Third Edition

EXCURSIONS IN WORLD MUSIC

Bruno Nettl ✦ Charles Capwell
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Thomas Turino

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Preface

The authors are pleased to present this third revised edition of *Excursions in World Music* to its expanding audience with the hope that the changes made will further increase its informativeness and utility. After the major revisions of the second edition, we have not felt the need for a fundamental overhaul, but several of the book's chapters have been rewritten to bring them up to date and to provide a greater variety of information. In particular, the chapters on music in China (4), in the Middle East (3), and among Native Americans (10) have been extensively altered and expanded with more attention given to popular music and contemporary developments, while the introductory essay on "Studying the World's Musical Cultures" now incorporates a broader discussion of the field of ethnomusicology.

Essentially, however, the book has remained, in its orientation, structure, and basic content, what it was originally intended to be—a set of chapters, by scholars writing with conviction and a sense of devotion, about cultures in which they have had substantial field experience, providing information and interesting syntheses of the musical cultures of the world. We have done this in order to stimulate understanding and engender respect.

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We are grateful to Melinda Russell (Carleton College) for editorial help with the second edition and to Margaret Sarkissian (Smith College) for preparing the teacher's guide. We also wish to express our gratitude for the numerous helpful suggestions provided by anonymous readers and loyal users of the book alike.

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About the Authors

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Thomas Turino studied at the University of Texas and has taught at the University of Illinois since 1987. After extensive field research in Peru, he published *Moving Away from Silence,* about the musical culture of the Aymara in a variety of contexts. In 1992–93 he lived for a year in Zimbabwe, where he did research on village music and musical nationalism. He is an expert performer on the African Mbira and founder of the Peruvian panpipe ensemble at Illinois.

Philip Bohlman studied at the University of Illnois and has been, since 1987, at the University of Chicago. He has done fieldwork in ethnic communities in Wisconsin, Chicago, and Pittsburgh, as well as Israel, Germany, and Austria. he is the author of *The Land Where Two Streams Flow* and *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*. Among his recent interests is the study of music in the pilgrimages of various religions.

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Introduction: Studying Musics of the World's Cultures

Bruno Nettl

OUR PURPOSE: PRESENTING THE WORLD OF MUSIC

The purpose of this book is to introduce the reader to the world of music, the music of the world's cultures, emphasizing their diversity and the uniqueness of each. Directing ourselves to students—particularly those without a technical background in music—and to general readers, we want to give our readers a sense of the character of music and musical life of all of the world's peoples. There are thousands of peoples, each with its own music, and so, clearly, we can do this only by sampling and by judicious synthesis. But rather than simply providing an introduction to non-Western music or "ethnic" music, we include also the musical culture of Europe, its academic or art music along with its folk and popular traditions, among the musics of the world. We have divided the world into ten major culture areas or blocks, devoting a chapter to each, mindful of course that within each of them there is a great deal of cultural and musical variation. In each region and for that matter in the whole world, we have tried to provide a representative sample. Even so, there are large areas that we have had to leave untouched.

In order to provide a degree of depth as well as breadth, we have had to be selective. We can do no more than provide excursions that, taken together, will hopefully provide the reader a picture of the way the world's peoples make music, think about it, use it in their lives, and also what all this music sounds like and how it is structured. The world's musical diversity is reflected to some degree in the diversity

of the organization of our chapters; but there are some things on which all chapters touch. Thus, in each chapter we first focus upon detailed description of a musical event that may be considered broadly representative of its culture area. Ordinarily, this is followed by an introduction to the cultures and societies of the area, and then a more synthetic treatment of musical life and ideas about music, of musical style (described in terms comprehensible by nonspecialists), music history, and musical instruments, a brief description of a few additional musical genres or contexts, and, finally, a consideration of recent developments. We describe musical cultures as they exist in the twentieth century, but wherever possible we provide some information about their history. We do this in some measure in order to dispel the notion that Western academic or art music lives in a sense through its history, while the musics of other societies have no history at all, or at best a very different sort of history.

There is one thing we should make clear right now, and also in every chapter: Every musical system, that is, the music and musical life of each society, from the multifarious society of New York City, say, to a native Amazonian tribe of two hundred persons, is a very complex phenomenon that may be analyzed and comprehended from many perspectives. We certainly would not be able to provide the amount of detail necessary to illustrate this point for all of the cultures and musics with which we deal. We therefore introduce the world's musical complexity selectively, each chapter featuring one or a few concepts. Thus, in addition to providing a set of general and essentially parallel introductions to the musics of ten world areas, this book may also be read as an introduction to the topics within world music study. For example, in Chapter 4, on China, the reader will find a detailed examination of the role of music in the political development of a modernizing nation as an illustration of the kinds of things that also happened elsewhere in the world. Chapter 2, on India, gives special attention to the relationship of music and dance, something that might have but could not be stressed in all of the chapters. Chapter 7, on Sub-Saharan Africa, provides special insight into the world of popular music in non-Western urban societies. Chapter 3, on the Middle East, concentrates on different conceptions of music in the world's cultures, and on ways musicians learn to improvise. Chapter 8, on Europe, shows the close relationships among folk, art, and popular musics in the contemporary world, and also, along with Chapter 9 (on Latin America) looks at the relationship of musical and social values. Chapter 6, on Indonesia, examines the place of Indonesian music in the Western world, and of the role of Western artists and tourists in Indonesian musical culture. Chapter 5, on Japan, shows the discovery, by very modernized society, of its older traditions. Chapter 10, on Native Americans, provides information on the study of history and prehistory of musical cultures without written records. And Chapter 11, on North America, provides insight into the interaction of traditional, rural folk music, and modern urbanized though multiethnic culture.

For each area of the world covered by a chapter, we have tried to provide an overview; thus, Chapter 2 speaks at least briefly to many of the kinds of music found

in India; Chapter 7 tells of the differences between East, Central, and West Africa, between rural and urban musics; Chapter 10 gives an overview of the musics of the hundreds of Native North American tribes. But, while we believe that our accounts achieve this kind of breadth, we also wish to show the reader the depth of musical culture, the many things that go into the composing, performance, understanding of even a simple song or ritual, its history and the effects it has, how it is perceived and judged by the people who render it and who hear it. This we have tried to accomplish by concentrating, in each chapter, on a limited number of representative cultures, communities, events, and even instruments within the broad geographical area that it covers. Thus, in Chapter 3, the author concentrates on Iran, where he had done original research, to impart a sense of the many things to be noted, even though space limitations prevent giving the same attention to the Arabic peninsula or Turkey. Chapter 8 presents the scope of European music, with all its variety, through the prism of the city of Vienna.

One of our purposes is to explain music as a cultural phenomenon. We do hope to persuade the readers to listen to music of at least some of the world's many societies, and to find it enjoyable. But the idea that music is principally to be "enjoyed" is a notion characteristic of Western culture, not necessarily shared by other societies. Indeed, much of the music we will be discussing has purposes far beyond enjoyment. The significance of much of the world's music is in the realm religion and society—in the way humans interact with the supernatural, and with each other. In some societies, music identifies clans and social classes, confirms political status, expresses communication from the supernatural, and cures the sick. Thus, while readers will want to know how the musical pieces of the world's cultures are put together and what general principles of composition may dominate in a given society, it is perhaps even more important for them to understand each culture's ideas of what music is, what its powers are, how it relates to other aspects of life, and how it reflects important things about its people and their view of the world. For this reason, while we wish to explain the nature of musical sound, we also have tried to present a holistic picture of musical life and musical culture.

NOTES ON THE "MARRIAGE OF FIGARO"

Our purpose, then, is to present the varieties of the world's musics, and to present several ways of looking at music, all of them necessary for understanding a particular work of music as it interacts with its culture in many ways. The world's music includes the music of Western culture, and so let me illustrate our approach first by commenting on a work familiar to many readers, Mozart's opera, *The Marriage of Figaro* (originally named *Le Nozze di Figaro*). Its structure is an alternation of recitatives, in which the action is carried forward through quick dialogue barely sung, with arias and vocal ensembles such as trios and quartets, in which characters make lyrical and contemplative statements, or react on what has just happened. Knowing this

tells us something about the aesthetics and, if you will, the attention span of the patrons. But it also tells us about the relationship of opera to spoken drama, about the way Mozart and other composers of his time, and their audience, perceived the relationship of music and language.

The fact that this is an opera with Italian words, composed by a German-speaking Austrian for a German-speaking audience in Vienna, speaks to this relationship as well. The well-educated audience of patrons for whom *Figaro* was composed presumably understood Italian and felt that this knowledge set them off from the general population, which would have wished for operas in German, and so we see this work as directed towards an elite segment of society. But this elite society also comes in for criticism in the content of the opera, because the plot actually depicts a mild social revolution. Figaro, the lowly but clever barber, wants to protect his fiancée from having to spend the night before their honeymoon with his boss, the count—this was at the time part of the contract between landowners and their employees. Figaro succeeds, of course, without violence and through his wit, and everyone lives happily ever after, but when this opera was first presented it definitely raised the eyebrows of the Austrian aristocracy.

Mozart was not widely regarded as a great genius in his own day, but now he holds that status more than any other. In his lifetime (1756–1791), the concept of "great master" of music had not really been developed, and when they were writing music, composers did not expect it to become great art for all times. Today, *Figaro* is considered one of the great musical works of all times, but in its day it was seen, at best, to be fine entertainment. In Mozart's time, the difference in musical style between academic music and music for popular entertainment wasn't all that great; the two sounded rather alike. Around 1800 this began to change, and today we expect academic music, what we call "classical" or "art" music, to sound quite different from popular music.

By now Mozart has become a deity among composers, and much is said and written about the greatness of *Figaro* and the reasons for it. In today's American society, the concepts of genius and talent, innate ability that sets an artist apart, are important to musical culture. It is very important to us to know that Mozart already composed acceptable music at the age of seven; and to assert the myth that he composed masterworks with enormous speed, as if they sprang ready-made from his brain. We have developed, it seems, a kind of athletic view of music: We are impressed when something takes many hours to accomplish, or when someone can carry out significant work quickly, or when a composer or performer can accomplish an extremely difficult task of memory or dexterity. A quick look at *The Marriage of Figaro* tells us certain essential things about the culture of Mozart's time, but, more significantly, because this opera is an important component of musical life today, also about our own musical culture as North Americans, our musical values and attitudes.

But now to stress another point. The attitudes that make us extol Mozart and *Figaro* may not be the attitudes of other societies. Doing something difficult musically

may not be a criterion for judging a song in Native American societies, and the concept of the musical masterwork, which may not be altered and must always be performed as the composer intended it, is not relevant to understanding the music of India. But it would be a mistake to see the musical world as bifurcated, the Western masterworks such as *Figaro* on one side, and the rest of the world's music on the other. *Figaro* fits well into the world's musical picture. Many societies have drama rather like opera, in which the characters sing; many have forms of communication that, like Italian recitative, fall between ordinary speech and song; in many societies, music is used to express criticism of society. Social elites have musical ways of symbolizing their superiority—artistic resources such as the orchestra, linguistic techniques such as having opera in a foreign language. And we will need to remember that just as the European view of Mozart has changed since his death, all societies change in their views of music as well as in their musical styles. And, further, that Western academic musical culture requires constant innovation and rapid change as a hallmark of its series of masterworks, while other societies may restrict and inhibit change as detrimental to the function of music.

Ideas about music, and contexts of creation and performance, help us to understand the music itself, which in turn provides insight into the values that led to it and the culture of which it is a part. And a look at a single work or performance gives us insight into the entire musical system.

CERTAIN BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

This book, in presenting the world's musical cultures, employs certain basic assumptions, the most important of which should be understood by the reader at the outset.

A Relativistic View

If *The Marriage of Figaro* is a great work of music, this must be because to its consumers—Europeans and Americans who listen to operas—it satisfies certain criteria: It is a work of great complexity; its structure has internal logic; it has harmony and counterpoint, whereby several simultaneous melodies are both independent and united; the composer shows ability to write music particularly suited to voices, instruments, and orchestra, and facility in relating words and music; the work carries a particular social and spiritual message; and so on. Using these criteria to judge the musics of other cultures would quickly lead us to conclude that Western music is the best and greatest. But from the viewpoint of an Indian musician whose task is improvising within a framework of melodic and rhythmic rules, the performers of *Figaro* might not come off so well, since they must reproduce an existing work precisely and rely on notation to keep them from deviating, thus finding little opportunity to be creative. A Native American who considers a song to be a way for spirits to communicate with humans might marvel at the counterpoint of Bach, but he might also feel that this whole notion of what is "good" or "better" (or "lousy") music makes no

sense. Performers in a West African percussion ensemble might find the melodic and harmonic structure of Figaro interesting but its rhythms simpleminded.

As students of world music, we cannot reconcile these divergent viewpoints. We are better off taking a relativistic attitude. We—the authors—believe that each society has a musical system that suits its culture, and while we may compare them with each other in terms of their structure and function, we avoid making these comparisons the basis of qualitative judgments. Instead, we recognize that each society evaluates its own works of music by its own criteria. In American society, we take it for granted that music should be an enjoyable auditory experience; elsewhere, the musical ideal may be quite different. We want to understand each music as an aspect of its own culture, and we recognize that each human community creates the kind of music it needs for its particular rituals and cultural events, to support its social system, and thus, to reflect its principal values.

World Music Is a Group of Musics

We see the world of music as consisting of a group of *musics*. It makes sense to think of *a* music somewhat as if it were a language. Each society has its own principal music, and the members of a society know and respond to their music with a kind of common understanding, in the way they communicate through their language. But just as languages borrow words from each other, musics also influence each other. Indeed, as mass media and the Internet along with radio, TV, and CDs facilitate worldwide communication, most people of the world have access to the same body of popular music that they add to their native music (and maybe most people know at least a bit of English, making them part of their language). And just as a society sometimes replaces one language with another (the Anglo-Saxons learned Middle English after the Norman invasion in 1066, and native peoples of South America took up Spanish after the arrival of Columbus), a community of people may cease using their tradition of music and replace it with another. Some individuals and some entire communities are bilingual; this is true of many North American Native American peoples today. Similarly, many Native American communities are "bimusical," using traditional Native American music and Western music equally but for different purposes, considering both to be, now, their cultural property.

We think of each music as a system, in the sense that changes in one of its components cause changes in the rest. Thus, if an Asian society begins using the Western piano to perform its traditional musical repertory, this music may change in its melodic and harmonic aspects because of the kinds of things (e.g., playing chords) that cannot be easily done on the older instruments but are normal for the piano. Bringing in the piano might also cause performance contexts to change. Consider, for example, a kind of music performed by itinerant street musicians. If this music were taken up by the piano it would no longer be itinerant, and if the piano were located in a concert hall, the idea of what this music should be and do would also change radically. Or, bringing notated music into a culture in which all music was