

Abstracts
2013 SEM Niagara Chapter Meeting
Saturday, April 13, 2013
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

I: Social Markers

Brittni Roach (Kent State): V-Pop Reflections: Cultural Continuance of Vietnamese Popular Music in Northeast Ohio

Abstract: This presentation examines aspects of cultural continuance through Vietnamese Popular Music (V-Pop) among members of the Vietnamese-American population in northeast Ohio. Through field interviews and personal experiences among immigrant Vietnamese and their American-born children, the presenter will show how various forms of V-Pop reflect differing perspectives on preferences for each manner of performance. Considerations of age, location, weather, and socio-economic status offer insight into the support for promoting V-Pop as an indication of cultural identity in this community. The evolution of V-Pop music from the theatre genre *cải lương* is reviewed, followed by an exploration of “old” and “new” styles of V-Pop music and their characteristics. Vietnamese rap and rock genres are also discussed, illustrating unique elements distinguishing them from each other and their American music counterparts. The perseverance of the cultural legacy of V-Pop is studied in relation to immigrant adaptation to American ideals. The presentation will consider previous research by other authors, such as *Neotraditional Music in Vietnam* by Miranda Arana and *Popular Music of Vietnam: The Politics of Memory, the Economics of Forgetting* by Dale Olsen, to enhance the presenter’s arguments.

Pete Marjenin (Kent State): Metal Metal Land, Where Men Have Long Hair, Women are in Control and Where Societal Rules of Gender are Broken: An Examination of Masculinity in Heavy Metal Music

Abstract: This paper presents an analysis of the masculine characteristics found within Heavy Metal music and Heavy Metal culture and examines the rebellious nature of Heavy Metal cultural members as they create and perpetuate images that both contradict and reinforce Western societal concepts of gender. Ideologies of masculinity and femininity and their manifestation within Heavy Metal culture by both musicians and fans through their actions, aesthetics and musical performances are discussed, as well as the perpetuation of Western societal gender stereotypes within the larger scope of Popular Music. This leads to an examination of the dissolution, rebellion and reinforcement of and against gender stereotypes within Heavy Metal culture. This paper will draw upon research previously conducted by

researchers concentrating upon Heavy Metal and will attempt to augment previous work and research through the analysis of contemporary Heavy Metal artists. Research was conducted at performances of Heavy Metal bands such as Judas Priest, Gwar, Arkona, Rush, Epica, Rammstein, Nine Inch Nails, Black Label Society and Amon Amarth through performance observations as well as interactions with Heavy Metal fans both in the context of the concert as well as outside of the concert experience. This paper will serve as a contribution to the literature of ethnomusicology as it exams issues of power, mysticism, Western gender constructs and the perpetuation and rebellion against these gender constructs within the context of Heavy Metal music and culture.

Amy Unruh (Kent State): Revisiting Music as a Universal Language

Abstract: Today it is readily accepted among ethnomusicologists that music is universal and can be a language, but not a universal language; however, asking a member of the general population their view on this topic is likely to result in the opposite answer. Why do so many people assume music is a universal language? Often, they do so because they see how music can connect people (to one and other, to their community, to their culture, to their country, etc...). Are these connections only the result of shared experiences, emotions, intellectual understandings, culturally generated meanings, and contemporary histories as has already been established; or, are there times where the musical sounds themselves are the connecting factor? If so would this demonstrate that music is, at least in some ways, a universal form of communication? Can “sound” in and of itself be a language? Furthermore, does recent research in how the human brain and body process and experience sound, and therefore music, suggest a biological and /or energetic perspective from which music could be viewed as a universal language? How might these new models fit with established ethnomusicological views that music is not a universal language? Does the possibility of a solution rest upon how we define “language,” or is there another way to reconcile the paradox of these seemingly oppositional viewpoints?

II: Imaginary Spaces/Places/Realities

Anastasia Udarchik (University of Toronto): The Soundtrack of Ostalgie: Exploring Nostalgia for the Former East Germany through Music

Abstract: A portmanteau of the German words *Osten* (East) and *Nostalgie* (nostalgia), *Ostalgie* describes the prevailing bittersweet longing for life in the former socialist German Democratic Republic (*Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, 1949-1990), as experienced by a substantial number of

East Germans after the country's reunification. By creating an "imaginary homeland", the desire to return to these idealized visions of the past often signifies a discomfort with, and presents a means of escaping, the present reality (Boym, 2001). I believe that music—a potent trigger of nostalgia—consequently plays an important role in experiencing *Ostalgie*. This paper investigates how *Ostalgie* is manifested, commodified, and preserved in music-making and music-listening practices in Germany today.

The mental and physical barriers constructed during the Cold War between the two Germanys penetrated deep into the collective conscious, ultimately solidifying the opposing constructs of Eastern and Western political, cultural, and personal identities among German citizens. The centralized modes of production behind the Iron Curtain had a significant impact on all levels of artistic output in East Germany; everything including films, pop music, *Volkslieder* (national songs), and children's programming was strategically censored and laced with propaganda to create a unified conception of what it meant to be "East German". This cultural isolation was made obvious as the East Germans faced a collective identity crisis after Reunification, confronted with the uncertain future of a transforming nation. I argue that indulging in the perceived comfort, stability, and security of *Ostalgie*'s imagined East Germany through music not only revives a lost sense of identity, but also provides a reference point for re-imagining a more integrated trans-German identity.

Cody Black (University of Toronto): Let Me Know When Abeoji Returns: Reclaiming Male Power Within the Relic of Neo-Confucian Patriarchy in Contemporary K-Pop

Abstract: Since the inception of Neo-Confucianism as the official state ideology in the Choson dynasty, this patriarchal social structure has placed Korean males in an unquestioned authoritative power positioning over women. However, the abolishment of the ideology in the early twentieth century, the rise of feminist movements in the 1980s, and the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis has significantly jeopardized this traditional gender hierarchy, leaving contemporary males in unfamiliar territory in terms of sexuality and power. In this paper, I argue that the contemporary Korean pop music (K-Pop) industry represents an attempt for males to reclaim their lost power through the process of reconstructive nostalgia of the Neo-Confucian gender structure. This process is not a Korea-wide consensus, but is identified as the promulgated ideology of the few capital-oriented males who run the industry. Since the official reinstatement of such a system would impede on the progressing gender-equality efforts by the South Korean government, this reconstructive process is disseminated on an imaginative level. Through representing K-Pop artists performing hypergender roles—women are naive, subservient dolls;

males are economically prosperous playboys—these males create a modernized politically transcendent reality based on utopian fragmented relics of the imagined Neo-Confucian gender hierarchy. Since this hyperreal spectacle of K-Pop idols is widely consumed by the masses, these males reclaim their economically-linked sexuality that was weakened by the 1990s economic crisis. Subsequently, the male industry leaders ultimately reclaim themselves as the powerful *abeoji* (father) amongst their hypergendered idol children within their created imagined gendered family structure reality.

Gillian Stone (University of Toronto): Perpetuating Cascadia: Retaining Regional Musical Identity in British Columbia Through Virtual Scene and Imagination

Abstract: There exists in the Pacific Northwest a well-traveled musical circuit that runs through Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland. This isolated geographical space has also been referred to as Cascadia, a bioregion drawn by rivers and mountain ranges. Joel Dinerstein (2003:115) suggests that musicians often emulate, whether consciously or inadvertently, the soundscape they are surrounded by. This “experience of a physical landscape in music” is inherent to Cascadian musicians. However, as noted by Murray Forman (2002:2), spatialized power is often used to control and dominate social and physical landscapes. Since September 11, 2001, increased international border security and expensive visa requirements have caused working musicians in British Columbia to frequently opt out of performance opportunities in the United States. In this paper I suggest that if musicians can interact through social media, video-sharing websites and online audio distribution platforms, then they can imagine themselves as part of a “virtual scene (Lee and Peterson 2004:191).” The notion of a virtual scene does provide what Arjun Appadurai calls “a form of negotiation between sites of agency ('individuals') and globally defined fields of possibility” (1990:5), leading to the use of imagination as a tool for social practice. If Cascadian musicians can visualize their concept of community outside the confines of “nation-ness,” then they can indeed, in the words of Benedict Anderson, remap an “imagined community” within cyberspace. Landscape and soundscape can be preserved through virtual scene; the juxtaposition of natural ecology and highly technical mass media.

Panel on Ethnomusicology in the Past, Present, and Future: Perspectives from the “Aging Boomers.” Ellen Koskoff, Terry Miller, James Kippen, James Kimball, Carl Rahkonen.

Like all other scholarly fields, Ethnomusicology has undergone change over the past fifty years. While change is inevitable, there is no certainty that all the changes lead to improvement; only “different” is guaranteed. Those who came of age during what

some regard as the field's "golden age," the 1960s and 1970s, came to the field because of its emphasis on fieldwork, the study of "traditional" music, and its opportunities for experiences in places outside our own society. Since then we have watched the entire intellectual enterprise shift from Modernism, with its emphasis on description, to Post-Modernism, with its emphasis on interpretation, preferably according to a theory articulated by an "authority." In addition we have witnessed a major shift from the study of "traditional music" to "popular music." Some assert that the field no longer emphasizes the fieldwork that was central in the 1960s and now avoids investigation of "traditional" music in favor of a new sort of fieldwork involving computers, websites, media, and less commonly to travel to distant cities to witness the music and interview the participants. We understand that change is inevitable but some also feel that the younger generation is either unaware of what we did, why we did it, and how we did it, and on occasion dismisses it as "merely descriptive." Some assert that Ethnomusicology has "moved on," that it is now a more advanced field for having abandoned what we consider its roots. Our goal is to offer younger members a better understanding of the field's roots and the perspectives of its second-generation of scholars, those whom the news media often dubs "aging boomers."

III: Repertoire and Musical Knowledge through Performance

Jim Kimball (SUNY Geneseo): Some Tunes Sam Bayard Missed: the William Proper Fiddle Tapes

William "Bill" Proper (1907 – 1986) was a lumberman, avid fisherman and self-taught fiddler who lived in Warren and Crawford counties in northwestern Pennsylvania. In his later years his rural home became a popular spot for old-time music fans, who enjoyed hearing Bill play tunes, accompanied by his wife, Viola, on piano or guitar. On at least two occasions in the 1970s these informal sessions were recorded on reel-to-reel or cassette tapes, copies of which were passed on to the author a couple years ago. Preserved on these tapes are about 65 tunes, along with discussion among those present. The tunes themselves present an interesting mix of sources and influences. Proper had clearly grown up with a tradition of local house dances and tunes, representative of that area. Some of these tunes are interesting variants of locally traditional dance tunes; some are not well known and may only exist via these tapes. Other tunes clearly relate to Proper's fondness, by the 1960s, of attending fiddle contests in Canada – as an adjunct to summer fishing trips. A number of Canadian waltzes and distinctive north country tunes are performed, alternating comfortably with his older local tunes. At one point he plays a familiar minuet tune, possibly learned from an old instruction book; he plays an unnamed "foxtot" – all a typical mix for a rural fiddler of his generation. The paper will discuss and analyze the repertoire as it represents tune choices as played in a 1970s setting. Sample tune excerpts will be played.

Patricia Rolland (Kent State): Fife and Drum Jamming Among New England and New York Ancients

Abstract: This presentation will look at the function and structure of jamming among fife and drum ancients in New York and New England. Jamming is a prevalent practice in the fife and drum community, occurring at planned events as well as impromptu gatherings. Its primary function is social in nature – considered more “social” than “musical” by the participants – but also provides a forum in which musical ideas and practices are disseminated. It is common for fifers and drummers to learn new songs, ornamentation, and harmonies from the musicians in other corps. Some of these musical elements are adopted by other corps, shaping what becomes the standard practice of fife and drum corps in the region. As technology has become more portable, it has been incorporated into the learning process at these events. While there is no overt structure, there is a set of unwritten rules that holds this entirely self-regulating practice together, even at events with hundreds of participants. The examination of this community and their musical practices will lead to a better understanding of how informal musical gatherings act as a catalyst for social cohesion and musical evolution.

Rachel Brashier (Eastman): In Gamelan “You Have to Become One “Feeling””: A Sensory Transference Musical Knowledge

Abstract: The processes through which music can be learned are not only dependent upon the music itself, but are also shaped by multiple variables including the musical expert, the learner’s prior experiences, and the familiarity of both with the instruments. All of these act simultaneously as a package through which musical knowledge is acquired. Within the musical setting of an ensemble, in order to make sense of the sound and learn how to execute their part of the music correctly, students must understand exactly what the expert or teacher wants them to know and do. By examining the gamelan gong kebyar ensemble at the Eastman School of Music, *Gamelan Lila Muni*, and interviewing its Balinese instructor, I Nyoman Suadin, this paper will discuss the process through which learning music occurs by questioning: (1) how the learning of ‘bits’ of musical information occurs among new adult learners in the group who have extensive backgrounds in Western musical training, (2) what learning modes are used in this process, and (3) how they accommodate themselves to the new modes of learning needed for approaching gamelan music? Since there does not exist a universal formula for learning music, the acquisition of musical knowledge can be seen as a process of constant, in-real-time process involving both cognitive and sensory abilities.

IV: Impact of Colonialism and Modernization

Matt James (University of Toronto): Confronting Colonial History: Rethinking the Karnatic Violin

Abstract: In *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern*, Amanda Weidman portrays the European violin as serving to usher Karnatic music into its own modernity. Weidman sees the violin as preserving the authenticity of Karnatic music through its complex mimetic relationship with the voice. To Weidman, the use of the violin by Karnatic musicians — a trend she situates within Homi Bhabha's discussion of mimicry and Michael Taussig's exploration of cultural mimesis — is an exercise of counter-colonial power. Yet her assertions that mimicry gives colonized subjects the power to "disrupt the supremacy of the colonizer" and that the Karnatic violin is able to "reverse colonialism's effects" are arguably problematic: Weidman insufficiently explains which effects of colonialism are undone and does not clearly illustrate the process or result of this undoing. In this essay I interpret the violin not as a tool wielded by Karnatic musicians for intentionally counter-colonial purposes, but as a musical instrument taken up as part of an engagement with the material culture imposed upon South India during the colonial era. Through a close reading of Bhabha's and Taussig's theories of mimetic behaviours in colonial and postcolonial societies, I modify Weidman's argument in a way that does not inflate the power of the Karnatic violin to intervene in the exertion of colonial power or overstate the intent of South Indian musicians to undo colonialism's effects. Mimicry is a crucial process that allows societies and individuals to make sense of cultural transformations in a constructive and performative fashion.

Katie Young (University of Toronto): The Role of the mbira in Zimbabwean Popular Music: 1950-1995

The mbira, a hand-held instrument from Zimbabwe, is often discussed in scholarship for its spiritual and traditional functions. Yet, the mbira has also established a unique role within international pop music markets. In this presentation, I will examine three political and economic shifts in Zimbabwe from 1950-1995, including the late-colonial period, unofficial independence, and official independence. These shifts altered and influenced the style, aesthetic and approach to mbira in popular music in different ways. From 1950-1965, the colonial ban on the mbira established the mbira as an iconic instrument of Zimbabwean urban-class culture. Mbira players resisted the colonial ban by playing in late night jazz and soul clubs in the nearby urban centers of Salisbury and Bulawayo. From 1965-1980, Southern Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) was not recognized officially by the international community, resulting in a fifteen-year international economic sanction. This

economic sanction forced the Zimbabwean popular music scene to abandon international ties, and as a result, the mbira was influenced by nearby Congolese, Zairean and South African rumba, soukous, and kwela genres. With internationally recognized independence and the end of economic sanctioning in 1980, newly imported foreign genres, including country, pop, hip-hop and reggae, influenced a new generation of mbira players. In combination, these internal and external political and economic forces altered the role of mbira in Zimbabwean society and culture in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Tony Vieira (York): Approaching Perfect Ezan: How technology is changing the 1400 year old tradition of the Islamic Call to Prayer

This article examines two different approaches in recent attempts to standardize ezan (Islamic call to prayer) in Cairo and Istanbul respectively. Drawing on fieldwork in Istanbul and western Anatolia, interviews with Muslims living in Canada, and abroad, existing academic literature, and news articles and editorials on the subject, comparisons will be presented with regard to the rationale for and process of standardization in each city. The argument will be made that although the Egyptian and Turkish sociopolitical relationships with ezan have historically been markedly different, and the recent approaches taken by each country to achieve standardization may appear to run counter to their respective predilections with regard to Islam and modernity, their intent and motivation are analogous. The evolving and often contentious relationship between technology and ezan will be addressed in order to contextualize recent modernizations within a broader historical timeline. Special attention will be paid to the Turkish ezan, with examples provided based on my own fieldwork in Turkey, and particularly Istanbul, with the intention of further contextualizing the pervasiveness and relevance of this ancient tradition within a city that seemingly grapples with the push and pull of modernity and antiquity. This article is part of a larger and ongoing research document that focuses on the cultural connotations of ezan within the modern Turkish milieu.