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Music in War, Music for Peace: A Review Article

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The study of music in war and music for peace has received surprisingly little attention in ethnomusicology. While a number of important publications do exist, these usually concern specific conflicts whose parameters are defined by particular geographical conditions and historical circumstances. As Samuel Araújo (2006:289) states, the study of conflict from a theoretical perspective has largely been neglected in ethnomusicology. In contrast to other cognate disciplines (such as anthropology and folklore) where a disciplinary interest in an applied dimension is well established, ethnomusicologists have only recently begun to embrace seriously the issue of musical advocacy. In part, this reflects the stellar work of individual scholars whose persistent efforts have served to bridge the divide between the academy and the community. In part, it also reflects the imminent effect of political circumstances where a current preoccupation with commemoration and a related desire for retaliation have impinged upon the scholarly realm. In this essay, I consider a number of recent publications that critique the proactive (by activists) and reactive (by critics) dimensions of these developments. Reflecting the dialogic approach to the study of music and conflict espoused by Araújo, I also examine critically my own concern for music in war and music for peace.

A Discordant Note

The discussion of music in war and music for peace is an ethical issue. It involves the sensitive representation of music in conflict and the critical assessment of music in conflict resolution. In particular, it concerns the academic depiction of human suffering where music provides a locus for interrogating a diverse range of subject positions, including that of the music scholar. Here, a personal disclosure is entirely pertinent since it should frame ethnographic

inquiry and influence scholarly interpretation and since it must also call into question the personal interests of the researcher and those researched. As Gourlay (1978), among others, pointed out, scientific inquiry is inherently subjective because it involves academic choices and scholarly methods that favor the prejudices of an individual scholar and the concerns of a particular discipline. Although the interpretive underpinnings of Gourlay's thesis have subsequently been reappraised (see, for example, Marcus and Fischer 1986), his advocacy of a dialogic approach to musical ethnography is still significant in ethnomusicology (see, for example, Rice 1997). In this context, the ethnomusicologist is an active participant in the research process, influencing and being influenced by the expanding horizons of musical understanding. In such an investigative context, understanding becomes a form of self-understanding.

My concern for music in war is personal. As an Irish Catholic from an established family with a Gaelic pedigree, I have questioned musically my understanding of self. From an early age, I was ambivalent about a nationalist representation of Irish music that was promoted in the academy and sanctified in the media. In particular, I was critical of a music tradition that advanced a singular reading of Irish identity where a particular language and a preferred religion were advanced through a singular music. While not atypical of other nation states, the political division of Ireland into an Irish and a British sector dominated by Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists, respectively, exacerbated my concern with self-identification, the ongoing conflict in Ireland blighting my youth with increasingly polarized portrayals of self and other. Here, music played a significant role in encoding difference. Where Irish traditional music was often viewed as the cultural capital of a colonized Irish, Western art music was usually regarded as the musical culture of a colonizing British. Defined in its opposition to a colonized precedent, Irish music seemed to perpetuate a British reading of Irish identity, a sonic reminder of what Kiberd (1995) called "This Little England called Ireland."

My research into music for peace was predictable. Having studied Western art performance and non-Western area studies at British institutions, I was drawn to ethnomusicology because of my background in relevant disciplines and because of my concern for cultural inclusiveness. Resisting a call to study Irish music in Dublin (as folklore) or in Belfast (as anthropology), I chose instead to conduct research on an unrelated tradition, hoping to achieve moments of "distantiation": a hermeneutic operation that involved a detour into the other to recover the self. Two moments are worthy of comment. First, my graduate study in Los Angeles underscored my interest in musical diversity and cultural pluralism. In particular, my work with Jihad Racy demonstrated the possibility of experiencing plurality as unity; for him the *takht* ensemble providing a singular musical context for supporting multiple social positions (see Racy 1988). Second, my doctoral

research in Istanbul presented an opportunity for witnessing musical prejudice in another nation state. There, a Western musical tradition (*alafiranga*) rather than a native musical style (*alaturka*) was promoted historically in educational contexts (see O'Connell 2000). In short, my study of ethnomusicology and my research in ethnomusicology provided unique sites for reflecting upon my own condition of alienation.

My experience of music after war was less predictable. Returning home with tenured employment, I hoped to develop a new program in ethnomusicology that promoted cultural pluralism within a national context. My hopes were subverted. While the conflict in Ireland had abated (especially after the successful implementation of the Belfast Agreement in 1998), economics rather than politics came to dominate the musical horizon. In this matter, a singular conception of Irish music was commodified by commercial interests to suit a national audience celebrating peace and an international audience buying into a mythologized version of Irish culture. Musical spectacles (such as *Riverdance*) articulated this euphoria. By placing a local tradition in a global setting, they rendered redundant the need for an ethnomusicological curriculum that advocated musical distantiation as an essential moment in the hermeneutic arc of self-understanding. Since Irish music was now world music, there was simply no need to study other world musics. Further, musical spectacles reflected the complex workings of industrial production, showcasing Ireland as an attractive venue for foreign investment. Here, a monochrome construction of Irish identity, which was sparked within the hearths of colonial dissent and ignited within the flames of postcolonial conflict, was still glowing within the embers of corporate greed.

The Price of Peace

Music seemed to question the harmonious constitution of conflict resolution. As such, it provided an ideal locus for interrogating the politics of style and the economics of taste. In the political realm, music was accorded a significant place in the "peace process" north of the border, where Irish traditional music was consecrated as the appropriate style for a nationalist minority. Where historically such an Irish style had been shared (being performed by nationalists and unionists alike), it was now considered the artistic expression of a Catholic minority but not of a Protestant majority. Here, musical style served to polarize cultural interest, sonically inscribing a stereotypical reading of Irishness with legislative effect. In the economic arena, music acquired an elevated standing in economic policy south of the border, where Irish traditional music attracted public investment, especially in terms of musical institutions (such as academies and archives) and musical events (such as competitions and festivals). Significantly, the relationship between economic management and artistic policy is

of interest since entrepreneurship became the hallmark of artisanship, a contemporary urge to be innovative characterizing the financial and the musical domains simultaneously. In the borderland that separated political distinction from economic connection, an acerbic debate about style and taste erupted.

Musical discourse reflected a wider deliberation about Irish identity. On the one hand, a conservative position wished to preserve a particular style in its traditional guise for political ends, ensuring the survival of a romanticized view of nationhood that was racially pure and spiritually cleansed. On the other hand, a radical position sought to transform musical taste with innovative experiment for economic reasons, hoping to reap the financial benefits from musical acculturation by demonstrating an ostensible openness toward international trends and by showing an apparent rejection of nationalist biases. The fact that both positions were informed by a local understanding of style and taste is noteworthy, since they served to ossify the debate about tradition and innovation around a singular axis: Irish traditional music as the Irish music. In this volatile cauldron of musical dissent, conservatives and innovators competed for political recognition and economic betterment, the former needing economic advancement for ideological reasons, the later requiring political validation for monetary aims. This discourse of selfhood was no place for the faint-hearted. It excluded minority groups from home (such as Irish travelers) and abroad (such as asylum-seekers). It also excluded music scholars who questioned the assumptions that concerned the significance of this music for that identity.

Music education should have presented a neutral space for contesting such musical intolerance. It did not. In another context, an ethnomusicologist could have questioned the political underpinnings of—and the economic opportunities associated with—such idiosyncratic notions of cultural production. I could not for the following reasons. First, ethnomusicology in Ireland suffered the ignominy of a colonial stain that dated back to the study of anthropology in Belfast under the directorship of John Blacking. While a number of Irish musicians studied under his tutelage, some Irish specialists considered his personal attitude toward Irish music and his academic approach to Irish culture unhelpful and inappropriate. Second, ethnomusicology in Ireland subsequently endured the discomfiture of tokenism. Supported now by Irish musicians in the academy, it was employed as an instrument to counteract accusations of chauvinism and nepotism. Although successful in a number of instances, ethnomusicology was subverted at an institutional level (through restrictions placed on program development) and at a governmental level (through the denial of financial assistance). Simply put, a disciplinary concern for musical pluralism and cultural inclusiveness did not chime well with a nationalist interest in political advancement and economic improvement. Here, Irish traditional music alone provided the ideal medium for the celebration of selfhood.

Music advocacy should have found its voice in this partisan world of nationalist prejudice. With the rise of racism in Ireland following the rapid influx of migrants to a newly prosperous land, Irish musicians responded by enculturating new arrivals in Irish traditional music. Although widely covered in the Irish media, this apparent act of musical enlightenment concealed the deplorable condition of inter-cultural relations. While music was employed here to assuage bigotry, it in fact exacerbated a delicate balance between the political desire for national separation and the economic drive toward international integration. Of course, this public demonstration of apparent tolerance failed, but it failed at a cost (but not at a cost to the musicians involved). When I proposed an ethnomusicological solution to the issue of cultural assimilation in Ireland (see O'Connell 2001), my suggestions were met with instances of personal intimidation and episodes of institutional harassment. While some colleagues in other national contexts have suffered similar circumstances, I realized that I needed to challenge the silent consensus that enveloped the price of peace in Ireland. By critiquing this so-called "peace dividend," I also believed that ethnomusicology presented a durable framework for examining music and conflict both at home and abroad.

Music and Conflict

In 2004, I organized an international colloquium in Ireland under the auspices of the International Council for Traditional Music, titled: "Discord: Identifying Conflict through Music, Resolving Conflict through Music." Attracting twenty-six specialists to Ireland from both sides of the Atlantic, I wished to formulate theoretical and practical solutions to the problem of music and conflict in a wide range of global contexts. I also aimed to evaluate the role of music in conflict resolution. Inviting representative activists from relevant projects in Ireland, I hoped to examine critically the place of music in promoting a functional harmony; that is, where groups in conflict achieved inter-communal understanding through sonic expression. In contrast to other music specializations, I believed that ethnomusicology was especially relevant since it honored the musical practices of distinctive traditions. By offering parity of esteem in the areas of music research and music education, I suggested that the discipline fostered an enlightened approach to the academic pursuit of cultural representation. In addition, I noted that ethnomusicology involved an applied dimension both in terms of scholarly methodology (as fieldwork) and in terms of social relevance (as advocacy). As a principal venue for the development of an applied ethnomusicology, the colloquium involved three significant areas of discussion.

First, the colloquium considered the ways in which music could be used to identify conflict by examining the many instances of discord in musical discourse and musical practice. In this respect, it explored policies and ideologies

that informed musical production, the media providing a significant locus for interrogating old identities and for imagining new ones. Second, the colloquium looked at the ways in which music was employed in conflict resolution. Here, it investigated a number of instances where music-making has been utilized to foster inter-cultural understanding and to promote intra-cultural healing through music education and music therapy, respectively. While many delegates were ambivalent about the power of music to promote peace, they recognized the potential of music to articulate distinctive cultural perspectives as an integral part of harmonious solutions. Third, the colloquium examined the ways in which ethnomusicologists operated as mediators in conflict and conflict resolution. Addressing a contemporary concern for musical advocacy, many participants argued that music scholars could enhance tolerance by designing musical programs that offered parity of esteem to the musical traditions of communities in conflict. By empowering music makers in such contexts, they could bridge the divide between the academy and the community for the betterment of humanity.

The results of the colloquium were both anticipated and unexpected. As predicted, the meeting confirmed that the role of music in conflict was complex, since music was used both to promote conflict and to further conflict resolution. Here, the power of music to incite violence (both in its actual and symbolic forms) or to assuage aggression (both in theory and in practice) conformed to my own expectations concerning music in war and music for peace. Not predicted was the ambivalent position occupied by music in conflictual situations. As one delegate suggested, music was a double-edged sword used both as a poison to excite hostility and as a potion to foster friendship. In the continuum that exists between war and peace, music occupied an ambiguous position, at once providing a contested space for conveying dissent while at the same time providing a common space for promoting assent. Further, the role of musicians in conflict resolution was hard to define. For example, musicians employed music to communicate multiple interpretations of a peaceful solution, using musical performance as a medium for addressing the diverse aspirations of distinctive audiences. In this respect, a peaceful song for one person could be a warlike song for another.

The findings of the colloquium are now published. As the principal editor of the publication entitled *Music and Conflict* (see O'Connell and El-Shawan Castelo-Branco 2010), I decided to highlight the significance of music in conflict to the detriment of music in conflict resolution. Although the volume addresses a number of relevant themes that include a critical examination of music and violence, music and dispossession, and music and ideology, an in-depth evaluation of music in peace negotiations is not extant. This reflects a general feeling at the meeting that music was often used by hegemonic bodies to disguise the tragedy of violence and the imbalance of power in discordant contexts. While a number of studies

on this subject were not included in the volume for reasons of political sensitivity, the role of ethnomusicologists as activists is fully acknowledged, especially in those situations where scholars have consciously engaged in musical mediation on legal, social, or educational grounds. In terms of impact, the colloquium had some positive outcomes. It promoted a productive dialogue between peace initiatives both north and south of the Irish border. It witnessed the foundation of a national committee in ethnomusicology. It also motivated participating scholars to conduct research into related studies; some of these studies are now published.

Music in War

The colloquium in Ireland did not occur in isolation. It was one of many meetings both within and outside ethnomusicology that considered music in war and peace (see, for example, Pettan 2010). It also coincided with the increasing output of academic literature on music and conflict in ethnomusicology and in cognate disciplines. Of course, Arnold (1993) and Pettan (1998), among others, had already presented classic accounts of music and war with specific reference to art and military music in the West and traditional and popular music in the Balkans, respectively. Other studies looked at the role of music in conflict both in reality and symbolically. In the former category, the place of music in war has been considered in popular music studies, with the critical examination of music among soldiers in Iraq by Pieslak (2009) and the textured portrayal of musicians as soldiers in Croatia by Baker (2010) providing notable examples. In particular, the groundbreaking examination of music as torture by Cusick (2006) is especially noteworthy not only for its in-depth interrogation of the issue but also for its influence upon other relevant studies (such as Pieslak 2009:90–99, among others). Perhaps less developed here is the use of music to incite violence (see, for example, Johnson and Cloonan 2009), although references by McDowell (2008) concerning ballad singing, Baker concerning government fundraising (2010), and Sugarman (2010) concerning military recruiting are pertinent.

In the latter category, there are many more publications that tackle the issue of music and war in its symbolic guise. While the publications concerning music and power (see, for example, Averill 1997), music and resistance (see, for example, Pratt 1990), music and protest (see, for example, Bauman 1979), music and propaganda (see, for example, Perris 1985), and music and gender (see, for example, Ceribašić 2000) are now accepted as seminal contributions, the musical enactment of war has more recently generated important research especially in the realms of music in competitions (see, for example, Avorgbedor 2001) and music as battles (see, for example, Bakan 1998). In this matter, dance scholars have contributed important overviews of embodied conflict (see, for example, Gilman 2009). Of particular interest is Fryer's diachronic study of war dances in

Brazil (2000), which demonstrates the power of dance to symbolize conflict, to articulate satire, and to promote healing. Certainly, the issue of censorship has also received considerable attention in extant sources. While the collection of essays edited by Cloonan and Garofalo (2003) is very valuable, especially when considering the instruments of musical control and the limitations of artistic freedom, other sources (such as www.freemuse.com) and publications (see, for example, Baily 2009) are also significant.

It is important here to consider music against war. While the scholarly evaluation of this issue is extensive (see, for example, Good 1989), the detailed study of music in peace initiatives is under represented. Although a number of publications concerning music and conflict resolution have either been reviewed in this journal (see, for example, Brinner 2009) or are considered in detail below (see, for example, Urbain 2008), the chapters by Pettan (2010) and Sweers (2010) in the volume *Music and Conflict* are significant for their academic contribution in this area. Recently, Beckles-Wilson (2009) has published a detailed study of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. Although the orchestra was co-founded by the musician Daniel Barenboim and the theorist Edward Said to promote inter-group understanding between Palestinians and Israelis within a musical context, Beckles-Wilson highlights the disjuncture between the pacific intentions of the organisation and the belligerent politics within the orchestra. Conducting ethnographic research in Andalusia, she charts the antagonist relationships between orchestral members at one level and between the organizers and the performers at another. While her work adds (perhaps unnecessarily) to an already inflated discourse about this musical initiative, she does highlight an interesting paradox: the degrees of disharmony within a musical organization that is supposed to promote harmony.

It is also important here to consider the role of ethnomusicologists against war. With the growing recognition of musical advocacy in the discipline, the number of relevant studies in applied ethnomusicology is increasing. Perhaps it is worth noting the classic accounts of music and freedom by Blacking (1980), music and dispossession by Reyes (1999), and music and conservation by Impey (2002). Perhaps it is also worth noting the important contributions in this area made by music educators including Ellis (1985) and Skvllstad (1993). Given that the institutionalization of Peace Studies is relatively recent, and given that the validation of music in that context is quite new, it is understandable that some ethnomusicologists have been reticent about undertaking relevant research. That being said, recent articles in this journal by McDonald (2009) on music in performance, by Van Buren (2010) on music and AIDS, by Mendonça (2010) on music in prisons, and by Kartomi on music as methodology (2010) point to a bright future for an applied dimension to the study of music in war and music for peace in ethnomusicology.

Having presented the scope and the study of music and conflict in the discipline, I will now review two substantial publications: *Music in the Post-9/11 World* and *Music in Conflict Transformation*.

Music after Terror

At first glance, a publication about music after 9/11—*Music in the Post-9/11 World*, edited by Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry (2007)—might seem problematic. By focusing exclusively on the consequences of this tragic event, the volume situates music-making at the center of a monumentalizing project which not only explicitly exaggerates the historical significance of 9/11 but also implicitly validates the inexorable drive toward war in its aftermath. At second glance, however, the collection presents a more ambivalent attitude toward the place of 9/11 in world history. In fact, the editors emphasize that the celebration of a new epoch in the wake of 9/11 is arrogant—rightfully being critical of interpreting this major incident as a new “Pearl Harbor.” In this respect, they have organized the volume to reflect a number of critical perspectives by drawing upon a range of interdisciplinary methodologies to make sense of this significant catastrophe from a musical perspective. Dividing it into two parts, they have attempted to explore in different sections the musical consequences of 9/11, both inside (Part One) and outside (Part Two) the United States. While the secondary status accorded to a cross-cultural consideration of the issue might seem somewhat tokenistic, the relevant section features a number of ethnographic studies of especial interest to an ethnomusicological audience.

In Part One, the volume considers the significance of music in the media after 9/11 from within the United States. Following a personal statement by Gage Averill and a succinct introduction by Martin Daughtry, the collection examines the role of popular musicians (such as Bruce Springsteen and Darryl Worley) and classical composers (such as John Adams and Samuel Barber) in constructing a sense of communal solidarity to commemorate and activate an American public. Employing different analytical tools, each author interrogates the narrative structure of individual events where benefit concerts (Chapter 1 by Reebee Garofalo, Chapter 2 by Kip Pegley and Susan Fast), television news (Chapter 3 by James Deaville), radio broadcasts (Chapter 4 by Bryan Garman, Chapter 5 by Martin Scherzinger), audio-visual media (Chapter 6 by Peter Schmelz), and commemorative events (Chapter 7 by Peter Treager) provide distinctive loci for examining music as a measure of trauma and revenge. Encompassing a range of musical issues (from pop theology to pop ideology) and covering a variety of musical genres (from news music through country music to classical music), the publication presents a textured reading of a major event in a focused and

(for the most part) convincing manner. While the sequential organization of chapters is not always successful, each author provides a sound insight into how music was used and misused after 9/11.

In Part Two, the volume examines the importance of music after 9/11 outside the United States. In contrast to Part One, this section privileges anthropological methods over musicological analyses to represent music and terror in two distinctive regions; namely, Latin America and the Middle East. In the first context, Jonathan Ritter (Chapter 8) and John McDowell (Chapter 10) present informed representations of 9/11 in the musical repertoires of Peru and Mexico. With particular reference to the musical genres *pumpin* and *corridos*, they show how an international tragedy is manipulated strategically through music-making to map national expressions of conflict and conflict resolution. In the second context, Larry Blumenfeld (Chapter 9) and James Grippo (Chapter 11) also recognise a cosmopolitan register in the musical repertoires of North Africa. While Blumenfeld explores the expression of inter-religious tolerance by Sufi musicians geared toward a global market, Grippo examines the articulation of inter-cultural intolerance by Sha'bī musicians aimed at a local market. Occupying an intermediary position, Veronica Doubleday (Chapter 12) interrogates through music the ambivalent attitude toward the United States in Afghanistan after 9/11 by analyzing songs that celebrate the defeat of the Taleban but at the same time deprecate the victory of the Alliance as foreign intruders.

In my view, the unequal division of this volume into two parts is problematic. While each part seemingly addresses a distinctive region in a particular way, the presence of two articles on Latin America in Part Two serves to underscore an Amerocentric perspective. By default, the remaining three chapters on music in the Islamic world are delimited as “other.” The fact that one of these chapters (Chapter 9) lacks critical depth is somewhat worrisome. This imbalance between sections seems to highlight the loose structure of the collection where the relationship between consecutive chapters—although noted in the introduction (xxvi)—is not always clear, and the connection between related chapters is not always foregrounded. The problem is compounded by the repetition of less significant musical discussions (such as the multiple considerations of “Clear Channel”) and by the omission of more significant musical issues (inadequate consideration is given to Al-Jazeera). While the interdisciplinary scope of the publication is welcome, the eclectic application of analytic methods in Part One sometimes detracts from the clarity of a given argument. Clearly these problems have an editorial dimension. That being said, the articles on music and censorship (Chapter 5) and music and politics (Chapter 12) are noteworthy, as they add considerably to our understanding of music in war.

Music for Peace

In the second part of this review, I look at *Music in Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, edited by Olivier Urbain (2008), a collection that explores the significance of music for promoting peace. Published in association with The Toda Institute for Global Peace and Research Policy, the volume provides an interdisciplinary insight into music and conflict transformation, with music therapy and music education principally informing the applied dimension of the publication. Where *Music in the Post-9/11 World* is unevenly structured, this collection is clearly organized into four sections that look at the intersection between music and peace in theory and in practice. While sometimes repetitious, each author addresses one or more of the principal issues emerging from Johan Galtung's tripartite definition of peace: "the capacity to transform conflict(s) with empathy, creativity and non-violence" (4). In this matter, peace specialists might find the uncritical reliance upon a single paradigm problematic, with the book failing to address adequately a critical literature concerning conflict and conflict resolution in the academy.¹ Ethnomusicologists will also be unhappy. Although some chapters deal with music in a cross-cultural perspective, representative studies are often naïve and ungrounded. In many instances, they reflect an ideological perspective that is over-idealized and an academic position that is too Eurocentric. Significantly, not one of the contributors is an ethnomusicologist.

Part One examines the theoretical dimension of music for peace. In Chapter 1 (by Felicity Laurence) and Chapter 3 (by June Boyce-Tillman), the key concepts of empathy and value respectively are evaluated, each author situating his and her discussion within a wider literature in philosophy. While both studies recognize the power of music both to incite and to appease conflict, they posit theoretical models for utilizing music-making in conflict resolution. In contrast, Chapter 2 (by Cynthia Cohen) and Chapter 4 (by Johan Galtung) are more practical in orientation. By recognizing the multivalent attributes of music, they consider the many ways in which music can be harnessed to advance inter-group dialogue in non-violent contexts. Part Two looks at the political dimension of music for peace. Where Chapter 5 (by Anne-Marie Gray) argues for the use of song in advancing interethnic understanding in South Africa, Chapter 6 (by Baruch Whitehead) shows how song can promote interethnic equality in North America, each author using music to recognize either a shared or a unique cultural tradition. Where these chapters acknowledge the complicity of individual musicians from a dominant group in advocating a just peace, Chapter 7 (by Karen Abi-Ezzi) is less successful in its study of an Israeli musician (Gilad Atzmon) who attempts to "Palestinianize" Jewish music as part of a personal campaign aimed at criticizing Israeli policy in Palestine.

Part Three explores the relationship between music and peace in music education and music therapy. The section features two informed studies by Kjell Skylstad—on music in prisons (Chapter 9) and music among minorities (Chapter 12)—where music is applied sensitively to the promotion of crime prevention and the advancement of cultural integration. Refreshingly, the author is conversant with the relevant literature in ethnomusicology. The section also includes two contributions on music therapy. The first (Chapter 10, by Vegar Jordanger) looks at the relevance of “collective vulnerability” for promoting interethnic dialogue between former adversaries in the Chechen War; The second (Chapter 11, by Maria Elena Lopez Vinader) presents an extended history of music therapy, with a limited discussion of music for peace. Unfortunately, the first study is ungrounded ethnographically and the second is unfocused thematically. Part Four presents three personal accounts of music employed in conflict transformation. Chapter 13 (by Rik Palieri) inadequately examines the redemptive power of music and provides unexpected interviews with a union mobilizer (Utah Phillips) and a peace activist (Pete Seeger). Chapter 14 (by Olivier Urbain) addresses in a partisan fashion the issue of music across boundaries, an “Arab Israeli Jew” (Yair Dalal) employing music to imagine a cultural connection between Muslim and Jew in the Middle East. Chapter 15 (by June Boyce-Tillman) concludes with a cursory study of cultural pluralism in cross-cultural composition.

It is hard not to criticize some aspects of this volume. The publication is founded upon a philosophical premise that considers a Western conception of empathy as a universal value. In this matter, a Judeo-Christian subtext seems to inform much of the scholarly narrative. The book is also founded upon a musical assumption that views a Western conception of music therapy and music education as having cross-cultural application. While the universal attributes of music are challenged (Chapter 12), the methodologies employed bespeak of psychological theories and didactic principles drawn from a particular intellectual tradition. Here, they are applied rather uncritically in a global arena where the causal relationship between sound and affect is widely assumed. Perhaps these drawbacks stem from a limited knowledge of musical scholarship shown by some contributors. Perhaps also, these criticisms could have been assuaged by a less partisan approach to cultural representation, especially when musical advocates are clearly sponsored by a government agency (Chapter 14). Unfortunately, these problems that concern musical understanding and cultural sensitivity permeate many of the studies in this volume. That being said, *Music in Conflict Transformation* is the first major publication of its kind. Geared towards a non-specialist audience, it considers a wide range of relevant issues in a clear and readable fashion.

War and Peace

In this review article, I have considered two recent publications concerning music in war and music for peace. Although nominally positioned as opposites in the “war-peace continuum,” each volume considers central issues related both to war and to peace: the first examining peaceful reactions to warlike intentions, the second looking at the paradoxical roles of music in conflict and conflict transformation. The two books also rely on an interdisciplinary collection of scholars: the former divided into musicologists and ethnomusicologists, the latter featuring political scientists and music practitioners. In both instances, this fragmentation leads to semantic ambiguity, a problem that detracts from a central issue: the significance of music for understanding war and for promoting peace. In this article, I have also examined my own relationship with music and conflict by presenting my personal interest in, and my professional concerns for, the topic. Significantly, my criticisms of the reviewed volumes arise from self-criticisms. Like Ritter and Daughtry, I believed in the significance of music for interrogating complex cultural texts. Like Urbain, I also believed in the power of music to transform conflict and to nurture inter-group understanding. For me, ethnomusicology provided the theoretical principles and the methodological tools to realize these goals.

However, my experience and my research suggest a more complex situation. Since war and peace are hard to define, the role of music in war is difficult to assess, and the issue of music for peace is awkward to study. The problem is exacerbated by the graded distinction between war and peace—that exist on a continuum—and the confusing intersection between war and peace that emerges during investigation. Here, ethnomusicologists may indeed be in a better position to examine with critical depth and cultural awareness the many ways in which music is used as a tool to aggravate and to appease conflict. They might also be able to evaluate with theoretical insight and methodological rigor the multiple perspectives uncovered through music in conflictual situations. However, they will need to take care. While the first reviewed book provides a critique of cultural representation and the second reviewed collection presents an evaluation of cultural appropriation, neither volume is fully self-critical. That is, the editors do not provide substantial statements describing their personal interest in the studies at hand. They also do not question the professional benefits of applied scholarship where some academics acquire prestige by studying the suffering of others—often with impunity, and sometimes without sensitivity.

Notes

1. The study of conflict has an established scholarly pedigree. Generally speaking, conflict has been understood either as a human behaviour (see Burton 1990) or as a social condition (see Tajfel 1978). In both instances, conflict is viewed in terms of asymmetric power relations (see Horowitz 1985) where power is used either to promote or subdue individual groups. Theorists of conflict resolution are less well represented in the academic record (see Boulding 1990, Kahn 1988). While psychological circumstance (see Kelman 1997) and behavioral constraint (see Burton 1990) provide a conceptual precedent, music has played some part in the development of a relevant theoretical discourse. In this respect, the work of Fitzduff (1989) and Jeong (1999) is especially representative. See O'Connell (2010) for an in-depth coverage of relevant sources.

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