Louis Seeger. Together, they were able to bring about the society of Ethnomusicology. The first newsletter was sent to 300 individuals

and/or institutions, and the society officially began in 1955 (Rhodes 1963). The society has grown to over 2,500 members and exists today as a leading structure for ethnomusicologists.

### **Music Defined?**

The battle, at present, is based on one's own desire to determine what he or she considers to be music. Music functions within a culture and society, but the desire to define what is music is not always left to the observer; instead, it is determined by its own existence. I do not consider all modern art to be of great value; in fact, I may not consider some modern works to be art at all. One's perception of art, including music, may differ from the views of another.

When looking at music, one must find common ground on which to build a definition, or the study of music will be impossible. Throughout the history of ethnomusicology, the definition has been reconstructed countless times. The majority includes the concept that music is a sound or noise created by man or an object manipulated by man. A bird's chirp is not music, and the sounds that emanate from street paving machines are not music. If a person were to record these sounds and play them as motivic ideas throughout a song, then they would be part of a musical composition, but just because someone can record something does not mean it is music. I feel that an addendum must be added to current definitions to include the intent to create music. The intent to make music also separates the use of speaking, and only speaking, as a form of music.

The forum in which music is performed can have an effect on the piece's function. For example, the culture in which a piece exists may change greatly over time, and the meaning that a piece holds may mutate due to these changes. A song's form and sound may exist in a very similar state for hundreds of years, but the culture in which it exists has adapted, changed and will continue to do so. Should a piece of Bach's music be received in the same religious manner

that it was received in his church when he first produced the melodious sounds from the pipes of an organ? Today, the listener can sit in a comfortable chair at an organ recital and spend time enjoying the genius that flows through the work. The differentiation in experience has had an effect upon the use and function of the same song throughout time. With the changed culture comes an adapted perception of the cultural pieces that have survived.

The concept of composition is also a debated topic that is based on one's perception. It is said that John Coltrane did not write music; instead, he was a gifted improviser, but did he not write the solos that he performed? The perception of music-making is now called into question. To the ethnomusicologist, all forms of music, written or unwritten, are still music. The structures of recording music on paper are mostly a western idea, and the systems that have been utilized have western origins. In other cultures, music does not always necessitate the physical action of recording on paper for an approximate performance to be produced every time a piece is performed. In ethnomusicology, improvisation is considered to be "composition through performance" (Nettl 1983).

Music is commonly called a universal language, but noted ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl disagrees. Instead, he views the differing styles of music like the differing languages in the world. Some styles of music are more closely related and may spring from the same cultural traditions while others vary greatly (Nettl 1983). Mantle Hood proposed the concept of music as a language in the 1960's. The conception has been carried further as ethnomusicologists view music as having dialects (Nettl 1983). Even the dialects within musical traditions may vary greatly. For example, France, Spain, and Italy are close physically and share the same musical language, western music, yet their nationalistic accents are slightly different. A specific sound is associated with each of these nations' music, and that sound can be used to discover a song's



roots or identity. Even one culture can encompass musical genres that contain vast differences in form, structure, and cultural use.

When discussing the cultural differences, one must recognize the similarities found in the music of all cultures. Music must have sound, there is singing in all cultures, and all cultures use an interval that is close to a major second. Musical intervals are the differences between one pitch in relation to another. The commonality can be explained in whole and half steps in western music, but other cultures may also introduce quarter steps. In all cultures, music is in some contexts linked to the supernatural; that connection, whether it is praising a god or gods or dealing with inspiration from a divine being, is not consistent between all cultures. In every culture, music that accompanies dance exists as well as poetry that is paired with singing (Nettl 1983).

Some have even taken the route of defining music as having to contain intent. In other words, there is more to music than sound (Seeger 1962). Without the intention of making music, there is no chance that it can be created.

### **Sample**

An ethnomusicologist must choose his or her field of study from numerous cultures, and then a sample is derived from some part of that culture. It is difficult to select a sample because, when one is done researching, there is always another informant to talk with or another song to record. One cannot estimate the total number of songs or possible variations of a song that exist. As Merriam states, “Theoretically, the number of songs in any community must be considered infinite” (Merriam 1977). Therefore, one can never view a complete population, but this

problem is true with most fields of study. A sample, a select number of informants, shall be used, and only a select number of songs can be recorded.

Merriam questions what number of songs constitutes a sample. One cannot quantify statistically a proportion if the number of songs is unknown (Merriam 1967). In ethnomusicology, one must focus upon collecting as much data as possible in the field in hopes of gaining a solid base upon which to build research. Merriam suggests the number of variants upon the songs recorded may tell the researcher when he or she has exhausted the realm of a song (Merriam 1967). In other words, he is describing saturation. When a researcher performing qualitative research is no longer collecting new information, and instead, is simply recording duplicates of previous data, then he or she has reached saturation. The common course of action is to continue a little past the point when saturation is reached and then to assume that one has collected all the necessary information on that topic.

The issue of the informant must be addressed. Saturation may be forced by the informant. If an informant or informants do not perform certain songs for the researcher, then a premature sense of saturation may occur. It is difficult to determine if an informant is “lying” or withholding information, but the use of numerous informants may help to eliminate some of these issues. The validity of the research is increased because the sample that is drawn comes directly from informants in many cases and also from performances. The informant’s ability to perform the same song repeatedly for transcription is not as necessary as it once was because of the vast improvements in the recording devices available for research.

The music that one collects from an informant should be community information. An informant’s knowledge of music is different from his or her understanding of language, and this difference may be due to the function of language vs. the function of music. Language is a form

of communication that is used by many and has specific meanings associated with specific words. Also, one's understanding and his or her breadth of knowledge of music can hinder his or her ability to communicate effectively about music. If an informant is not truly educated within the music that one is researching, then his or her information is not representative or useful. An informant may be more closely connected with certain types of music. For example, I would not be an educated informant of rap or hip hop. My tastes encompass jazz, "classical" (the common listener tends to rope many periods of western music into this title), acoustic rock, and Native American music. I cannot, without getting involved with these other music styles, speak or perform music from these styles with any authority. Even if I did learn how to rap, the cultural issues that surround the music on the streets would not be communicated through my renderings of the music.

### **Theoretical and Methodological Concepts**

Many of the theoretical concepts of ethnomusicology are important because they define the direction of one's research. The combination of musicology and anthropology has given an emphasis to establishing one's theoretical backing with the desired methodology. For example, if one is focusing primarily on the form and structure of specific genres of African music, then he or she may have a heavier focus on the musicological aspects of transcription instead of on the cultural context in which the music is presented. I believe that the end goal should be to encompass factors of both ethnography and musical transcription within one study.

The tool of ethnography reaches into the realm of anthropology, and in doing so, it opens the field of ethnomusicology to the use of some anthropological paradigms. Functionalism has played a key role in the development of ethnomusicology. Emile Durkheim, though not the first

to begin working with the concept of functionalism, was the first to truly define the paradigm. He felt that it was essential to break down the areas of functional, historical, and individual purpose. The functionalist would focus on the purpose of social actions within a society (Cosser 1977). For example, institutions play a large role within every society as they supply constructs of the society. Our military, a major institution, protects our nation's people from harm and disaster, and this role could be defined as part of the military's function within our society. Just as the term implies, the functionalist looks for the role or function that any group, action, or item plays within a society.

When applying the functionalist theory to music, it is important to define the purpose of music within a given setting. Many anthropologists that view culture through functionalism see music as a part of culture, a small slice of the puzzle (Chernoff 1989). Music fulfills a purpose in many societal actions, such as religious ceremonies, or simply through the message it communicates. Nationalistic music can be used as political music because it contains features attached to the music of one nation. Chopin wrote numerous mazurkas in an attempt to emphasize the Polish aspects of his own heritage, but overall, music has been seen as a separate entity from political issues (Chernoff 1989).

The ability of music to communicate ideas has allowed its malleable form to be fit to many causes throughout history. For example, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, music was very involved with politics, such as the work of musician/activists during the Vietnam War, but overall, music's primary function is not solely connected to the realm political.

Other theoretical ideas have dealt more directly with the concepts of music and less with its function within a society. Merriam believed a researcher must deal with the following issues: concept, behavior, and sound. He believed that the researcher must understand the concept of

how the people within the culture view their music. The researcher must recognize not only the music, but also the actions that accompany the music. Lastly, the researcher must deal with the music (Nettl 1983).

The ethnomusicologists that focus on comparisons may put more focus on issues of similarities and differences between the music of one tribe and the next instead of the reason and role of the music within the first tribe (Nettl 1983). Comparison within ethnomusicology is a very important concept, but I believe that certain types of music cannot be easily compared. I do believe that a note-for-note comparison can be made between a prelude by Chopin and a rap by Puff Daddy, but does this yield any data of importance? The issues of culture are completely ignored by this type of analysis. Instead one can compare the roles that the types of music have played within our society from their inceptions.

Functionalism is not a paradigm without contentions. The paradigm has the ability to shape its form to explain almost anything (Chernoff 1989). The functionalist view creates an image of a homeostatic model. The issues of conflict are seen as bumps in the road, but these stresses subside to return to the stable state. The changes that occur within a society cannot always be seen as bumps, and conflict does not always resolve. The perspective has allowed for adaptations to be tools for maintaining the system instead of changing it. The models created by the paradigm seem slightly disconnected from reality and have created an air of artificiality (Chernoff 1989).

The Native American powwow can give a prime example of the error that can be created due to reliance on a homeostatic model. Powwows have created a place where an overriding Pan-Indian culture has come to fruition. Many researchers have seen the unifying actions of the powwow as Native peoples from varying traditions and backgrounds come together. The issues

that are not always as easily observed are the differences that cause conflict between these varying cultures. The powwow does provide a place of unity, but also a place to mediate differences (Mattern 1996).

One cannot reduce music completely to its function. When music of a certain type is performed, it does not mean that a specific action is accompanying it. The context of performance is important, but does not define the function of the music as a whole. Instead, the context explains what functions are available. The music cannot be reduced as part or as an aspect of another culture's meaning (Chernoff 1989). Analytically, the music itself is part of the culture, but it must be recognized as standing on its own in its ability to have influence on emotions and thoughts.

If one ignores the human within music, then he or she is eliminating the importance of the music. The notes found in music are not of great concern; instead, it is the passion and emotion that can be communicated that allows music to be of significance within a culture. I believe that some comparative studies disregard the notability of music that is not as complex as western music. In essence, some comparative studies do not see the beauty within a composition of "simple" form or structure. In other words, the form, such as ABA, is not the primary feature of a song. Today, one of the main goals of comparison in ethnomusicology is to establish an understanding of history as a tool to establish developmental details (Nettl 1983). However, to compare earlier and later forms of the same music makes more sense than attempting to establish a path of musical evolution. The only evolution that can be followed in a step-like pattern similar to evolution is the history of a specific song because it has changed over time.

Anthony Seeger brings up a different perception of the musical ethnography. He believes that one cannot use the same techniques of ethnography as those used in anthropology. His

reasoning is simple. Seeger believes that there is primary difference in the use of theoretical information. In anthropology, one relies on theoretical information to create the study of a culture, but in ethnomusicology, one simply relies on studying the music without reference to such information (Seeger 1962). The lack of referent is appealing in some ways for it allows an avenue of understanding that does not hold as many biases, but then purposes can be debated. In other words, some music research is centered on collecting data, analyzing the data, and from this, forming conclusions. The theoretical is then built out of the data from the research and does not influence the researcher's data collection.

Seeger also reduces ethnomusicology's purpose into the asking of three questions of a culture's music. One, what organizes the sound, including the timing of sound features? Two, how does the music being studied compare to that of other peoples or within the same culture? Three, why does a person or group of people perform the music, and what is the music's context? (Seeger 1962) Seeger's understanding does not rely on theoretical information; instead, he bases his ideas only on the purposes and use of the music being studied.

The ability to look beyond the comparisons of music is an important feature of ethnomusicology. Direct comparison between various styles, such as Indian and western music, does not always yield significant information for culture. Instead, the cultural comparison of the contexts of musical performance can provide more significant findings. One cannot ignore the insider vs. outsider view when considering the methodology of musical analysis (Chernoff 1989). The perceptions that a researcher holds can greatly influence the means of data collection and interpretation. In his work, *The Relevance of Ethnomusicology to Anthropology: Strategies of Inquiry and Interpretations*, John Chernoff focuses on the work and ideas of his mentor, J.H. Kwabena Nketia. Chernoff believes that Nketia made great advances in the field's conception

of analysis. Nhketa strongly supported the idea of moving beyond the formal analysis of music (Chernoff 1989). A focus on using the indigenous people's interpretation of their own music greatly changes the researcher's viewpoint. Nhketa concentrated on recognizing the cultural context, and in doing so, connected the "musical structure and cultural function" (Chernoff 1989). The combination of these two factors is the key feature of ethnomusicology. Through the connection of musical structure and cultural function, one can grasp the most important concepts of musical research, such as the relation between form and function.

### **Social Darwinism in Music**

Social Darwinism was communicated through the works of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists alike. The concept put forth by Herbert Spencer explained differences in culture through evolution. Spencer did not construe his understanding of an evolution to the dim sight that was used by others, such as the belief that our society is the apex of cultural evolution. Instead, he believed that it is through retrogression and progression that every society develops, and that no one path can be defined (Cosser 1977). The cultural evolutionary stages were presented by Lewis Henry Morgan. As Morgan defined this evolution, each culture could be seen at some point within this evolutionary track that was fulfilled by our own western civilization. Music did not escape the grip of the ethnocentric views and the failed application of Darwin's theories to society (Browner 2002). Unlike Darwin's work, the theories of cultural evolution as specific stages of development were not backed by scientific research; instead the armchair observer took too little time to compose the theories dealing with the superiority and inferiority of cultures.



The “primitive” cultures contained music that was studied as a precursor to the creation of western music. For example, Native American music was considered “primitive” because it was based primarily on the voice and percussion instruments. Social Darwinism would then view Native music as an early stage of the development of European music which could be studied to understand musical development (Browner 2002).

Frances Densmore worked with Native singers and determined that their music was more advanced and refined in the usage of microtonal intervals. In other words, the music was not focused on the simple use of the twelve tones found in western diatonic music. Instead, the music that Densmore was studying contained more notes; the level of the whole or half step was too large. The quarter tone was used in the music of the Native Americans, meaning that more than twelve pitches were utilized in their music. Densmore did not hail the music system as more advanced; in fact, she felt it was a lack of precision that allowed for the microtonal systems to be in use. Her skewed view, which focused on an evolutionary path, allowed her to be blind to the different individual developmental history of the music and cultures.

In America, Franz Boas was an important character in causing the downfall of a reliance on cultural evolution theories. In the 1890’s, his work on cultural relativism was able to move anthropology forward, and consequently ethnomusicology avoided the vices of social Darwinism (Browner 2002). Cultures vary due to their independent creation and adaptation. Granted, a larger proportion of blending has occurred since global connections have strengthened, but all cultures are still significantly different. No culture is greater or lesser in value than any other, and because music is a part of culture, it should be treated no differently. I believe that music is full of different languages and dialects, and none stand before another in development or superiority.

### **Cantometrics**

Cantometrics is a pathway to quantifying music. In essence, cantometrics attempts to provide a quick manner of classifying and characterizing a piece. The classification is based on certain musical characteristics (Nettl 1983). The creator of the comparative tool, Alan Lomax, was attempting to create a system that was effective for comparing differing musical performances and defining musical genres. It shows the concepts of music by describing issues such as vocal performance. Lomax created a rating system in an effort to compare music. He attempted to address factors such as group organization, level of cohesiveness, rhythmic features, melodic features, dynamic features, ornamentation, and vocal qualities. Within each category are terms that are used to define the styles. Terminology, such as raspy vocalizing and very long phrases, was used in an attempt to describe effectively some of the aspects of a performance (Lomax 1976).

Lomax utilized a computer to compare the factors of different songs. He then tested the correlations of song style in an attempt to determine its importance socially. For example, he compared issues such as scales with the size and type of communities. He codified or assigned values to all of the qualitative features and attempted to see if the issues could be correlated. Therefore, one might find certain correlations between small communities and musical structures or scales.

Assigning numbers and looking for a quantifiable connection between music and society appears to be ludicrous. He does recognize that correlations are not always a definitive connection of influence, but instead, they are a connection of common occurrence (Lomax, 24). It is important to realize that Lomax is not to be thrown off as some hack; he was attempting to

make comparisons of musical styles and cultural issues more effective. He was trying to avoid the western view of music in order to make comparisons fairer and less ethnocentric. The primary issue with his work is the flawed idea that music can be considered a quantitative issue.

### **Research Example**

To understand further the field of ethnomusicology, I have reviewed different field studies. The following is a work that I have read and of which I shall give a brief synopsis.

*Heartbeat of the People: Music and Dance of the Northern Powwow*, by Tara Browner

Tara Browner produced a recent study on the Native American powwow. Her methodology was very effective in producing a work that communicated more than simply the music. She spent years participating in the powwows, interviewing Native Americans, and analyzing the aspects of the powwow. She surveyed powwows of varying natures, including traditional and competitive ones. Her overview of the cultural aspects and acquisition of the insider's view were paramount in analyzing the purpose and functions of the music within the powwow setting. Her involvement with the planning of powwows and her participation allowed an insider's view on numerous issues. She completed her work over four summers, from 1996-1999, but used her already established friendships and connections to open the field for her research.

Browner focused her work on the diversity of dance regalia, the protocols, order of events, dance footwork, and the singing styles. She was able to establish some groundwork for the present powwow. Browner's work is significant because she involved the aspects that surround the music and allow for true understanding of it. If one cannot recognize the

interactions between the musicians (the drum) and the dancers, then a pertinent piece of the complicated study is missed.

When one studies the music of another culture, one's analysis should be communicable to the people of that culture. Browner achieves her goal of communicating her research to Native American musicians and to music academics. She is able to produce the dual understanding through a meld of Native and academic terminology and explanations, when necessary. The differences in word usage are apparent in the word "harmony" (Browner 74). As defined by academics, it would include the sonorities that exist when one is analyzing the pitches that are sounding at the same time. The Native American uses the word harmony in reference to the blend and volume of the vocal line in comparison to the drum. The drum stroke and the individual's voice should blend to create a harmony.

Browner includes musical excerpts, pictures of dancers and drums, and sketches of powwows to effectively communicate the issues that surround the music and the music itself. The detailed descriptions of the music along with the actions that surround the parts of the music allow the music to be understood.

### **Debatable Issues of Analysis**

Ethnomusicologists do not always provide the same analysis for the same piece. One does strive for the most effective analysis of a piece, but one can argue many issues of analysis concerning culture. For example, can a transcribed piece truly represent the music of a culture that functions using improvisation on a melody as its primary form of music? Every rendition of a song is completely new and different to the western ear. Even if the performer claims that he or

she just performed the same song, the researcher would hear the variations and the recording would not contain the cultural issue.

The transcription of pieces may produce an analysis that does not truly represent the piece. Obviously one must explain the terms and break down the ideas for the reader. One cannot simply assume that the reader will comprehend a transcription. The disagreement in transcriptions is common, but if an analysis communicates its ideas, it is effective. For example, I have heard two professors debate the analysis of Beethoven's Fifth symphony. The argument is between two or three main themes, but they both can easily communicate the piece using their respective sides of the argument.

For example, if I were to transcribe a piece of music from a powwow held by the Lakota, the desired result would be for another person to read this transcription and comprehend the song. If someone were to attempt to perform the piece from my transcription and the attempt failed, then I would have failed on some level. Granted, musical transcription is not going to communicate the musical ideas to those without background and training within the field.

Recording a piece of music is effective for gaining the ability to transcribe and record the song in a written form, but has the music been communicated in its true form? I believe that one must include with a transcription all materials that would communicate the music, including the ethnographic details that help a reader truly comprehend the music.

Several issues contribute to the effective communication of music. One must include perception (insider/outsider), the nonmusical actions that surround the creation of the music, and of course, the music itself. The more one can collect about the music, the greater the understanding that can be communicated. If one has transcriptions, recordings, and detailed ethnographic notes, then one will give the fullest picture of the music.

## The Psychology of Music

Different researchers have recognized that music has an effect on emotions that is directly related to the cultural aspects of a piece. If a dissonant chord, or a clashing of notes, is played for an individual of a western culture, then he or she will recognize this clashing, but individuals of other cultures may not recognize the clashing due to the acceptance of these sounds in their cultures' music. For example, the piece *Symphony #1: in memoriam of Dresden* by Bukvich uses dissonance effectively to communicate the bombing of Dresden, but if an audience is acclimated to dissonance, the song's effect is completely lost. The dissonance communicates the panic and horror of being bombed, and it creates a gruesome scene of death. All the listeners who have been acculturated into western tonality will feel the emotion that is written in the dissonant moments and the sense of pain will be communicated.

The psychology of music is important to the ethnomusicologist because it shows the emotions that are expressed within the cultural context. The two primary roles surrounding the emotions of a piece are played by the listener and the performer. The listener will react to the music dependent upon the message that it communicates, and the performer will attempt to communicate the undercurrent of emotions of the piece. As a performer, I cannot do justice to the emotions that music can evoke when a "perfect chord" is played at the exact moment of climax within a work. The experience can evoke chills. One of music's primary roles is to have an effect on the audience. Some music is so powerful that it can bring its audience to tears or excite them enough to dance.

## **PART TWO**

### **The Cultural Context and Its Importance to Music**

#### **Cultural Context**

Music is an inherent part of culture. Every culture includes music, and the role that music plays varies among and within cultures. To the ethnomusicologists, music can be considered whole only when all of its aspects are taken into account. I believe the main aspects of music are the actual song, the performance of the piece, the audience's reaction (physical and emotional), and the cultural context. The first three aspects have been emphasized greatly throughout the history of ethnomusicology, but the final, and arguably the most important, has not received an overt focus. Only when the cultural context is taken into account can the three other aspects be determined. For example, if a piece of music is written for a Catholic mass, then that context will have an effect on the structure of the piece, the performance of the piece, and the audience's reaction to the music. William Archer (1964, 30) recognized the importance of music in connection to culture when he stated the following:

"...the ecology of music presuppose[s] that the dynamics of music shift in proportion to the dynamics of the total culture, and, by and large, are some index of the emotional needs of the culture."

Archer recognized that the differing dynamics of music were directly connected to the cultural context in which music is created. To fully understand the ideas of cultural context, the following issues need to be explored.

#### **The Alien Culture**

When an individual listens to a piece of music, the influence of that piece is directly dependent on the cultural context of the listener and that of the music. When I listen to a piece of music written for the Indian sitar, I may be able to find the tonalities and some beauty from

the music, but do I understand the cultural context? The piece may have been written for ceremonial purposes, but without that knowledge, I cannot begin to grasp the depth of the music. Instead, I can only view the façade that is placed before me as a performance. In other words, one of the primary aspects of the music has been removed, and my interpretation of the piece is then skewed not only by my cultural influences, but also by the lack of my knowledge of the aspects under which the piece gained its purpose.

Archer (1964) recognized that music is an "agent of cultural unity." For music to be cultural in nature, its style must be known to the public. The actions of the public that are associated with music are cultural in nature. In America, the audience claps at the end of a song during a concert at Carnegie Hall, and at the end of a song at a rock concert, the audience claps, yells, and screams. The cultural context in which a piece of music is presented has a tremendous effect on personal reactions to the music.

### **The Alien Ear**

The difference in one's upbringing can also have a direct influence on his or her experience of music. When I listen to a piece of German rock and roll, I may not understand the words, but the key factors that create the piece will be recognizable to my ear because they were created under the same constructs as American rock and roll. For example, I will understand the time signature, the rhythmic ideas, and the chord progressions because they are all based on the same system: western music.

On the other hand, I may not understand all the differing Asian music that has been written because it was created using a differing system of musical ideas. The rhythmic patterns, tonalities, and timbres may be outside my realm of understanding.



### **The Role of Music**

The cultural surroundings affect the role that music plays within a society. Music is found in numerous genres in our own culture, and due to these variations between musical styles, music plays varying roles within our society. Social class, race, age, and political orientations control the music of our society (Ridgeway and Roberts 1976). For example, the popular rap music can be correlated to a group of listeners. I cannot with accuracy give a description of the listening group, but I suspect that adults in their 50's and older are not the primary listening audience for rap music. Rap music plays a role within our society. It allows teens and young adults an outlet that has been accepted socially. The significance of rap music can be explored in depth, but for our purposes, it is important to recognize that the cultural context found in America has allowed for the creation of that musical style. The social and cultural factors, such as ethnicity, societal class, and societal strain have allowed for the rebellious messages of rap music to be created and disseminated.

The issues of a culture that exist within a society have a large effect on the musical creation within that culture. There are two more examples that can be easily viewed through the looking glass of our own nation's history. Both examples deal with the infusion of African-American heritage and Anglo-Saxon influences. During the time of slavery, a great number of spirituals were created, and if the cultural context is ignored, then the meaning of these pieces is lost. The musical pieces show the infusion of the dominant culture through the connection of the dominant Christian religion and the character of the African culture. For example, some of the spirituals were sung in the fields to give directions to runaway slaves, so that they might continue their journey to freedom in the North.

A second musical style that is connected to African-Americans is jazz. The infusion of different cultural pasts allowed a new genre of music to be created. The cultural context of our nation created the garden from which the harvest of jazz and blues was reaped.

### **The Context of Creation**

The context of creation, including the reason and motivation for creating a piece, is important to grasp the meaning of a musical piece. For example, the American Christian is involved in the dominant culture of the United States. The music that Christians use for religious purposes varies greatly from the music that they experience on a day-to-day basis. For many Christians, their religious music, such as hymns, is performed only during their services. Hymns function within the context of the ceremonial, but in doing some armchair observations, I have not seen my Christian friends singing hymns in their cars. Instead, they listen to the popular music of our culture. The music of the rapper Eminem cannot be found within the hallowed walls of the church. The cultural context explains how the same person can switch between the musical extremes and maintain his or her beliefs and values. In our society, for many individuals there is a separation of religion from lifestyle. One has religion, but does not live through religion. For many, religion is just a sector of life.

### **Time and Music**

As time passes, the cultural context adapts and evolves. The function of music within a culture can also change greatly over time. These changing functions of music are directly dependent upon the cultural context. For example, the blues is a genre of music closely connected to the spirituals of the African Americans. Throughout time, the ear of American

society has changed, and though the meaning of the Blues has not changed, the interpretation of Blues has vastly evolved. In other words, the same messages are communicated by the music, but now, almost all Americans, not just a secularized population, can recognize and understand these messages and the feel of the genre. The change from a subculture's music to music that is shared with the dominant culture has allowed for the opening of interpretation to the larger population (Oliver, 1983).

The cultural context can also be connected to the audience. During the time of Mozart, in certain venues, usually those of the middle class, if an audience did not like a piece of music, they were likely to yell or make snide comments. Today, if an audience member got up during a performance of *The Magic Flute* and yelled, he or she would quickly be removed from the performance hall.

### **Music and Dance**

In many tribal cultures, music and dance are more intimately connected than in western cultures. Their connection is vital because the dance can explain the meaning of the music or vice versa. The cultural context allows for the creation of music for dance. The cultures have created the connection between the music and dance, and without the cultural context, this connection is lost.

For example, at Native American powwows, I have spent hours observing and participating in dance. The different dances hold different meanings, and thus the music varies according to dance style. For example, a Men's Sneak-up involves the males moving between two styles of dance. The first involves crouching down and sneaking as if they are about to pounce upon some prey, and the second involves dancing upright. The music varies between a

more controlled beat with verses of a song sung in unison or in harmony and a sporadic beating of the drum that is accompanied by erratic yells. The yelling phase of the song accompanies the sneaking/searching style of dancing, and the upright dancing accompanies the more regular beat portion of the song. Without the dance, the song seems to make less sense, and without the cultural context, the dance and song lose their meaning.

### **Transcending Cultural Boundaries**

Conversely speaking, what is it about music that allows a person from any culture to identify music? The innate ability to recognize music may be based on the ability to differentiate order from chaos. Music has thought behind its structure, but the branches of a tree being smacked together in the wind are controlled by no human effort.

Even if I do not recognize the meaning and function of Indian sitar music, I can still recognize that it is music. However, without comprehension of the cultural significance and context, I will never fully comprehend the music. The study of music has been limited to the musicologist, who does not consider the effects of culture upon the music and vice versa; the meaning in connection with the realm of performance has been lost.

### **Music and Ceremonies**

Within a culture, music plays a role in almost every ceremonial function. Most significant milestones in a person's life are accompanied by music. The manner in which the music functions may differ with the ritual or ceremony.

For example, consider three major stages in an individual's life: birth, coming of age, and death. In almost every culture, these stages are emphasized, and music plays a dominant role. The cultural context is very important to establishing the type of music that is played.

When a child is born, some cultures use music to accompany the beginning of the journey upon which the babe is about to embark. For example, a Christian baptism, commonly has music of some form. Whether it be hymns or a soloist's performance, the music is usually connected to the inception of the child's journey towards God. The occasion is accompanied by restrained excitement because a baptism is solemn. The music reflects the feelings associated with the ritual.

In America, at almost every person's birthday, there is music. The "Happy Birthday" song is used to commemorate one's birth and the journey through life. No one would expect that the song would be sung with a slow pace and in a minor key (making it sound sad). The song is upbeat and exciting because it communicates the feelings that are connected with a party.

In many cultures, there is a ritual connected to coming of age. For example, when a male child becomes a man in some Native American cultures, music plays a dominant role in the ceremony. The young men must learn certain songs for their transformation from one stage of their lives to another. The nature of the songs depends on the culture in which they exist. Some of the Native cultures induct their children into a society, such as a warrior society or a ghost society, as a form of making them men. The songs are associated with that society and are ceremonial in nature.

Finally, at the end of one's life, music is commonly connected to the funeral ceremonies. In the Christian ceremonies, hymns are used to commemorate the person's journey to another realm of existence. The music brings the ideals of the religion to the forefront and soothes the

individuals who remain behind. The musical style of the hymns selected is directly connected to the cultural understanding of death. Death is considered an inevitable step in the path of existence for a Christian, but the mourners grieve over the passing of their loved ones. If one were to play a polka at a funeral in an American Christian service, that music would most likely be considered inappropriate and disrespectful. On the other hand, in a culture that celebrates the dead person's life, the funeral services may be more like a birthday party, where people excitedly tell stories of the person's kindness and character, and the music is jovial or jubilant. The differences in music between the two services are directly connected to the cultural context.

### **Technology and Cross-Cultural Boundaries**

As technology has advanced, the cultural boundaries of music have begun to change. The global connections that have been created using recordings and now performances have made the world a smaller place musically. The presentation of music from differing cultures does have an effect on the listener. What would have been considered completely foreign is more readily accepted, and a greater blending of musical styles and cultures occurs each year.

The most important factor in the transfer of music from one culture to another is the cultural context. Even if the notes and tonalities become more readily accepted, the cultural contexts are not always communicated. One cannot transfer the context of a piece through an MP3 player.

The transfer of cultural traits, most recently facilitated by the internet, is opening a new realm of research that can focus on the development of new cultural contexts as the blend of musical styles is occurring everywhere. The infusion of musical styles does not mean the infusion of cultural context. One can borrow an instrument or tonality, but if one does not

understand the backing from which that sound is created, then neither the listener nor the musician has experienced the complete musical understanding of another culture. The exposure to differing styles of music is not a bad action; in fact, it allows one's mind to more readily accept the music of other cultures, but the new methods of transferring music cause a loss in meaning. For example, I have plenty of friends that listen to Japanese techno, but not one of them can tell me what the vocalists are singing.

I believe that the internet and macromedia in general have reduced the importance of music within the American culture. Through the use of media, such as the television and the computer, our culture has been transformed and music has not escaped these changes. The American people are less focused on the culture that once surrounded community; instead, we are more directed towards the individual aspects of one's life. It seems to me that people are more comfortable going home and watching TV than they are with getting involved within their community. The entertainment value and purpose of music has changed in America over the last one hundred years, and with the elimination of these cultural specific niches, music has lost its cultural significance or at least changed to fit new roles in our society.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, there are key aspects of understanding music that cannot be ignored, including the musical structure, the performance, the reactions of the musician and audience, and the cultural context. To understand music and correctly identify its function in a society, these factors and more must be analyzed and studied, for music is more than simple melodies and notes on a page. Music is more than the chirpings of a bird on a fresh spring morning because

music can make you see that spring morning and taste that fresh air without leaving the comfort of your chair.

The influence that music holds in many realms of human existence makes it a topic of study that will continue to progress. The difference between music and other arts is the cultural role that music plays throughout the ritual and ceremonial customs of every culture. The two-way street between the musicologist and the anthropologist is open, and somewhere in the middle, the ethnomusicologist is directing the traffic. Without an understanding of the music, the anthropologist cannot grasp the customs that involve music, and without an understanding of the cultural context that surrounds the music, the musicologist cannot grasp the true meaning of the music.



**PART THREE:**  
**Study of the Influence of Western Cultural Ideas on the Realm of Native American Music**

Since contact in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, European and Native American cultures have interacted. When cultures interact, numerous actions can take place, and if the dominant culture takes precedence over a minority's culture, then the minority is under pressure to become acculturated. One may recognize cultural items and ideas that have bled across the lines. One can focus on items of cultural production for signs of acculturation, but it is important to recognize that influence may be present without acceptance into another culture. Music, its tonality, and structures can be examined as aspects of culture contact. The two genres of Native American music that are readily available for study are the social dance songs and powwow music.

**Background**

The comparative nature of ethnomusicology focuses on the music and the cultural context that surrounds the music (Society of Ethnomusicology 2005). Music is a product that is directly related to the culture in which it was created. As a whole, cultural production includes anything that is created as part of a culture, such as its dance, religious acts, and music (Welty 1984). Since music owes its lineage to the culture in which it is created, musical traditions vary greatly from one another. Before contact, American Indian and European cultures varied greatly, as did items of cultural production, including music. When focusing on Native American music, one must consider the effects of the dominant culture on a minority culture. One must analyze the music to determine if there has been an influence or assimilation of musical ideas.

Milton Gordon, one of the first theorists to create a concrete theory to describe the dimensions of assimilation, believed that acculturation must occur before assimilation can take

place (Alba 1997). Acculturation takes place when ideas are transferred between two cultures. The exchange of ideas is weighted. In other words, one culture accepts more than it gives and the second culture experiences the inverse (Kroeber 1948). Acculturation occurs through a process of diffusion, in which, much like the biological process, transference takes place. The ideas move between the two cultures, but primarily, ideas flow from the dominant one. Acceptance of the dominant language, habits, and even personal values is acculturation, and once this process has taken hold, then assimilation can occur.

Acculturation is not always an influence brought on by a dominant culture. Different minority cultures can influence each other. Native American cultures have embraced numerous aspects from each other. The powwow is important in demonstrating the transference of ideas. Through powwows, a PanIndian identity has been created. The creation of PanIndianism has occurred due to an exchange of cultural products. Music and dance have been easily transferred from one tribe to another, and the powwow has created a forum for such exchanges. The Plains cultures have had a large influence on other tribes' music (Merriam 1967) because the powwow grew primarily from their traditions. Due to cultural drift, many cultures have also experienced more than adaptations upon musical forms, they have also experienced a loss. As new cultural points are spread into a pre-existing culture, the older traditions can be pushed aside (Merriam 1967). For example, Alan P. Merriam observed the elders of the Flathead Indians as they continually commented on the loss of their traditions. As acculturation occurs, generational gaps may appear as differences in cultural traditions become more pronounced. Though transference of differing ideas and technologies has greatly influenced Native cultures, some key aspects have remained segregated, such as certain tribe's ceremonies and rituals.

On some levels, cultural items have been accepted into Native cultures. Native Americans drive cars and drink coffee, but there are cultural spectrums that keep them separated from the dominant culture. For example, issues of traditional music-making, craft-making, and ceremonies keep the American Indian identity alive.

New types of Native songs, which have been published since the 1970s, show an Anglo influence. Numerous genres have been used as means of expression for Native American artists, including western, rock, country, choral, orchestral, and rap (McAllester 1982).

When considering the genres of traditional Native music the dominant culture may not have had as strong an influence as it has had on the contemporary Native artists. The reasons for change in traditional American Indian music can be linked to three main areas: the spread of Pan-Indianism, contact with western cultural ideas, and the loss of elders who had contact with the old lifestyles (Merriam 1967). Though these influences are present, traditional music has not necessarily adapted due to these influences. The dominant culture's presence does not necessarily indicate an influence on traditional Native music.

The lineage for American music has been tightly connected with European music as it laid the foundation for many components of our musical culture, including the language and textures that would control the social production of music. The foundation for American music has been mortared and bricked using western tonality. The western identity of music grew from the path that swept from Gregorian chant to Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Debussy, and many other greats. Established practices and rules have created sounds that are accessible to the ear of each culture, and any that came out of Western Europe; including those of American music, have been centered on a diatonic system. The term diatonic indicates that the notes are spaced in intervals of half or whole steps and larger. In America, even music that blatantly disregards the

traditions and principles of western music has not escaped the standard of tones no smaller than a half-step apart.

Within the western diatonic music, differing manners of composing have developed, such as monophony, homophony, and polyphony. Monophony contains only one melodic line, homophony contains one melodic line that is accompanied with chords, and polyphony has many different notes sounding simultaneously.

Traditional Native American music was defined as heterophony or monophony (Roberts 1973) dependent on the music. Heterophony is not commonly found within the bounds of western music. Heterophony is music based on the simultaneous performance of slightly different versions of the same melody. The difference between European and American Indian heterophony is based on the spectrum of available pitches. It is common for heterophonic music to be partially improvised so that the melodic idea may be very similar each time, but the product varies slightly dependent upon the performers.

The pitches available in American Indian music were more numerous than those of European music. An easy way to understand the concept is to consider two stairwells that are identical in height, but one has twelve steps and the other has twenty-four steps because its steps are half of the height of the first staircase's steps. In other words, the music was based on smaller steps than the European music.

American Indian music creates dissonance to an ear that has been acculturated to western music. Just as a language of one people may not be comprehensible to a people of another culture, the musical language also may vary and create confusion. The characteristic heterophonic non-solo music of the American Indians may sound very dissonant to an ear that has been trained in western traditions because the smaller intervals that are present will make

notes seem slightly “out of tune” to the listener. The use of the smaller intervals is known as microtonal, which differs from the western use of semitones or pitches that vary by a half-step or half-tone.

Every culture has different genres of music. For the purpose of this paper, American Indian vocal music shall be considered in three categories, though these categories may not be mutually exclusive or encompass all possible music. The ceremonial music, social dance songs, and powwow music found in each Native culture can vary greatly, though more commonality shall be found in the latter. Also, one must recognize that each Native culture has great differences from others, though they may share some characteristics (Roberts 1973). An overgeneralization may develop when one assumes that one group’s music is similar to another without further analysis, and the same is true when one is looking for instances of western influence within Native music.

One common theme found in Native American music is the use of vocables, at least in vocal music. Vocables can be related to nonsense syllables in Anglo-American music, such as singing tra-la-la, but they are used more seriously and can encompass a large portion of a song’s melody (Densmore 1943). The vocables become a vehicle for the melodic information of a piece and are usually sung up to and after actual words are sung. Some Natives believe that vocables were once words, but they have gone out of use and lost their meaning. Others believe that there is no need for as many words in music, and vocables are a way of creating a melody without words (McAllester 1982). In some cases, vocables can represent an idea, even if they do not state in words a phrase or complete sentence.

Ceremonial music has not been analyzed in this study because its analysis would breach the ethics of the researcher. The sacred nature and purpose of the music keeps it from the grasp of musical analysis unless it is given for such a study and recorded by a Native group.

Social dances are more public, but still commonly not performed for large outside groups. Such music may be performed at some powwows, but powwow music cannot function as a social dance song. The only new social dance songs are those created for the women; the rest have been passed through generations. The integrity of the music is the primary focus of this study. With the influences of a differing dominant culture, will the music remain untouched by western tonalities influence?

Social dance songs are commonly performed for socialization and recreational festivities. Many of the samples used for this research are Iroquois songs, and they are performed after large ceremonies. Commonly the titles of these songs are focused on animals, such as rabbits and ducks (Heth 1976).

Another realm of Native music is powwow music, one of most modern types of American Indian music because it has grown and developed with the modern powwow. One must understand the powwow and its lineage to understand this music. The word powwow is derived from an Algonquian word “pawauogs” that refers to a shamans’ curing ceremony (Kavanagh 2005). Today the event has moved very far from its pre-contact definition. A powwow serves as a social event and an economic venture as an outgrowth of many Native cultures and even some western ideas.

The modern powwow came into existence for many reasons, but one of the primary reasons was the outlawing of Native American religions that occurred during the 1920’s (Browner 2002). The Prairie-Plains Indians began using the powwow as an outlet to keep their

music and dances alive, and with time, the powwow has been adopted and morphed by numerous Native peoples. Even as these events allowed for Native ideas to be diffused to other groups of Natives, they also created a venue for an influx of the dominant culture's ideas.

Merriam theorized that a further loss of traditional music may occur as Native tribes become more involved in the dominant culture (Merriam 1967), but to establish if the music has changed, one must move to analysis of music. An analysis of current recordings of traditional Native American music can help determine if the music has been influenced by the dominant culture. Issues of tonality and dissonance are reflected in musical recordings. As a basis for comparison, early recordings of traditional music can be used to show that Native music was based on heterophony and monophony and was not essentially connected to the western concepts of tonality due to the existence of more microtonal ideas.

The two genres of Native American music most readily available for transcription and comparison are social dance songs and powwow music. The social dance songs have been passed down for generations, but may still have been influenced by acculturation. All Americans are bombarded by mainstream music. One cannot enter a mall or grocery store or even listen to the radio without listening to the dominant culture's music. The question at hand becomes one of musical influence. Powwow music is the second genre in which one can search for the influence of the dominant culture, and this genre of music most likely contains both traditional Native and European musical ideas. Powwow music, as a whole, ranges from very traditional to modern songs. It is important to realize that the realms of social dance and powwow songs may overlap, but the overlap goes in only one direction. A social dance song may be performed at a powwow, but a powwow song cannot be performed as a social dance song. The reason for the different treatment of the songs is a cultural decision. The social dance songs are traditionally performed

after a ceremony, but powwow songs are not. Social dance songs enter the realm of the powwow as a manner for non-plains Indian tribes to offer part of their traditional music.

When one compares musical genres, the possibilities may seem endless, but to determine if western ideas have infiltrated Native American music, one need only look directly at the music itself. An effective ethnomusicological technique of comparison can be accomplished through transcription. Musical transcription can be performed in differing manners due to the tools that are available to the researcher. The results found by different researchers may appear in more than one form, but if the proper time has been taken, most transcriptions will show the same material. Transcription creates a manner of viewing the music so that questions of acculturation and cultural context can be viewed concretely. The ability to analyze a score has allowed researchers to look for differing cultural traits, and in this case, signs of influence of western tonality.

### **Methodology**

In this study, to gain access to the music recordings needed for comparison, I have collected Native music from several sources. The older social dance song recordings analyzed date from 1976-1977 and were obtained through the Lycoming College Music Department. The newer social dance songs were recorded in the last five years and were gifted to the researcher from the head singer. The powwow songs were recorded in 2002 by a Native drum<sup>1</sup> in Ohio and these recordings were also gifted to the researcher. Both sets of social dance songs were recorded by different groups on Seneca reservations in New York.

Transcriptions were made to compare the musical features of songs and to search for indications of influence of western musical ideas or the lack thereof. In order to create rough



scores, the researcher played recordings in search of numerous features, including defined pitches, heterophony or monophony vs. polyphony, and song structures. A piano was used as the source for pitch comparison, and the other aspects were recognized or timed for their existence. For example, as structures changed from unison singing to call and response, these characteristics were noted. By listening and identifying the pitches, rough drafts were notated, and from these, more legible scores were created using the computer music notation program Sibelius.

After each song was transcribed, the features were analyzed at the level of intervals/tone clusters (including the establishment of microtonal or semitonal properties). Each motive was analyzed by looking specifically for these features. A motive is a prominent, small, musical idea within a composition, which may or may not be repeated.

## **Results and Discussion**

Upon analyzing differing motives, one can find the primary ideas that are present. The first social dance song (Song 1) is taken from the recordings that were done in the last five years, and the second social dance song (Song 2) is taken from those done in the 1970s, and both are recordings of the same song. There are some stark differences between the two, such as the tone center. The tone center is simply the note or pitch class that is focused on throughout a piece, and a pitch class indicates the same pitch no matter the octave in which it is sounding. Song 1 has a tone center of E, and Song 2 has a tone center of D-flat. The length of the two recordings is also a large variant. Song 1 was 5:49 minutes in length, and Song 2 was 3:01 minutes in length. The main motivic or thematic information was very similar, but the theme that was focused upon longer differed between the two pieces. A musical theme is a main idea; themes are usually

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<sup>1</sup> Drum indicates a Native drum group in Native terminology.



The clusters do not follow the western use of semitones; instead, the pitches are more closely related, making them microtones. Tone clusters are found in the same motive throughout both songs, which acts as cadence in both recordings (Fig. 4). The pitch grouping, which is sung by the group<sup>2</sup> represents multiple pitches that are sounding simultaneously, and this tone cluster is built on microtones. The use of microtones indicates a Native idea that is still found in the social dance song.

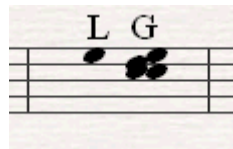


Fig. 4

Some heterophony is present, but overall Songs 1 and 2 are primarily based on monophony. The main thematic material focuses on semitones and does not consistently use microtones throughout the recordings, a fact which gives prominent evidence of western tonality's influence on the Social Dance Song genre. Overall, the Social Dance songs do not use heterophony; instead, they focus on monophonic semitonal themes. Even though many Native characteristics are still present, the mere existence of purely western ideas shows that musical ideas have bled across the cultural boundaries.

The third example of a social dance song is in a more modern format. The modern drum machine beat shows a non-static use of the social dance songs. The music itself shows definitive signs of musical influence from diatonic music systems. In other words, the tonality of the piece is focused on semitones and uses monophony, which also supports the influx of the western diatonic system. For example, the theme from Social Dance Song 3 (Fig. 5) is based almost completely on semitones.

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<sup>2</sup> The letters L and G were used to indicate Leader and Group.

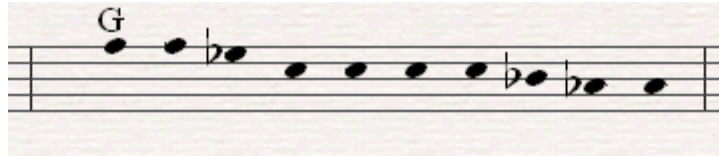


Fig. 5

The powwow music that was analyzed was recorded by the same drum. The first example of powwow music (Song 4) was transcribed totally, but the second piece (Song 5) was only partially transcribed for comparative purposes. Song 4 uses primarily semitones, but specific points use microtones. The piece does contain some heterophony, but overall, it contains monophony that is based on semitones. Though these characteristics are Native in nature, some characteristics show influence from western music.

When one compares the two powwow songs, Song 4 shows more influence from the diatonic system than Song 5. Song 5 uses heterophony rather profusely, and though pitch centers can be determined, more microtones are present. The powwow songs analyzed, which follow a different lineage than the social dance songs, seem to show a stronger use of microtones and other Native ideas. It is outside the realm of this study to theorize on the reason for the differing degrees of western traits found in the music, but it can be noted that western Native cultures which experienced contact at a later date gave lineage to the powwow traditions, while the social dance songs came from an Eastern Woodlands tribe that would have experienced contact at an earlier date.

### Conclusion

The traits described about each song indicate that the music has not been acculturated; instead, it has been influenced. All of the songs indicate influence from the dominant culture's musical ideas, but each song still contains parts that are still very Native. The amount of

influence varies among each song and cannot be gauged at a constant level. Even the two powwow songs recorded by the same group show differing levels of westernization.

To better comprehend the differing issues of cultural influence within Native music, a larger survey needs to be conducted. Also, more advanced equipment would aid the researcher with transcribing the music to promote accuracy and efficiency. Further studies may include a wider variety of music within each genre and music from more Native cultures to help avoid generalizations. Future work should focus on opening the discussion of western influence on traditional Native music at the level of each tribe or nation's music.

The Native American music analyzed in this study indicates the influence of western tonality on the Native music. The traditional Native music has not been assimilated or acculturated because the music still contains numerous strong Native musical ideas, but the influence of western ideas can easily be recognized. The lessened use of heterophony and microtones shows that Native music has accepted some concepts from western tonality.

## APPENDIX 1

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## APPENDIX 2

### Score Notes

The musical recordings came from two different primary sources. The social dance songs were recorded on the Salamanca Seneca reservation. The first social dance song was recorded by the Allegheny Singers within the last five years and the second came from the album *Songs of Earth Water Fire and Sky: Music of the American Indian* which was recorded in 1976. The powwow songs were recorded by the Morning Star drum in Ohio in 2002.

The scores created from these recordings illustrate the main pitches of the melodies, but in some cases; due to heterophony, other pitches may have been sounding. Throughout the notation, rhythm is not notated; instead, the themes or ideas are separated by barlines. In some cases, microtones are indicated by a cluster of notes or by two pitches that represent the microtone that exists between the two pitches.

The social dance songs are more realistically represented by the melodies that have been sketched. The powwow songs contain more heterophonic variations. Out of the two powwow songs, the first one uses more monophony and the second excerpt uses more heterophony.

Overall, creating the transcriptions was a very tedious endeavor. More advanced tools, such as a better notation program could have greatly increased the effectiveness of the scores. For example, the ability to indicate heterophonic deviations from the primary melody would greatly increase the functionality of the scores, but Sibelius did not have the notation tools to accommodate such a task.

# Social Dance Song #1

transcribed by Lee Zelewicz

Vocal

Leader :10      Group :15

7      :20  
G

13

18

23      :49      :53  
L G      L G

29      L G      L G      L G      L G      L G      L G

35      1:04      1:06  
L G      L      G

41

46      1:27      1:30  
L G      L G

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. It consists of ten staves of music, each starting with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C'. The notes are primarily quarter notes and eighth notes, often beamed together. Above the staves, there are various annotations: 'Leader :10' and 'Group :15' at the top; measure numbers 7, 13, 18, 23, 29, 35, 41, and 46; and time markers such as ':20', '1:04', '1:06', ':49', ':53', '1:27', and '1:30'. Some measures contain letters 'L' and 'G' above the notes, likely indicating dance steps. The music is written on a single line of a grand staff.

52 L G L G L G L G L G L G

58 1:42 L G 1:45 L G

64

70 2:01 L G 2:05 L G L G L G L G L G

76 2:14 L G L G Drums & Rattle 2:20 L

82 G

87

92 2:41 L G 2:45 L G L G L G

98 L G L G L G 2:54 L G 2:57 L

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for Zelewicz contains nine staves of music, numbered 52 through 98. The music is written in a single system on a grand staff (treble clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Above the notes, there are letters 'L' and 'G' indicating specific notes or chords. Time signatures are provided for several measures: 1:42, 1:45, 2:01, 2:05, 2:14, 2:20, 2:41, 2:45, 2:54, and 2:57. A section between measures 76 and 77 is marked 'Drums & Rattle'. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 98.



153

158

4:25 4:29

164

4:38 4:43

170

G

175

180

186

5:00 5:04

192

5:14 5:17

198

204 5:36  
L G

210 5:39  
L G L G L G

213 5:49  
L G L G L G L G

Detailed description: The image shows three staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff, starting at measure 204, contains six measures of music. The final measure of this staff is marked with a time signature of 5:36 and the letters 'L' and 'G' above it. The second staff, starting at measure 210, contains four measures of music. The first measure is marked with a time signature of 5:39 and 'L' above it. The second and fourth measures are marked with 'G' above them. The third measure is marked with 'L' above it. The third staff, starting at measure 213, contains four measures of music. The first, second, and third measures are marked with 'L' and 'G' above them. The fourth measure is marked with a time signature of 5:49 and 'L' and 'G' above it. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

# Social Dance Song 2

transcribed by Lee Zelewicz

Vocal

:06 Leader :11 Group

6

12 :26 L G :29 L G

18 L G L G L G L G L G L G

24 L G L G :41 L G :44 L

30 G

36 1:00 L G

42 1:03 L G L G L G L G L G L G

48 L G L G L G 1:15 L G 1:18 L

54 1:22 G

60

66 1:34 1:37 L G L G L G L G L G

73 L G L G L G L G L G 1:49 L G

79 1:52 L G

85 2:07 L G

91 2:10 L G L G L G L G L G L G

97 L G L G 2:21 L G 2:24 L G

103

109 2:36 2:40 L G L G L G

115 L G L G L G L G L G

Detailed description: This page contains a musical score for Zelewicz, measures 60 through 115. The score is written in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 8/8. The music consists of a series of eighth notes, often beamed in pairs. There are several instances of chords, specifically dyads of a flat and a natural (e.g., B-flat and C). Above the staff, there are time signatures (1:34, 1:37, 1:49, 1:52, 2:07, 2:10, 2:21, 2:24, 2:36, 2:40) and letters 'L' and 'G' indicating specific notes or chords. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.



Zelewicz

121 L G L G L G L G 2:56 3:00-3:01  
8 L G Jingles

# Social Dance Song Three - Modern Drum

transcribed by Lee Zelewicz

The musical score is written on ten staves. The first staff is labeled 'Vocal' and contains the vocal melody. Above this staff, the text 'Drum Machine' is written, with time markers ':07 Leader' and ':11 Group' indicating when the drum machine enters. The subsequent staves (4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 20, 23, 26, 29) contain the drum machine accompaniment. The notation includes eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, often beamed together. Various musical markings are present, including 'gliss.' (glissando) and 'G' (likely a guitar or specific drum sound). Time markers are placed throughout the score to indicate specific measures: :14, :23, :29, :33, :41, :47, :50, 1:06, 1:11, and 1:15. The score concludes with a final measure on the 29th staff.

Zelewicz

31 1:18 1:23  
33 1:27 L  
34 1:30 1:34 L  
36 1:38 1:43 L  
38 1:46 1:50 L  
40 1:55 1:59 2:00 2:07  
L Drum Machine

The image shows a musical score for Zelewicz, consisting of six staves of music. Each staff begins with a measure number and a time signature. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Some measures contain rests. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score ends with a double bar line at measure 40, with the text 'Drum Machine' written below the staff.

# Powwow Song 1

transcribed by Lee Zelewicz

Drums                      :12 Leader                      :18 Group

Vocal

4 :25 G                      :30 G

6 :39 G

7 :47 G                      :52 L

9 :57 G                      1:02 G

11 1:08 G

12 1:17 G

13 1:24 G                      1:30 L

15 1:35 G                      1:41 G

17 1:47 G

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for 'Powwow Song 1'. It consists of a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The guitar accompaniment is also written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The score is divided into measures, with time markers and performance instructions (G for guitar, L for leader) placed above the notes. The vocal line starts with a rest for 4 measures, then begins at measure 5. The guitar accompaniment starts at measure 4. The score ends at measure 17.

18 1:56  
G

19 2:02 2:07  
G L

21 2:12 2:16  
G G

23 2:21 2:25  
G Solo

25 2:26  
G

26 2:34 2:39  
G

The image shows a musical score for Zelewicz, consisting of six staves of music. Each staff begins with a measure number and a time signature. The notes are primarily quarter notes and half notes, often grouped with slurs. The key signature is G major, indicated by the 'G' time signatures. The score ends with a double bar line at the end of the sixth staff.

# Powwow Song 2

transcribed by Lee Zelewicz

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Vocal' and begins with a rest for 'Drums' (measures 1-4). At measure 5, the 'Leader' part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a melody of quarter notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The middle staff is labeled 'Group' and begins at measure 3 with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a melody of quarter notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is labeled '4' and begins at measure 4 with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a melody of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. There are two 'G' chord markings above the staff at measures 20 and 26.