



becoming an ethnomusicologist

A Miscellany of Influences

Bruno Nettl

Becoming an Ethnomusicologist: The History of Int

of Bruno Nettl, in which he examines the personalities and contributions of eleven individuals who influenced him significantly, from his childhood in Czechoslovakia and his family's forced departure to his education in the United States and career as a scholar.

This book opens with the author's exploration of the careers of his father, the well-known music historian Paul Nettl, and his mother, Gertrud Nettl, a pianist and piano teacher. He provides insights into his own evolution as a musicologist, discussing the rise of the discipline of ethnomusicology from studies of Native American music by his mentor George Herzog to the works of linguist C. F. Voegelin and folklorist Stith Thompson. He also looks back on the contribution and input of the principal consultants in his fieldwork on Native American, Iranian, and Indian music.

Becoming an Ethnomusicologist contributes significantly to the history of musicology, containing the most in-depth treatment of the work of Paul Nettl and George Herzog. Nettl's insights allow for an understanding of the lives of Jewish and German minorities in Bohemia through the first half of the twentieth century, pre-WWII Prague, the experience of intellectual and academic refugees in the United States during and after the war, and the early development of ethnomusicology as a field of study. This work will interest students and scholars of immigration history, Native American culture, and the history of ethnomusicology itself.

Bruno Nettl was born in Prague in 1930, immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1939, and grew up in Princeton, New Jersey. He is the author of *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts* (2005) and *Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology* (2010). He has spent most of his career teaching at the University of Illinois, where he is now professor emeritus of music and anthropology.

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Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities

Series Editors: Philip V. Bohlman and Martin Stokes

The new millennium challenges ethnomusicologists, dedicated to studying the music of the world, to examine anew the Western musics they have treated as "traditional," and to forge new approaches to world musics that are often overlooked because of their deceptive familiarity. As the modern discipline of ethnomusicology expanded during the second half of the twentieth century, influenced significantly by ethnographic methods in the social sciences, ethnomusicology's "field" increasingly shifted to the exoticized Other. The comparative methodologies previously generated by Europeanist scholars to study and privilege Western musics were deliberately discarded. Europe as a cultural area was banished to historical musicology, and European vernacular musics became the spoils left to folk-music and, later, popular-music studies.

Europea challenges ethnomusicology to return to Europe and to encounter its disciplinary past afresh, and the present is a timely moment to do so. European unity nervously but insistently asserts itself through the political and cultural agendas of the European Union, causing Europeans to reflect on a bitterly and violently fragmented past and its ongoing repercussions in the present, and to confront new challenges and opportunities for integration. There is also an intellectual moment to be seized as Europeans reformulate the history of the present, an opportunity to move beyond the fragmentation and atomism the later twentieth century has bequeathed and to enter into broader social, cultural, and political relationships.

Europea is not simply a reflection of and on the current state of research. Rather, the volumes in this series move in new directions and experiment with diverse approaches. The series establishes a forum that can engage scholars, musicians, and other interlocutors in debates and discussions crucial to understanding the present historical juncture. This dialogue, grounded in ethnomusicology's interdisciplinarity, will be animated by reflexive attention to the specific social configurations of knowledge of and scholarship on the musics of Europe. Such knowledge and its circulation as ethnomusicological scholarship are by no means dependent on professional academics, but rather are conditioned, as elsewhere, by complex interactions between universities, museums, amateur organizations, state agencies, and markets. Both the broader view to which ethnomusicology aspires and the critical edge necessary to understanding the present moment are served by broadening the base on which "academic" discussion proceeds.

"Europe" will emerge from the volumes as a space for critical dialogue, embracing competing and often antagonistic voices from across the continent, across the Atlantic, across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and across a world altered ineluctably by European colonialism and globalization. The diverse subjects and interdisciplinary approaches in individual volumes capture something of—and, in a small way, become part of—the jangling polyphony through which the "New Europe" has explosively taken musi-

cal shape in public discourse, in expressive culture, and, increasingly, in political form. *Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities* aims to provide a critical framework necessary to capture something of the turbulent dynamics of music performance, engaging the forces that inform and deform, contest and mediate the senses of identity, selfhood, belonging, and progress that shape “European” musical experience in Europe and across the world.

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For Natalie, Gloria, Becky

Foreword

On Miscellany, Modernity, and Memoir in Ethnomusicology

Miscellany is a relentlessly plural form of writing, and it is therefore particularly fitting that Bruno Nettl has chosen the miscellany to gather his writings on memoir and modernity. Miscellany as a genre of writing and publishing has a long history, one beginning with the first printing of English poetry in 1557, Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes*, generally known simply as *Tottel's Miscellany*. The etymological history of miscellany, too, unfolds as linguistic predecessors to the modern term moved from one language to another, gathering plurals along the way, for instance, when the French *miscellanées* took over from the Latin *miscellanea*. As a genre miscellany is distinctive because of its capaciousness, its ability to gather parts together and afford them a new wholeness, all the while retaining, even enhancing, the diverse qualities of their plurality. How very fitting that Bruno Nettl should turn to the miscellany as he gathers the stories of eleven individuals whose lives collected and collectively give shape to the modern history of ethnomusicology.

That Nettl's miscellany is a natural fit for the series *Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities* could not be more obvious. Ethnomusicology's modernities would be unimaginable without the lifelong contributions of Bruno Nettl. As a scholar he has researched the musics of many times and places, he has moved across repertoires and disciplines, and he has insisted upon the value of bringing many rather than few perspectives to understanding the field. As a teacher he has provided lessons to the generations of students passing through his classes and charting their own ways across the landscapes of music's modernities. Even a quick glance across the works that define his contributions to ethnomusicology falls upon the dense presence of plurals and pluralizing, be they "eight urban musical cultures" or the expansion of the study of ethnomusicology from "twenty-nine issues and concepts" to "thirty-one."

The plural turn itself assumes multiple forms, which become the markers of memoir in Nettl's *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist*. The plural turn captures the dynamic processes of change that are critical to the ways in which ethnomusicologists understand, shape, and activate history. At the most fundamental conceptual level, music becomes musics;

origin becomes origins; culture becomes cultures. The plural turn signals the acts of "becoming," and it is therefore hardly surprising that those acts of becoming fill the present volume of memoir and miscellany. The plural turn, moreover, is notable because it unleashes modernity, indeed, the very modernities that have become the subjects of the volumes that collectively reflect the turn toward Europe that "Europea" represents, not by holding to a methodological canon in ethnomusicology, rather by proliferating as the ethnomusicologies that are now possible and critical for understanding the European modernities of our own age.

Bruno Nettl has chosen miscellany, too, as a signal of the move toward the plural, and in so doing, he reflects on the pasts and presents of a field that exists fundamentally by gathering multiple ethnomusicologies. There is little question that Bruno Nettl has been the historiographer laureate for the ethnomusicologies over many years. Whether tracing the lives of folk songs or looking for the ways in which Asian modal systems came to cohere, Nettl follows the ways in which music moves from past to present, and musicians live lives that become ever more modern. It is even plausible to suggest that Nettl's historiographic impulse led him to the miscellany we have before us. Miscellany, as we witness here, generates the many forms of writing the history of ethnomusicology. *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist*, thus, clearly employs the methods of prosopography, the study of history as the collective actions and interactions of multiple historical agents. Ethnomusicology, as the field's first generation frequently declared in the 1950s, is what ethnomusicologists do. The following pages, nonetheless, are not only about what ethnomusicologists do, rather they also ask us to consider the ways in which ethnomusicologists respond to the influences from others. The sense of homage and honor that fills Nettl's writings is surely very clear here, but we also witness the ways in which the influences that led to his becoming an ethnomusicologist came from his family, not least in the chapters on his mother and father. Might we think of the history of ethnomusicology, then, also as a miscellany of family histories? The personal transmission of music between generations forms other subgenres of historiography in the following chapters, leading us to observe the ways in which ethnomusicology's histories are themselves the result of the plural turn within the field. As memoir, *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist* bears witness to social and cultural history, personalizing and transforming them, as Nettl himself observes, into a Bildungsroman, a coming-of-age novel. Memoir affords the opportunity to honor our teachers, and we enter the history of ethnomusicology with them, not unlike the legacies that are passed on through the North Indian, *guru-śiṣya parampara*, leading us at various moments to feel influences from Nettl's researches in the Middle East and South Asia. His European origins always exposed, not least for a memoir that moves from Europe but then returns to Europe, Nettl the historiographer and memoirist also writes style history, discourse history, *Wirkungs-*

geschichte, and *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, all as if they were dialects that reflected his intellectual mother tongue. Which is precisely what they do.

Becoming an Ethnomusicologist brings new questions to the concern in the *Europea* series, for what Europe has meant in the history of ethnomusicology. In Nettl's volume, much like other volumes in the series, the movement between Europe and North America assumes many forms. These pages are filled with stories of success, stories of tragedy, stories of transformation. Europe, significantly, has contributed to the plural turn toward ethnomusicologies. The plurality of a discipline and the prosopography of those whose lives collectively—as miscellany—become its history. The turn toward modernities, too, follows the turn to North America and the return possible in a Europe reclaiming its intellectual past. For Bruno Nettl, these modernities make possible a kind of intellectual democracy that he reimagines and realizes as an Americanness that made it possible for him to transplant his European roots. Nettl's sense of intellectual democracy and openness has been critical to the ways in which the individuals who populate our works in ethnomusicology make their own modernities.

We believe that the use of miscellany as a genre of ethnomusicological writing signals much of the return to Europe that has shaped *Europea* from the outset and remains explicit in our series foreword: “*Europea* challenges ethnomusicology to return to Europe and to encounter its disciplinary past afresh, and the present is a timely moment to do so.” Bruno Nettl at once sustains that challenge and encourages ethnomusicologists to embrace it. He lives, as he is wont to remind us when writing about world music, in the American “Heartland,” and he has even given it ethnomusicological form. In his ethnomusicology, however, he refuses to essentialize an American ethnomusicology, his own success stories and those of others notwithstanding. Critically, his work represents an American ethnomusicology that rejects American exceptionalism, but recognizes, instead, the fact that it is anathema to the ethical foundations of what leads one to become an ethnomusicologist.

For earlier drafts of this book Bruno Nettl used the title *Eleven*, whereby he referred to the eleven individuals whose lives provided the miscellany of influences in its pages. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons that he abandoned his original title for *Becoming an Ethnomusicologist*. *Eleven*, we might imagine, is a number that suits miscellany rather uncomfortably. As a prime number, eleven does not lend itself to division into parts, claiming instead a wholeness all its own. Symbolically, too, eleven might offer fewer meanings with which to understand the memoirist's miscellany.

As we close this foreword, we should like to suggest that Bruno Nettl abandoned *Eleven* because he recognized that it was really the number

twelve that he should have used for his title. For an ethnomusicologist whose life took him from Prague to Bloomington to Champaign and beyond into the world, the number twelve is laden with symbolic importance. The religious significance for Judaism and Christianity is obvious: the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles. It is with twelve as a figure of time—the hours of the day as two times twelve, the number of months in the year—that we reckon the temporal moments that accrue to history. Most significantly, however, the number twelve reaches its plural turn in music. In European music, the twelve tones of the chromatic scale proliferated in J. S. Bach's two volumes of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, and they led Arnold Schoenberg beyond the borders of tonality in the techniques allowing the composer to shape new wholes from the twelve tones of the European tradition. In the course of Nettl's ethnomusicological experiences twelve achieved even greater significance in his studies of Asian modal systems, in the twelve fundamental *shruti* in modern South Indian practice, but above all the twelve *dastgah-ha* to which the *radif* of Persian classical music gives wholeness. Twelve, then, would have been the obvious title for this book, with the memoirist himself assuming the position of twelve.

We can only wonder why he chose not to use twelve, but it is clear to us that the plural turn in ethnomusicology that lies at the heart of this book would not be as well served as by the title on which he eventually settled. Miscellanies contain narratives that, like the ethnomusicologist, are in the process of becoming. The lives that enter this ethnomusicological miscellany, too, take their turns becoming influences, on the readers joined in the collectivity of multiple ethnomusicologies and modernities, no less than on Bruno Nettl himself.

—Philip V. Bohlman and Martin Stokes

Acknowledgments

I am pleased to acknowledge many kinds of help in the preparation of this book. Several passages in chapters 2 and 3 are taken, with revisions, from pp. 75–81 and 90–93 of my book *Encounters in Ethnomusicology* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2002, out of print since 2009). I am grateful to the Harmonie Park Press for permission to reprint these passages. Much of chapter 4 is a reproduction (again, with substantial revisions and corrections) of my article “In Honor of Our Principal Teachers” (*Ethnomusicology* 28:173–86, 1984), which was a published version of my Charles Seeger lecture given at the 1983 meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Tallahassee, Florida. I thank the society for permission to quote this now almost thirty-year-old article.

Most of the research for and writing of chapter 2 about George Herzog was carried out while I had a Mellon Emeritus Fellowship for research in the history of ethnomusicology, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the University of Illinois. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Mellon Foundation for the support of this project, and to the University of Illinois for supporting my research and writing projects over the years. Also regarding this chapter, I am grateful to Dr. Susanne Ziegler and Dr. Lars-Christian Koch (Berlin) for permitting and facilitating the use of the Deutsches Phonogrammarchiv; to Professor Zuzana Jurková (Prague) for facilitating interviews; and to Dr. Alan Burdette, Ms. Marilyn Graf, Ms. Rachel Caswell, and Ms. Susanne Mudge (Bloomington) for facilitating my use of the Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University.

Since the definition and history of the term “ethnomusicology” appears as an issue at various points, I wish to express gratitude to Izaly Zemtsovsky for pointing out the 1928 invention of the term *etnomusikologija* in Ukrainian, and the article by Lukaniuk (2010) that discusses it.

I am grateful to Jessica Hajek, my research assistant from 2010 to 2011 and doctoral student in musicology at the University of Illinois, for all of the various kinds of things research assistants usually do.

Quotations from publications and from my memory ordinarily appear in the original, and the translations that sometimes follow them are my own. In a good many cases, however, very brief quotes are presented only in English without the original, in order to avoid disturbing the flow of the sentence. These translations, except where noted, are my own as well.

I wish to extend sincere thanks to several friends and colleagues and also to members of my family for reading parts of the manuscript, making corrections, and giving advice and encouragement: Michael Beckerman, Hormoz Farhat, Victoria Levine, Arthur Lieb, Lotte Mulligan, Gloria Roubal, Paul Stewart, Robert von Gutfeld, and Philip Yampolsky. Thank you. And many thanks particularly to my wife, Wanda, for proof-reading, editing, and being my inspiration.

Chronology

- 1863 BN's (author's) paternal grandfather, Karl Nettl, b. (born)
- 1866 BN's paternal grandmother, Johanna Nettl, b.
- 1877 BN's maternal grandmother, Clara Hutter, b.
- 1885 Stith Thompson b.
- 1889 BN's father, Paul Nettl, b.
- 1899 William Shakespear (Arapaho) b.
- 1901 George Herzog b.
- 1905 BN's mother, Gertrud Nettl, b.
- 1906 Nour-Ali Boroumand b.
- 1906 Carl (C. F.) Voegelin b.
- 1907 Harold E. Driver b.
- 1913 Paul Nettl, Dr. Jur
- 1915 Paul Nettl, PhD; Calvin Boy (Blackfoot) b.
- 1917 S. Ramanathan b.
- 1920 Thomas A. Sebeok b.
- 1922 Paul Nettl became assistant at University of Prague
- 1925 George Herzog immigrated to USA
- 1927 Paul Nettl became acting professor in Prague
- 1928 Paul Nettl and Gertrud Hutter married
- 1930 BN b.
- 1939 BN and parents immigrated to USA, settled in Princeton
- 1946 BN and parents moved to Bloomington, Indiana
- 1947 BN began college at Indiana University
- 1949 BN began study with George Herzog and with the scholars of chapter 3; Paul Nettl appointed professor with tenure at Indiana University

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|-----------|---|
| 1951 | BN's first acquaintance with William Shakespear, Arapaho |
| 1952 | BN married Wanda White; Gertrude Nettl (BN's mother) d. (died) |
| 1953 | BN and Wanda moved to Detroit; birth of daughter Rebecca |
| 1963 | Birth of BN's daughter Gloria |
| 1964 | BN and family moved to Champaign-Urbana; BN appointed associate professor at University of Illinois |
| 1965 | BN's first acquaintance with S. Ramanathan |
| 1966 | BN's first acquaintance with Calvin Boy in Montana, and with Nour-Ali Boroumand in Tehran |
| 1968-1969 | BN's family spent a year in Tehran |
| 1972 | Paul Nettl d. |
| 1975 | Calvin Boy d.; William Shakespear d. |
| 1976 | Stith Thompson d. |
| 1978 | Nour-Ali Boroumand d. |
| 1981-1982 | BN and Wanda spent six months in India |
| 1983 | George Herzog d. |
| 1986 | Carl Vogelin d. |
| 1988 | S. Ramanathan d. |
| 1992 | Harold Driver d. |
| 2001 | Thomas Sebeok d. |

Introduction

This book pays homage to eleven people who were very important on my road to becoming an ethnomusicologist, and my inclination was first simply to title it *Eleven*. If I were able to write fiction, this might have turned out to be a bildungsroman, a novel about a boy who escaped from the Nazi occupation of central Europe, became an American ethnomusicologist, and was influenced on the way by his parents and some other very interesting people. If I were a social or political historian, this book might have become a case study in the literature on the diaspora of Jewish intellectuals in the 1930s who, escaping the coming Holocaust, moved to America and revolutionized academic life in the United States. If this were a work of ethnomusicology itself, it might have provided a study of the development of a sample musical idiolect of a family, or of the ways musical conflict accompanies social or political conflict. If I were writing anthropology, it would have provided an example of culture change, fusion, and syncretism. An institutional historian would perhaps have made of this a contribution to the history of Indiana University, as each chapter intersects significantly with my alma mater in mid-twentieth century. Instead, however, I present here a miscellany of essays that, together, attempt to pay homage to persons who were most influential in my education, from early life to well after graduate study.

These essays also have other purposes and functions. Most generally, they illustrate the movement of artists, scholars, and an entire academic discipline from pre-World War II Europe to North America. Although I frequently refer to my own experiences, this is not an autobiography. It is mostly about these eleven people, my principal educators, and what they contributed to their fields of scholarship, about what they were like, and about my experience of them. Broadly speaking, as many in my cast of characters as well as the field of ethnomusicology moved from Europe to North America, it connects and compares the two continents. These essays comprise memoirs, biographical details, and comments on the accomplishments of my parents, educational and otherwise; they include rough sketches of the approaches and behavior of some of my principal teachers in higher education; and they also pay homage to four men who were my outstanding informants-consultants-teachers in ethnomusico-logical fieldwork.

The five chapters differ markedly in style and length. The reader will find some continuity, but the individual essays also stand on their own

and may hopefully be appreciated independently. For this reason, however, there are bits of information and short accounts of events that I was obliged to bring up more than once. Excavating memories has resulted in free associations that lead to comments on works of music, on songs and pieces, that played a role in my life and that help me to interpret the lives of my parents and teachers. Using the approach of the biographer provides an opportunity for looking at people in ways that go beyond their publications. Speaking as a member of a family of musicians gives me the opportunity to comment in detail on my parents' writings and performances.

Writing (or revising) these essays at the age of eighty-two, my main motivation was to present to my children and young relatives, and to my younger colleagues, something that will give a sense of what it was like to grow up and study before the middle of the last century. On the one hand, as a music scholar interested in the history of his discipline of ethnomusicology, I consider it important for younger colleagues to appreciate the development of the field at a time, mid-twentieth century, just before it changed its principal venue and its directions, and the situation that led up to all this. On the other hand, as a child of immigrants (and myself an immigrant), I wished to provide firsthand portraits giving samples of the experience of musicians and academics in pre-war Europe, wartime America, and after. The two streams are joined in my experience of Paul Nettl and George Herzog, both of whom were immigrants, both researchers and educators playing major roles in the histories of their areas of study, and both, in different ways, my teachers of music scholarship. I have been able here to provide the most extensive published accounts to date of their lives and work, and to comment in some detail on their publications.

I came to this project from different directions. From 2009 to 2010, I was fortunate to hold a Mellon Emeritus Fellowship, which led me to study various aspects of the history of ethnomusicology, including the contributions of George Herzog. At the same time, having been asked at various times to write short biographical sketches of my father as a music historian, I found that the many brief dictionary entries about him gave the same few facts but told very little of his personality and what it was like for him to undergo the experiences of mid-century European Jewish scholars, and I undertook here to try to fill this gap. Moreover, I came to realize that my mother, a pianist and piano teacher with important accomplishments, is now barely remembered, because she passed away at an early age. She too shared in the experience of Europe in the 1930s, of America in the 1940s. My interest in writing about my teachers in the course of field research goes back three decades, but my desire to discuss four professors who, I later realized, taught me to "think big" was more recently inspired.