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Intercultural Approaches and "Diversified Normality" in Music Teacher Education: Reflections from Two Angles

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Intercultural Approaches and "Diversified Normality" in Music Teacher Education: Reflections from Two Angles

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In this article we argue for sustained and contextualized exposure to a variety of musics as a valuable means of developing intercultural approaches in music education as well as in teacher education, approaches which integrate more norm-critical perspectives. Musical diversity in music education concerns issues of participation, citizenship and interaction, not just a presence and representation of differences. It is also about how institutions need to change to reflect the diversity of the society in which we now live, leading to both broadened knowledge, and broadened interest in music. Music education needs to consciously be developed in such a way that it reflects—and is a dynamic part of—the society we live in today.

Keywords: *intercultural approaches, musical diversity, music education, marginalization, music teacher education, ethnomusicology*

In this article, we argue for sustained and contextualized exposure to a variety of musics as a valuable means of further developing intercultural approaches in music teacher education, approaches that more effectively integrate norm-critical perspectives. These perspectives would not merely reproduce insider/outsider or same/different dichotomies, but would expand and reshape the borders of "normality" and "comfort zones" within the area of music teacher education. The result would be a radical redefinition of current norms of music education in keeping with the idea of *diversified normality* (Léon Rosales 2001; Goldstein-Kyaga, Borgström, and Hübinette 2012), which—rather than assimilat-

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ing differences—would broaden our conception of the norm to include a variety of musical expressions.

For the past several years, we have been working on issues of social, economic, and ethnic diversity in relation to how people learn, create, and experience music in a given context. Through a variety of interactions with student music teachers in both Sweden and the US, we have observed a number of common themes related to the transmission and reproduction of norms in music educational settings. These observations are informed by our differing research and cultural backgrounds—a Swedish music education researcher and an American ethno/musicologist. Of course, though there exist systemic and cultural differences between the two countries, there remains a shared emphasis on western traditions which, in effect, still represent the preservation of a particular musical canon, whether "classical" or popular.

Work on integration and diversity in schools and society has generally increased in both Sweden and the US. But are these changes also reflected in music education? We see this as an important question, from both "music educational" and ethnomusicological standpoints. In the hands of engaged music educators, the field of music pedagogy provides us with the tools to expose our students to a variety of musical and cultural experiences. Without this exposure, music education risks becoming limited if we only move within a familiar "comfort zone" with regard to choice of repertoire and methods. Likewise, ethnomusicology as a field offers us the opportunity to explore musical diversity and places these musical practices within their socio-cultural contexts.

Methods integrating music education research and ethnomusicology have proven to be quite effective in providing important critical voices (Volk 1998; Campbell 2002, 2004, and 2010; O'Flynn 2005). The field of ethnomusicology recognizes diversity and the importance of local musical practices, and simultaneously seeks to develop methods and ideas that address the relationships between music, culture, and society. Blacking (1967) argues that "musical structures [grow] out of cultural patterns of which they [are] a part" (191). He stresses the importance of the relationships between musical, cultural, and social practices in a society. In *How Musical is Man?* (1973), he states that music-making is a fundamental goal for mankind, but that the limited scope of western values and aesthetics prevents us from exploring the real potential of music (4).

In this article, we address the idea of musical diversity, and its place within music education. In doing so, we need to confront the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism, arriving at definitions of these terms that inform our work. From there, we will bring these issues to bear on our work in both Sweden and

the US. In the end, we suggest a re-definition of "normality" in music education that includes more diverse approaches, methods, repertoires, and goals.

Musical Diversity in Music Education

We are concerned with the ways in which musical multiculturalism is showcased when it is addressed in music education. What is the relationship between inclusion/marginalization and artistic expression in the music curriculum? Does the inclusion of one non-western work on a musical program, or the hiring of a "fusion" group at a festival constitute real intercultural engagement? These "bracketed" examples set marginalized cultures off from the mainstream, ironically reinforcing those same divisions they attempt to overcome. Some could interpret these attempts as, at the very least, tokenism; or perhaps even highly exploitive forms of exoticism. This kind of "bracketed multiculturalism" represent the boundaries of a cultural "comfort zone"—a conceptual area that keeps difference at a distance and precludes meaningful engagement with worldviews that may run contrary to the hegemony. Such engagement will demand a re-definition of "community," one that is more expansive, less exclusive, increasingly flexible, and constantly changing. Isolated musical performances don't connect with the local; they are the beginning of the conversation, not the solution.

Repertoires and curricula would be more balanced if we sought to reflect not only the musics of the world, but the realities of the multicultural nature of the social contexts in which the educational system is situated. Students who are being trained within the western tradition should be aware that this tradition is but one among many. With this would come the realization that there are many equally valid ways of making and experiencing music. Ultimately, this would manifest as a more flexible attitude towards various musics and cultures (Campbell 2004; Anderson and Campbell 2010).

Aspects of Multicultural Societies

Our societies are already "multicultural." This is really nothing we need to question, in the sense that there are many cultures present and represented in the same nation. However, we need to reflect upon the interactions between these "cultures," and how these interactions affect our institutions, our daily lives, and those who live together. This involves questions about participation and inclusion, not merely about presence and representation of differences. It is also about how institutions may need to change to reflect the diversity of the society in which we now live, leading to both broadened knowledge and broadened interest in music. Therefore, we need to purposefully develop an approach to music

engagement that both reflects and responds to the societies in which we live today (Lundberg, Malm, and Ronström 2000; Roth 2005; Pripp 2006; Lidskog and Deniz 2009; Goldstein-Kyaga et al. 2012).

Multiculturalism as a concept merely implies that various cultures are present within a given geographic location. Multiculturalism can thus describe a great variety of ways of interacting. Various cultural groups may live side-by-side but rarely meet. This can lead to essentialist views of culture, where people are eager to "cling to" or "hold fast" to their cultural origins. In many multicultural settings, an element of marginalization is built into what might be called a "predefined" society, where there is a clear canon, and in which there is more concern with assimilation into the norm, rather than challenging it.

An alternative reading of multiculturalism may include more interactive and intercultural processes, where meetings between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds take place, and where a kind of cultural hybridity is made possible (Taylor 1994; Lundberg et al. 2000; Banks 2015). This contrasts with the more traditional view of multiculturalism as outlined above. Rather than just superficial contact, which preserves the hierarchical structures of the center/margin dichotomy, we advance a view of multiculturalism that involves a deeper level of engagement. Musical repertoires, practices, and aesthetics are all involved in this process, as opposed to a "curatorial" or "collector"-type experience with "the other."

The idea of a "predefined" society in Europe and the US can be traced back to 19th Century European nationalism, when scholars and leaders sought to create "unique" national identities monitored and shaped by classical ideals and humanistic education. However, the consequences of such strategies today lead to a structural and cultural marginalization, particularly among certain immigrants. This results in a cultural hegemony in which the choices of social and cultural institutions are based upon the majority culture's norms and values (Pripp 2006; Banks 2015). Our reading draws heavily from Pripp's work, which concerns the mechanisms of structural exclusion of immigrants within the Swedish state-financed cultural sector, and supports our claim of a marginalization of musical and ethnic multiculturalism within public institutions. This tells us that a multicultural society *requires* a multicultural education system in order to avoid excluding a significant number of the population.

When we reflect upon music, we can note that such a cultural hegemony affects which kinds of musical knowledge and experiences receive greater attention in education, performance, and the media. This often leads to a monocultural approach to musical representation in a society. O'Flynn (2005) says that focusing on how people interact with, assess, understand, teach, and learn music of

different societies and cultures may be the key to developing a more global multicultural—or rather, intercultural—system of music education.

Mainstream and Transformative Music Practices

We follow Banks (2015) in questioning the objective and neutral nature of what he calls "mainstream citizen education," (154) and the ways that such assumptions reify hegemonic social structures. In lieu of this, we join him in seeing the transformative aspects of education as creating spaces for intercultural dialogues that, rather than promoting assimilation, allow for richer modes of interaction. This happens from all sides. It is not merely that individuals from marginalized communities need to be able to develop the skills necessary to engage with the dominant group's values, but all agents should aim to cultivate a view of society that includes difference and variety as a fundamental aspect.

As our work addresses musicking at the margins, Campbell's (2002) concept of the "periphery" is useful, as it highlights the power structures inherent in educational institutions, whether formal or otherwise. Such definitions are necessarily broad, encompassing a wide range of categories and points of contact (or lack thereof) with the center. In particular, Campbell's understanding of marginalized populations—easily the most identifiable aspects of the periphery in music—resonates with our interest not only in immigrant, ethnic, or minority groups, but also with our inclusion of class as a vital aspect of collective identity, one which intersects with other aspects in important and complex ways.

Moreover, her emphasis on the "idiosyncratic nature of individuals," (Campbell 2002, 195) which in her discussion includes individual people *and* institutions, is valuable in that it highlights the *a priori* structures that influence power relationships within a system, *and* the individual responses to those same structures. Scholars such as Bourdieu (1977) and LaTour (2005) have theorized various ways that individuals can move within givens systems of power, and in most cases, *thrive* despite the restrictions of those systems.

In the case of music education, we must consider the relationships between individuals, between individuals and the institution, and between the institutions and larger hegemonic structures like local or national governments. Additionally, we must consider the impact of even larger institutions, namely the media, whose influence on systems of knowledge is omnipresent and multifaceted. This impact, while characterized as objective, is far from benign. Often the negotiations that take place are complex, and inform the experiences and goals of both the teacher and the students. Teachers must navigate not only the relationships within the classroom, but must also be aware of the requirements and restrictions of their

local institutions, as well as the (potentially problematic) goals of the nation-state. The media, however, exerts a tremendous influence over students, through the guise of "global youth culture." To give but one example of this influence, western popular culture is characterized by a clearly gendered discourse that, among other things, relies upon tropes of male dominance. These elements have a tendency to be reproduced in a teaching context, as well (Bergman 2009; Björck 2011; Kvarnhall 2015).

When we speak of a "global youth culture," we have to remember that this idea does not emerge out of nowhere, but instead is mediated by a number of complex networks of knowledge and information. The media's role in distributing music, for example, affects a disproportionate influence on music and music education. Far from neutral, there are multiple ways in which these processes take place, and multiple effects, whether positive or negative. Just as the wide-reaching influence of music media potentially makes assumptions about a "mainstream" global music culture, the potentially transformative nature of the media may also allow for individual connections to places, cultures, and traditions beyond the local through the music. Someone displaced to a new and different context may in fact draw upon the ubiquity of a globalized popular music culture as a means of both reconnecting with home, and as a way of finding familiarity in a new locale. Similarly, this music may facilitate the fostering of new relationships across the global through social media or other forms of modern communication. Thus, rather than just continuing to view education and media as being at odds, we advocate for an approach through which both elements can and do address broader repertoires, ones that integrate the musics not only of the "center," but also of the margins, by default.

Coupled with this, Campbell's use of "borders and boundaries" (2002, 195) as a lens for discussing musical marginalization resonates with the geographic nature of much of our research, focused as it is on national and international contexts, and how these inform the relationships between dominant and subordinate groups. However, these borders exist not only between countries and nations, but within them, as well. The boundaries of music education are policed at the institutional level, where divisions between formal (classroom) and informal (community) educational and performance settings are often starkly delineated.

Methodologies can also be marginalized, and the over-emphasis on the centrality of western-derived means of music-making and teaching often comes to the detriment of equally valuable practices from outside that cultural sphere. By most accounts, the ability to draw from a variety of musical and education meth-

ods can be seen as an asset in the classroom. Nevertheless, peripheral models are often dismissed or ignored outright.

Musical Diversity in US Education

To make a connection to the development of "multicultural education" in a nation that is traditionally perceived as a cultural "melting pot"—the US—we refer to Volk (1998), who discusses the development of multicultural music education in the US from the late-19th Century, to the mid-1990s. Volk describes how western music came to represent a kind of universal language in American musical education during the early 20th century, as a part the process of "Americanization" that took place in US schools during this time.

According to Volk's description, demographic shifts during the mid-20th century more or less facilitated a change in music education. A focus on a multiplicity of musical forms, genres, and expressions emerged as a means of addressing an increasingly diverse cultural context. This variety, however, was always "bracketed"; that is, it was (and largely still is) understood as an expression of the essential division of same/other. Ultimately, despite an "opening out" of the curricular aims, the net effect was one of reinforcing social, cultural, ethnic, and racial divisions within US society.

Furthermore, in spite of this trend in American general music education, there has not been as pronounced of a multicultural emphasis in *higher* education. Western European models of music—concert band, choir, and orchestra—remain central aspects of the US music educational system (Kratus 2007). It also seems that the higher up in the educational system one progresses, the more entrenched these practices become, and thus the fewer multicultural elements one may encounter. This is reproduced primarily through music teacher training in higher education which, in turn, resonates throughout the public educational system as a whole.

The majority of music education undergraduates express indifference at these concerns, having been trained in the same system they now seek to enter. These students themselves often come from similar backgrounds, which in turn reinforces the normativity of their experiences. Furthermore, their training in university often reflects these "ideal" circumstances: middle-class suburban schools with low rates of socio-economic diversity, whose programs are well-funded and often quite competitive. While such experiences are valuable laboratories for learning to apply the knowledge they have gained at university, they differ significantly from the challenges they will likely face once they begin their own teaching careers. A majority of them may end up in other contexts—rural or urban schools

whose ranges of diversity and/or educational infrastructure may differ substantially from the experience for which they were trained.

Students who show interest in music outside of the "western" tradition are offered little or no access to this within the curriculum offered by the university, despite the exceptional opportunities that do exist within the school of music. Jazz is built around western classical pedagogical models, while popular music is absent (and even discouraged) in the program. The exception being the "world music" ensembles administered by the division of musicology/ethnomusicology. These ensembles are generally "bracketed off" from the rest of the school of music's activities: music majors are unable to participate in these ensembles as a part of their curriculum. Thus, the ensembles are comprised mostly of non-majors, a few members from the community, and graduate students from the ethnomusicology program, for whom participation in such groups is mandatory. For the most part, the marginalization of non-western musics in the curriculum is mirrored in the marginalization of these groups. This situation is not an exception; many schools face similar challenges.

The training of music teachers at the graduate level has its own challenges, as well. Many students who enter our programs have spent some time in the classroom, often in public school settings. In conversations with them, they attest to the fact that they were generally ill-prepared to face the challenges of the classroom—especially as it concerns more "diverse" settings. They, too, emphasize the fact that their undergraduate training took place in "ideal" circumstances—for example, academically well-performing schools, in generally homogenous neighborhoods, and with all necessary resources—and through their later experiences in the classroom, they see this as a musical, pedagogical, and a social concern. Often, they have responded by seeking to expand the curriculum in unique, if standalone, ways. These include teaching bluegrass fiddle at an arts middle school, teaching mariachi at schools along the border, and working with young girls in a summer rock camp. But these experiences are the exception; they often happen *in spite of* established institutional structures and practices, rather than because of them.

Musical Diversity in Swedish Education

In recent decades, there has been a concerted effort to change the perception of Sweden as culturally homogeneous. In terms of music (teacher) education, these efforts were reflected in changes in the music curriculum, which began to shift the focus from art musics towards popular musics as early as the 1970s (Olsson 1993; Stålhammar 1995; Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010).

When we look at music education in contemporary Sweden, however, we can notice that we still operate within a fairly limited comfort zone regarding genre, repertoire, contents, and methods. Some common larger traditions like classical or folk are occasionally used, and within these traditions we can find both familiar and the unfamiliar elements. Today, even though we have largely moved away from these traditions to those of popular music, the emphasis is still on Western traditions. This includes popular music from the US and UK almost exclusively, largely built around a core repertoire of "classics" dating back to the 1960's (Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010; Lindgren and Ericsson 2010; Westvall and Carson 2014).

In relation to music teacher education in Sweden, an intense cultural-political debate was taking place in the 1960s. The focus shifted from earlier ideas of preserving the established culture in society, to new objectives which entailed a broadened cultural landscape in Sweden (Olsson 1993; Stålhammar 1995). This included various genres of music such as pop and rock music, folk music from Sweden, and folk music from around the world. Such broadening consisted of an intention to reach out to the whole population instead of a particular "cultural elite."

During the 1970's and 80's these features also became more represented in music educational textbooks, but since then there has been an overall emphasis on popular music, particularly in connection with the students' "own musical interests" (Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010). However, these connections often reflect their relationship to popular media. The images they consume often reinforce well-worn class, gender, and ethnic stereotypes within the music. Student teachers often see this as problematic, but are at a loss for how to counteract its effects. Therein lies the contradiction: though the curriculum prescribes that teachers should strive to include students in the decision-making process about content, these decisions are often the result of strong media influences. In that case, the media becomes the authority in the classroom, even overshadowing the influence of the teachers.

This authority of the media establishes a type of normative "comfort zone," in spite of the best efforts and intentions of the teachers and the curriculum. This forecloses new musical experiences; experiences that would seek to expand the students' awareness and appreciation of music beyond the familiar, increasingly homogenized boundaries of popular culture.

Thus, western popular music education has become a "new canon" in music education in Sweden. When do we come across Bosnian, Chilean, Kurdish, or Somali popular music in music education? These are popular music traditions that may resonate with many so-called "new Swedes," yet they are still largely

absent from the curriculum and training of our music teachers. Thus, even when we attempt to move beyond the familiar, we continue to run up against the boundaries of the "comfort zone" (Westvall and Carson 2014).

If we look at recent studies of youths, music, and multiculturalism in Sweden, we see contrasting readings of the role of music among immigrant youths (Malm 2004; Saether 2008, 2010; Karlsen 2012). While these youths claim that they mainly listen to the same international popular music as their peers, upon further questioning they add that in more private settings they are also listening to music that represents their own ethnic background.

Perhaps this says something about the norms of mainstream culture also being reflected in smaller settings like this. Maybe there is an expectation for what youth in Sweden today should listen to, simply because they are young. If so, these expectations may contribute to the "flattening out" of their musical interests. Given this information, an important question arises: Does music education allow space for such processes of musical and cultural hybridity within these contexts? Here the question of the role and nature of music education in multicultural societies becomes apparent.

The relationship between this new "popular music canon" and diversity in music education has only recently been problematized, in a number of recent studies in Sweden (Georgii-Hemming and Westvall 2010; Westvall and Carson 2014; Bovin Schierup 2015) which have begun to explore the obstacles and possibilities of these practices.

Conclusion

As we have pointed out, a multicultural society requires a multicultural education system, and artistic forms of expression—such as music—are vital in this process. Meaningful and sustained exposure to a wide variety of music and art promotes deeper cultural connections between individuals, groups, and larger communities. Teacher education is a good place to initiate these processes, as the teacher training context provides an opportunity to reflect upon these issues and to develop the skills and strategies necessary to implement them in the classroom. As such, it serves as an important link between institutions of higher learning and those of general education. One result would be more balanced curriculum, balanced not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of the level of engagement with the material. The net effect of this profound shift in our approaches to music education could be student empowerment through the development of more critical approaches to music, media, and institutions. Such critical and interactive processes foster greater cultural flexibility, a critical aspect of the

transformative potential of multicultural education, and one that allows the expansion of the borders of "normality" and of the "comfort zone," in general.

We join the chorus of the scholars cited above who argue that both students and music teachers—as well as the society in general—could benefit from both a wider and more extensive exposure to musical genres and practices, given that our society is now characterized by a growing ethnic and cultural diversity. Instead of just moving the borders of our "comfort zone" to center around another tradition, genre, or specific repertoire (like the shift from western classical to western popular music), we should strive to eliminate these borders altogether. We could also expand this idea by asking: what would happen if the "comfort zone" had no center? If music was not only taught from the perspective of the familiar, would we then develop alternative ways of composing, performing, or experience music? Such an approach would, to some extent, involve a review of the objectives and methods of music education. But at the same time, this would be absolutely necessary, as music education would have a greater chance of shaping children and young people into democratic citizens, a central goal of our current curriculum. Perhaps it is through these encounters with new and challenging experiences offered by music education that we can encourage people to become more active citizens. Through these processes, educators may be able to successfully engage the seemingly benign discourse of "global youth culture," mitigating the unquestioned authority of the media in this regard. This perhaps is the musical parallel to Banks' call for a more "transformative" approach to education, one which can counter and problematize the fixedness of "mainstream citizenship education," which—left unchecked—would reify hegemonic ideals (Banks 2015).

Music teacher education needs to find concrete ways of empowering the music teachers in the classroom. They should feel comfortable finding new and specific ways of teaching music, ones that operate in opposition to a "fixed curriculum." The discourse should shift from one of "authenticity" to one that acknowledges the variety of skills and methods available to musicians. In the classroom, teachers may only possess specific scope of musical skills, a fact which may inhibit their belief in their abilities to teach new repertoires. But it is not merely a question of increased variety. The depth of engagement with these repertoires must also increase. Furthermore, acknowledging the connections between repertoire and methods, it becomes essential that student teachers also explore a number of different pedagogical approaches, as well. Thus, it is not merely a question of applying the same methods to new repertoires; it means applying an assortment of approaches to a range of musics.

This is where changes to teacher training may be most useful. Student teachers should be exposed to a wider variety of musics and methods during their training, but they should also be encouraged to continuously undertake new approaches to new repertoires beyond the borders of their knowledge. By going outside their comfort zones during their training, their musical experiences are decentered, resulting in more confidence and willingness to try new things in the classroom. This is what we mean by "diversified normality" in music (teacher) education—the new "norm" becomes flexible and ever-changing, characterized by a spirit of musical exploration that values greater diversity.

In the end, the reliance on standard repertoires (whether "classical" or "pop") emphasizes a narrow range of practical skills, and often comes at the expense of a rich and holistic relationship to the music, one that recognizes the fantastic variety of music experiences that are valuable to our students. Perhaps the answer lies in a turn towards the broader public interests and needs, as opposed to just reaffirming the status quo. Curricular decisions should be informed by a dynamic reading of the larger community—its goals, challenges, and contexts—not by a focus on a single, idealized vision that, at heart, would be unavoidably exclusionary or reductive. This would necessitate an inversion of assimilationist ideas of curriculum design in the hopes of critically engaging with all facets of the community, from the "center" to the "margin." Such a project would not only change the "what" of educational goals, but also the "whom," reorienting the curriculum to reflect an awareness of the public at large. Here, the focus would need to be on variety and diversity as a range of perspectives—as an emphasis on a more "diversified normality"—rather than as opposing categories (such as us/them or same/other), thus shifting, or better yet, *eliminating* the concept of center/margins altogether.

We are arguing for sustained and contextualized exposure to a variety of musics (through education and performance) as a valuable means of developing true diversity. This kind of diversity does not merely reproduce insider/outsider or same/different dichotomies, but expands and reshapes the borders of our "comfort zones" in contemporary society. Perhaps this is the true potential of music as a "universal language." Instead of just assimilating our differences, music can make them accessible, allowing us to negotiate the types of complex interactions which are increasingly common in today's global contexts. In that sense, *difference is essential for us all*, if our communities are to thrive both socially and artistically.

About the Authors

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