7.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended for linguistic researchers preparing to undertake fieldwork, probably documenting one of the world's many small or endangered languages. Recognizing that linguists have their own priorities and methodologies in language documentation and description, I will advance reasons for including in your corpus the song and/or instrumental music that you are almost certain to encounter in the course of your fieldwork. I start by providing an overview of current thinking about the nature and significance of human musical capacities and the commonly encountered types, context, and significance of music, especially in relation to language. Since research funding usually precludes having a musicologist tag along in the original fieldwork, I will suggest some topics for discussion that would be of interest to musicologists, and
p. 167 make some suggestions for what is needed on a practical level to make your recordings useful to ↳ musicologists at a later date. I comment on the technical and practical requirements for a good musical documentation and how these might differ from language documentation, and also provide some suggestions on a workflow for field production of musical recordings for community use. Examples taken from my own fieldwork are intended to provide food for thought, and not to imply that music and dance traditions in other societies are necessarily structured in comparable ways.

7.2 Music, Language, and Human Diversity

The human inventiveness that underlies the production and development of language, music, and other communicative modes draws on various innate cognitive capacities for communication that are framed in human sociality (Cross 2008; Sperber and Hirschfield 1999). Like language, music is taught, learnt, and performed through human interaction. The same arguments advanced for documentation and preservation of the world's linguistic diversity (Grenoble and Whaley 1998) can be applied to musical diversity (Marett 2010; Marett and Barwick 2003). The following survey of the nature and importance of human musicality is intended to provide a framework for the linguistic researcher to understand some ways in which musical and linguistic capacities may differ, and the consequences of this difference for documentation.

7.2.1 Human musicality

Patterned sequences of speech, sound, and movement in the temporal arts of poetry, song, music, and dance are found in every human society. Cognitive psychologists and evolutionary biologists have theorized that this enables group synchrony, thus conferring evolutionary advantage (Cross 2003: 380). Much early work by cognitive psychologists on human musical capacities was tied to western conceptions of music and musical practices, and used western music in its experimental design. It is now acknowledged that non-western musics need to be taken into greater consideration in the field of evolutionary psychology (Cross 2007: 662; Fitch 2006: 206; McDermott and Hauser 2006: 113).

Although some have suggested that in evolutionary terms music can be characterized as ‘auditory cheesecake’ (Pinker 1997: 534) or ‘non-adaptive pleasure-seeking behaviour’ (Huron 2001), arising as a side-product of other more important faculties such as language, other researchers have argued that music
p. 168 may have ↳ played a key role in enabling the development of human cultures everywhere, and that certain aspects of musicality may have been the target of natural selection (Cross 2009; Huron 2001; McDermott and Hauser 2005). Fitch points out that different components of music capacity may have different evolutionary histories:

> music integrates a wide variety of domains (cognitive, emotional, perceptual, motor, …), may serve a variety of functions (mother-infant bonding, mate choice, group cohesion …) and may share key