

Istanbul's impressive "Blue Mosque," built in the sixteenth century by the Ottoman Turks

CHAPTER 3

## Cultural Considerations: Beyond the Sounds Themselves

In a technical sense, music is just organized sound and can be analyzed through concentration on its elements, such as melody, rhythm, phonic structure, form, and so forth. But no music exists in a vacuum, free from social context, even if it primarily lives on concert stages or in recordings. All music manifests itself within a "culture," however defined, and has meanings for those who create, perform, or consume it that go far beyond the sounds themselves. This chapter briefly discusses some of the perspectives that may be brought to bear on a given musical type or style. This list of ideas, however incomplete, at least suggests that a full understanding of any music would require multiple approaches. Obviously, with only limited space we cannot apply these concepts with any degree of thoroughness or consistency, but those concepts that are most relevant will be introduced when appropriate.

## Music and the Environment

Music, it is often said, is "everywhere." One might conclude that this "everywhereness" means that modern societies place a high value on music. For many musicians, however, music's omnipresence is more of a curse than a blessing. Music has become the "auditory aspirin" of modern society. Especially with the development of media capable of delivering it anywhere, anytime, music has come to be used more and more as a drug. People use music to get themselves going, to facilitate relaxation, to enter meditative states, or to dispel boredom. The music business, in cahoots with psychologists, has developed the means to use music as a manipulative tool. Muzak, the company, promotes its "product" as a means of achieving increased sales, moving people in and out of rapid-turnover restaurants (or keeping them there to buy more drinks), and maintaining productivity in the workplace by altering the natural daily cycle of human energy. Some people drown their concerns in a tidal wave of sound, especially in their "speakers on wheels"—cars whose sounds can sometimes be heard for hundreds of feet *with their windows closed*. Indeed, loud parties and booming cars have brought about "noise" laws in many cities, in an attempt to curb "noise pollution."

Other forms of environmental degradation have also had an effect on music-making. As numerous plant and animal species have become endangered, many long-time musical practices have been lost or altered. Traditionally, many musical instruments were made of natural materials such as now-rare hardwoods or ivory. Dancers used feathers from now-endangered birds or skins from now-endangered mammals. As a result, many old instruments are refused entry into countries enforcing international environmental laws, and in fact may be confiscated and destroyed. New materials have been developed to substitute for restricted substances; for example, plastic or bone are now often used in place of ivory. Some instruments, though, cannot be made of substitute materials, such as the ivory elephant tusk horns used in West Africa. In certain situations, governments permit the hunting and use of certain endangered animals that are part of the ritual tradition of a given people.

## Cultural Knowledge

Every individual absorbs a certain amount of cultural knowledge while growing up. Just being somewhere makes you a member of a "cultural group," whether at the level of family, "tribe," community, nation, continent, or global cultural sphere (such as "the West"). Who you are depends on where you are and with whom you are living.

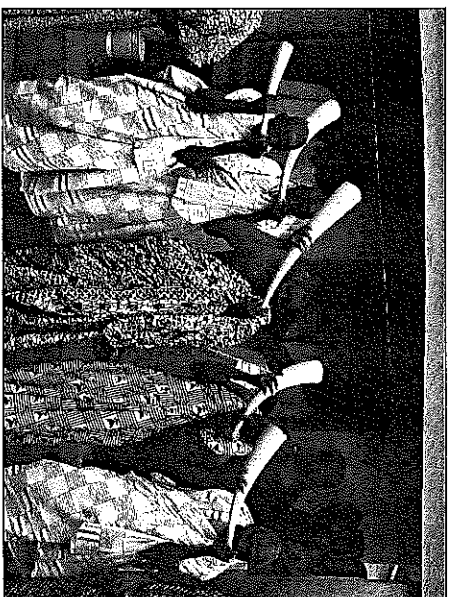
The experience of growing up within a given society creates a sense of normalcy; individuals develop expectations that typical patterns will continue. This sense that one's own culture is "normal," and that cultures which exhibit differences, both great and small, are "abnormal," "weird," or "exotic," is a natural perspective known as "ethnocentrism."

Frederick Verney, Secretary to the Siamese (Thai) Legation in London, wrote in 1885 that a great "stumbling-block" for many in the West when attempting to appreciate non-Western music is Western education, which "precludes the possibility of a full appreciation of music of a foreign and distinct school." In order for a Westerner to fully appreciate Asian music it would be necessary "to forget all that one has experienced in the West." Ethnocentric reactions are natural and perhaps inevitable—but an awareness of ethnocentrism makes it more likely that one will come to accept and understand music that is "different."

Scholars attempting to understand how music is experienced and "known" have developed a distinction between "outsider" and "insider" knowledge. They have dubbed the "outsider" perspective *etic* (from "phonetic"), and the "insider" perspective *emic* (from "phonemic").

Insiders are assumed to react to their own culture's music in ways that draw on a lifetime of unconsciously absorbed cultural knowledge and attitudes. Outsiders, because they come to a given culture after their perceptions are formed, are assumed not just to inject ethnocentrism into their interpretations, but also to prefer to dwell only on those aspects of music that are observable to outsiders, such as objects and sonic structures.

The major drawback to this concept of "insider" and "outsider" is that it doesn't allow for middle ground; there's no room conceptually for the sympathetic "outsider" who has acquired "insider" knowledge. Do we value the views of



Ivory tusk horns in Ghana are essential to the Ashante court in Komasi, but African elephants are endangered and transporting such instruments across national boundaries is forbidden (Joseph S. Kaminski)



French ethnomusicologist Alain Weber performs with The Musicians of the Nile from Upper Egypt

The perspective of a cultural insider:

### EMIC

The perspective of a cultural insider:

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

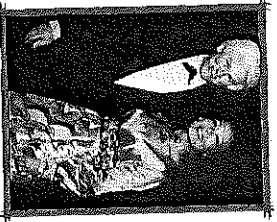
an insider, simply because he or she grew up in a given culture, over those of an outsider, no matter how knowledgeable that person is? Can individuals shift identities by living among a "foreign" people? If so, for how long must they live among them? When I (TM) studied the pre-centered (fined out) psalm singing done in the Scottish Gaelic language in Edinburgh in 1982, the worshippers at Greyfriar's Kirk (church) presented a problem for the folklorists at the University of Edinburgh. Some years earlier a young French woman had gone to live on the Hebridean island of North Uist, learned Gaelic, and became exceptionally skilled in psalm singing. After moving to Edinburgh, she attended Greyfriar's and provided the strongest voice of the Gaelic-speaking congregation. Some of the folklorists contended that her singing was not "authentic" because she had come to Gael life as an adult—even though she was the group's best singer. In their view, an outsider could never attain insider status, even after many years of life amongst a new group and the attainment of a high level of cultural knowledge and skill. On the other hand, Western audiences have no problem in accepting

## An Inside Look

### Ki Mantle Hood

My father was a violinist, singer, easel painter and architect. As a young man he worked with Frank Lloyd Wright. My mother was preparing for the concert stage as a pianist, but when she married at eighteen, she became instead a teacher of piano. She told me that at age five I was put to bed afternoons so I could join them in evening concerts (in Springfield and Chicago, Illinois). Years later she said, "Whenever they played a piano concerto [which starts with an orchestral exposition], you jumped physically when the piano entered." I learned as an adult that this was the moment when two different tuning systems collide. There are other stories that indicate I was born with an unusual sensitivity to sound, especially musical sound.

The first time I heard very early recordings of Javanese and Balinese music, I was ecstatic to hear more, to know more, to go to Indonesia to try to comprehend the logic I sensed as a young composer but didn't understand. That same sensitivity to exotic sounds all over the world has been present all my life. At UCLA, in the Fall of 1954, I was privileged to establish the very first university program of training in ethnomusicology.



Ki Mantle Hood, Professor Emeritus, UCLA, composer and ethnomusicologist with his wife, Hazel.

I didn't realize until I was about 40 that apparently I hear things in musical sound that others either do not hear or unconsciously ignore. That led to the development of a series of melographs, laboratory instruments that show in continuous display the pitch, loudness, and quality (by including a printout of overtones) of musical sounds.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

orchestral conductors and musicians who grew up outside Western culture, people such as Japan's Seiji Ozawa, India's Zubin Mehta, and New Zealand's Kiri Te Kanawa, a Maori ethnic minority. We would argue for a more fluid and nuanced view that does not automatically privilege "insiders" over "outsiders."

## Value Systems and Hierarchies

Within any given culture, people tend to evolve value systems that dictate what kinds of music, which performers, and which instrument-makers are considered "better" than others. Although in the West many accept and others assert that "classical" music is superior to "popular" music, such a ranking begs the question of *authority*—that is, the complex question of who gets to make such judgments. What, after all, are the criteria that make one music tradition superior to another? And who decides? Is it done by some kind of consensus, by appointed critics, or by *self-appointed* critics? What are the implications of such hierarchies?

Essentially, the question is whether expressions of value are to be taken as matters of truth, opinion, or perspective. In the United States, value systems and hierarchies are now understood more in political than aesthetic terms. Many ask whether a value system can be taken seriously when it asserts that the musical heritage of a dominant group, such as European-derived peoples, is inherently superior to that of, for example, African-Americans. Music is necessarily part of the current debates in our society over *canons*, *diversity*, and *hegemony*. As with the canon of

When I was about 50, I visited an aunt I hadn't seen for many years. She told me that I avoided family reunions beginning at age 12. She said, "We used to worry that you didn't really belong to us. Now we understand, you never did. You belong to the world." Exposure to the indigenous music of many cultures of the world has enriched my lifelong pleasure in many different traditions of music and afforded a penetrating understanding of the cultures that produced them. By now I must agree with my insightful Aunt. As a musician, I never belonged to my roots in Illinois but to the riches of music worldwide.

I retired from teaching in 1998 and began a series of semi-fiction novels. My wife and I have lived in many parts of the world and learned as performers (she as a dancer, I as a musician) that the arts are a sure and immediate door to the identity of a different culture. Knowing I would no longer be teaching in a university regularly I decided to write books that helped the reader learn things we had learned as performers in the arts of other cultures. To keep them turning pages I decided to make them thrillers. The bookstore Borders handled the first one and dubbed me the writer of thrillers "with an education." The label has stuck through seven books. Recently I also published an autobiography.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

"great books," the canons of "great composers" and "great works" are essentially European. Calls for "diversity" challenge not just the canons but also hitherto accepted standards of greatness. Some feel threatened by these challenges to the hegemony of European tradition, others feel liberated.

Courses in "world musics" (and textbooks like this one) have been part of this essentially political process. Until relatively recently, the study of "music" in education at most levels focused almost exclusively on the Western "classics." Courses on the musics of the rest of the world, which have now become common, still do not create many problems as long as they are restricted to studies of compositional style and "exotic" instruments. But scholarly assertions that all musics are potentially valid, or as William Mahn often said, "different but equally logical," are seen as threatening in some quarters.

### Music and Identity

A person expresses their identity in a variety of ways. The clothes we wear, the foods we eat, and the language we speak are all outward projections of "who we are," or more accurately, "who we think we are." Biological factors, namely race and sex, are often cited as the source of a person's identity; however, cultural factors are equally, if not more important determinants.

For example, what makes a person "African"? Must he or she have "black" skin? That can't be the answer, because Africans come in an array of skin pigmentations, including "olive" and "white." Likewise, would it make sense to consider Australian aborigines or the Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea "African" because many of them have a dark skin color? Certainly not. Rather, people are "African" because they think they are. And because they think this way, they behave as "Africans" do.

How others interpret the behaviors of an individual or group is also important to the formation of identity. If, for example, a person's behaviors are considered by others to be representative of the qualities of being "African," then this self-perception as an "African" is reinforced. However, if others do not agree that the person's behaviors are typical of an "African," then a conflict arises in which either the individual must modify these behaviors, thereby altering this self-perception, or the atypical behaviors must be accepted by the others as properly "African." If the conflict is not resolved, then the "African" identity of our hypothetical person would be continually questioned.

Music plays a vital role in expressions of ethnic identity. Groups and individuals often use music as a way to assert their unique ethnic qualities in relation to others. Outside perceptions of particular musical activities as normative behavior for a group or individual reinforce the sense of ethnic identity expressed through the music. Along with other cultural elements, such as language, religion, dress, diet, and so on, music shapes

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

how people think about themselves and their role within a society.

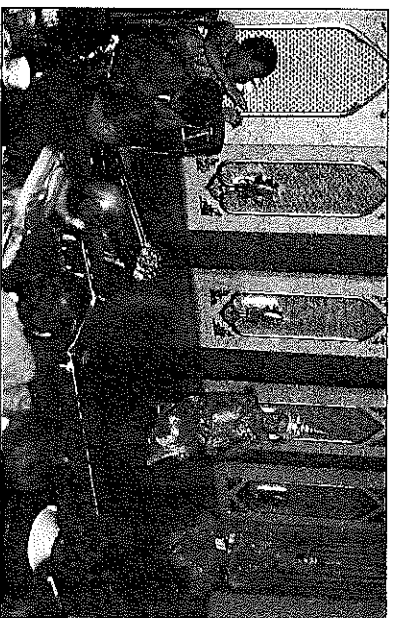
In many cultures, the expression of ethnic identity through music is an essential aspect of daily life, so understanding and appreciating musical activities is an important part of getting to know how people from these cultures think. Even in cultures where music is considered a specialized activity, much is expressed and revealed through the types of music common to the culture. For example, the glitz and glamour of Super Bowl halftime shows reveals the emphasis our culture places on entertainment, even though these music performances are certainly not representative of all the music found in the United States.

### Use versus Function

The anthropologist Alan Merriam spent an entire chapter of his landmark 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music* differentiating use from function. Whereas use, defined as "the ways in which music is employed in human society" (p. 210), can be easily observed, function requires much deeper inquiry into the meanings of music. Most studies of music's use are descriptive and are based on the observations of the researcher. The study of music's function, however, requires deep-level cultural knowledge and can entail much interpretation; for this reason, the perspectives of "insiders" are often privileged over those of "outsiders." Recently, however, there has been a trend in what is called "postmodern" scholarship to conceptualize function in the broadest way possible.

### Music and Ritual

One of the most important contexts for music is its use in a ritual context. While the term ritual obviously encompasses religious services, it is more broadly applied to all situations in which patterns of behavior are repeated without question because they are seen to have meaning. Ritual may also include sporting events, graduations, Memorial Day parades, Christmas dinners, and many other occasions when music is desired as part of the "pomp and circumstance." For example, the singing of the American national anthem occurs before virtually all

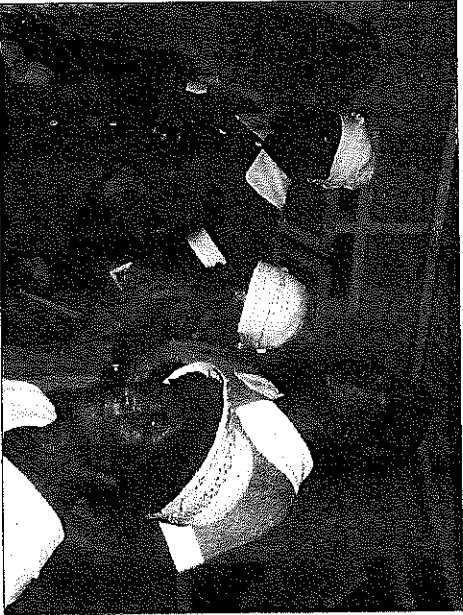


Japanese tourists watch a Thai Cultural Show at a Bangkok restaurant that caters strictly to tourists

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

sporting events in the United States. Casually, this is merely a step in a longer sequence of requisite events, but its function is to reaffirm national identity and solidarity.

When music's use in ritual contexts is considered, questions inevitably arise about the relationship between music and trance states. In rituals in which trance occurs, such as those associated with the African-derived religious systems found in the Western hemisphere



Spiritual Baptists in the tiny Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines sing a hymn in a trance state called "doption" (from the "adoption of the Holy Spirit")

be used in a given possession ritual to "call the gods"—but its function is to regulate trance.

### Music and Spirituality

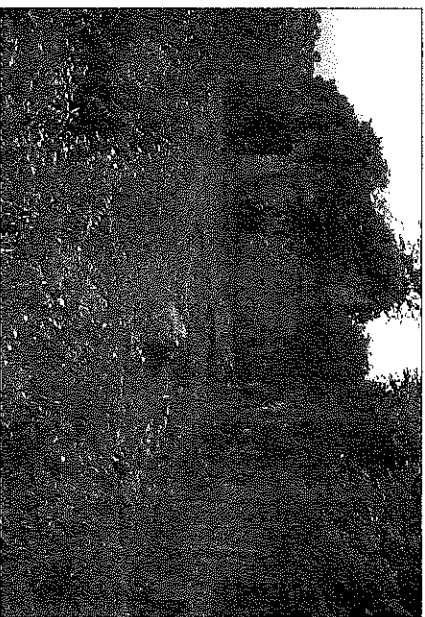
In addition to having a significant role to play in many long-established religious rituals, music can serve a spiritual role in the lives of individuals. In recent times, for example, many in the so-called "New Age" movement have asserted that music can heal, directly affect the mind and its many moods, or enhance contact with the spiritual world. These views have resulted in everything from belief in the so-called "Mozart effect"—an alleged increase in intelligence among infants exposed to the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—to books that claim that listening to specific compositions will cure certain ailments. While the field of music therapy has come to be accepted as a legitimate professional use of music, certain other applications coming from the "New Age" sensibility probably remain little more than wishful thinking.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

### Music and Ethics

Music has also been thought of in ethical terms. For Plato, in the fourth century before the Christian era, the ideal ruler was one shaped by an array of ethical forces, including music performed in the appropriate musical modes.

(Conversely, Plato saw great ethical peril in music performed in the "wrong" modes.) China's great philosopher Kong Fuzi (also known as Confucius), who lived five hundred years before the Christian era, also taught that the harmonious operation of the universe, down to the lives of individual humans, was directly affected by music. In his thinking, music must reflect the same order, balance, and restraint expected of human behavior.



Plato's student Aristotle founded this school near Vergina, Greece, about 338 B.C., where he tutored Alexander the Great and the other children of Philip of Macedonia

### New Theoretical Perspectives

Although we cannot offer a complete history of recent scholarship, we believe that some discussion of it is required in any essay on holistic approaches to music. The original work of the musicologist was to create authoritative musical scores based on manuscripts or prints, as close to the original as possible. Musicologists also sought to write histories of music and musicians based on "primary sources," namely firsthand documents such as letters. This concern for "sticking to the facts" and "establishing verifiable truth" is the core of what is called *modernist* scholarship.

Such work continues to be the focus of the majority of musicologists, but a countertrend has arisen as a result of new kinds of scholarship in other fields such as literature. Whereas modernism taught that (capital T) Truth could be established, what is now called *postmodernism* teaches that "truth" is relative and has little validity beyond the person attempting to establish it. Instead of "describing facts," postmodern scholars seek to "interpret texts," a text being anything, including a book, painting, sculpture, or a piece of music. There are other new directions in ethnomusicological scholarship as well, including those focusing on political and economic perspectives (e.g., Marxist interpretation), gender issues, such as feminism, and non-heterosexual perspectives (e.g., "Queer Theory" which examines music-making from a gay or

lesbian viewpoint). While some of this scholarship has proved to be provocative and stimulating, the specialized vocabularies common to such writing can seem impenetrable to those not familiar with the jargon or theories involved.

### Music Technologies and Media

Technology has played a key role in the development of ethnomusicology. Wire recordings and the Edison wax cylinders of the late 1800s and early 1900s were important to the research of comparative musicologists who focused much of their attention on transcription and on the tuning systems of world music traditions. Throughout the twentieth century, technological advances enabled ethnomusicologists to record music in increasingly remote locations with greater and greater ease. While early field researchers traveled with heavy loads of equipment and numerous boxes of cylinders, reel-to-reel tapes, and eventually cassettes, today's ethnomusicologist can get pristine digital recordings with equipment that fits easily into a shirt pocket.

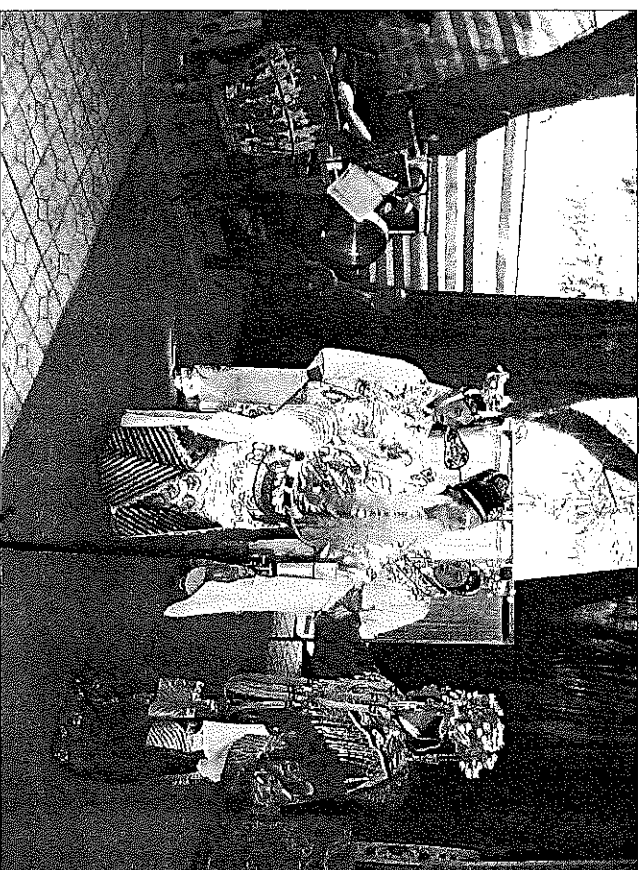
The media through which music is disseminated have also vastly changed over the last one-hundred-plus years. They have evolved from radio and vinyl records to television and CDs to the Internet and MP3s—and each new development has made dissemination of the world's music easier and faster. This evolution has created greater opportunities for ethnomusicologists to disseminate their research in both academic and mass-market arenas.

The ease with which recording can be done today has resulted in a proliferation of world music recordings for sale to the general public. While many of these are well researched and come with accurate liner notes, others are simply tourist trinkets slapped together to make a quick buck. Oftentimes what seems to be a poor-quality recording is actually an attempt to capture music in its original context, such as a crowded festival. Conversely, a studio recording with excellent sound quality may misrepresent a tradition, by for example, leaving out instruments from an ensemble or incorporating inauthentic rhythms or melodies. It is generally best to stick to well-known labels, such as Smithsonian-Folkways or Lyrrichord, although sometimes even a carefully put together CD can provide an enjoyable listening experience.

### Music and the Arts

The relationships between music and the other arts—including dance, theater, the fine arts, and literature—are varied and complex. While there certainly is music that stands alone for its own sake, a surprisingly great part of the world's music exists in relation to other arts.

The relationship with dance is the most obvious. Dance without music is almost unthinkable. Dance music provides far more than just a beat: it must also have a character appropriate to the kind of dance it

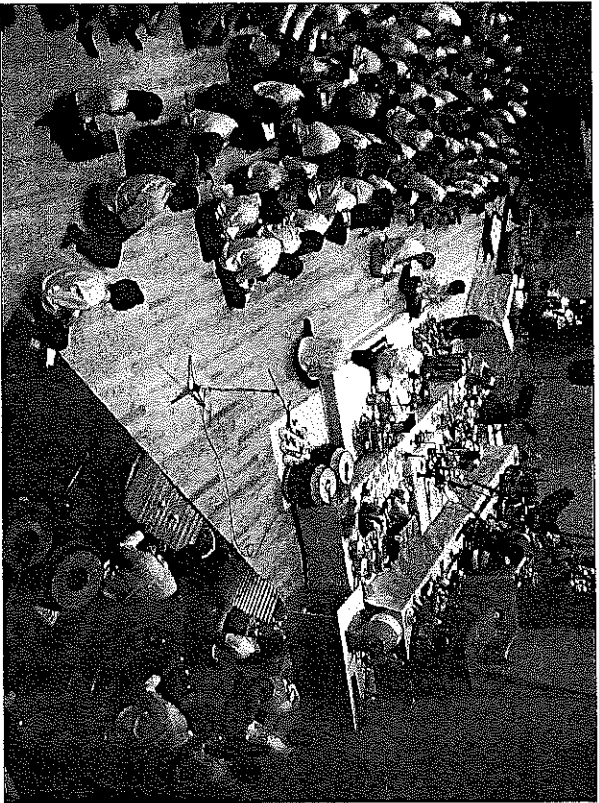


A street performance of Chinese Chaozhou regional opera with percussion accompaniment in Shantou, Guangdong province, People's Republic of China

accompanies, whether the dance occurs in the world of classical ballet, folk music, opera, traditional theater, or in a ballroom. A great deal of dance music may be heard—indeed, normally is heard—separately from dance, causing us to sometimes forget that a particular song or piece was actually conceived to accompany movement.

Theater in the Western world is usually thought of as spoken drama, opera being a separate category of sung theater. The West also has theater types that include both speaking and singing such as the old German *Singspiel* of Mozart's time (the eighteenth century), the English ballad opera, and the American outgrowth of the latter, the Broadway musical. But throughout the rest of the world, theater without music is often unthinkable. This is particularly true in Asia, which has some of the world's most distinctive theatrical traditions, including Indian *Kathakali*, Thai *Klon*, Indonesian *Wayang*, and Chinese Jingju (Beijing Opera).

Music tends to have one of two relationships with the visual arts. The first is found in the field of *musical iconography*, the study of music history—and particularly musical instruments—through pictures. The second occurs when a composer, especially in the Western classical tradition, creates a work that is at least said to have been inspired by a work of visual art. Perhaps the most obvious example is Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky's famous *Pictures at an Exhibition*, composed



The altar for a Thai *wai khru* (teacher greeting ceremony) is extremely elaborate. □

in 1874 based on a series of paintings by Viktor Hartmann.

Music can also be related to literature—primarily by association—through title, text setting, or allusion. The general term for this phenomenon is *programmatic music*, meaning music that alludes to something outside itself, be it a story, a great literary work, a poem, a painting, or, even more broadly, an emotion or aspect of nature. Chinese music titles commonly allude to well-known stories from novels, “Chinese opera,” and famous poems. Most pieces have titles that suggest an image, emotion, or place—such as “Meditation at the Dressing Table,” “Suzhou Scenery,” or “Winter Ravens Sporting over the Water.”

### Transmission and Pedagogy

Musical knowledge can be acquired in various ways: intuitively by living in a given culture, directly from a teacher, from a book, or by observation. When teaching is involved, many issues arise—such as the nature of the student/teacher relationship and the question of what educational methodologies are employed. When technologies are used in instruction, questions concerning memory, notation, and recording also arise. Some cultures have developed formal institutions that transmit music to anyone willing to learn (the conservatory, for example) and others have created institutions for preserving it within a closed system (the Japanese Imperial Household, for example). In some

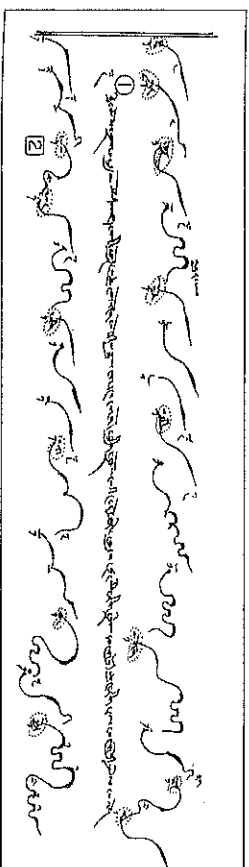
societies, especially those of East, South, and Southeast Asia, the music teacher is a revered individual who offers knowledge as a privilege. The Indian *guru* (and by extension, the Thai, Cambodian, and Lao *ban*) dispenses knowledge in a somewhat unsystematic fashion over a long apprenticeship; in the past, students lived with teachers and acted as their servants. In these Asian societies, rituals that honor the teacher and the teacher’s lineage are often required before learning is permitted.

In contrast, in the past music teachers in Europe were sometimes seen as odd characters deserving of ridicule, as with Don Basilio in Rossini’s famous opera, *The Barber of Seville* (1816). As for students, many societies offer titles or other forms of recognition such as certificates or degrees when students attain certain levels of skill.

### Notation Systems and the Creation of Music

Students of Western music are accustomed to thinking in terms of a “composer” and a “performer.” In the popular culture the composer is usually depicted as a male seated at the piano, left hand on the keys, right hand writing on manuscript paper. This image more often than not comes with an assertion that composing involves “inspiration” and “genius.” Perhaps the best-known icon-composer is Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), with his intense eyes, furrowed brow, and wild hair.

Western classical music developed a division of labor between the creator/composer and the realizer/performer. Composers are assumed to have the genius that leads to a work’s creation. In order to maintain control over all aspects of a work, the composer represents his ideas through graphic symbols called musical notation—which must be played “as written” by subservient performers. Performers may add nuances but may not violate the composer’s intentions. As a result, formal music education in the West tends to privilege “musical literacy.”



The graphic notation for Tibetan Buddhist chant is enough to help informed practitioners remember the chants

with the unspoken implication that cultures without notation suffer from “musical illiteracy.” It is important to realize, however, that only certain aspects of music—such as pitch, melody, rhythm, meter, and

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

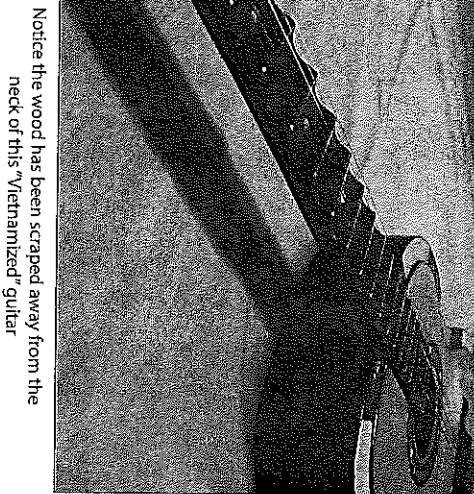
texture—can be depicted in notation; aspects such as ornamental nuance, slight gradations of pitch, timbre, and mood cannot be indicated.

Musical notation exists elsewhere in the world, but most often only to preserve compositions for posterity or as a reminder to performers. Few cultures outside the West use music notation prescriptively; that is, as a guide to live performance. And even where there is notation, it is usually skeletal because its function is to provide only what is necessary to cause performance. This notation is viewed as a point of departure, much as you find with jazz improvisation.

### Exchange and Adaptation

Although disparate musical categories like *kabuki* and *bluesgrass* suggest that musical systems are isolated from each other, the reality is much more complex. As distinctive as a given musical culture can be—and many are quite distinctive—none developed without outside influence. Some borrowed or loaned aspects travel better than others, however. Instruments, because they are objects, can be easily adopted by other cultures, though they are usually *adapted* as well to make them serve the aesthetic ideals of the borrower. On the other hand, even neighboring cultures can have dramatically differing musical concepts, timbre preferences, decorative styles, and tuning systems.

To give a specific example, few would debate that Vietnam's musical culture is distinctive, that it can be quickly recognized even by minimally experienced listeners.



Notice the wood has been scraped away from the neck of this "Vietnamized" guitar

requires tone-bending created by pulling the strings downward. The Vietnamese guitar, for example, has an unusual neck, with the wood between the frets scooped out to give the player the space in which to pull the strings.

But it is also true that Vietnam was virtually a Chinese colony for nearly 1,000 years and adopted many aspects of Chinese music, especially its instruments. However, the Vietnamese transformed these instruments to satisfy the requirements of their own sonic world. The most striking difference is the use of noticeably higher frets on the lutes with loosely strung strings. While Chinese instruments were built primarily to produce fixed pitches, the Vietnamese system uses many "in-between" pitches and thus

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

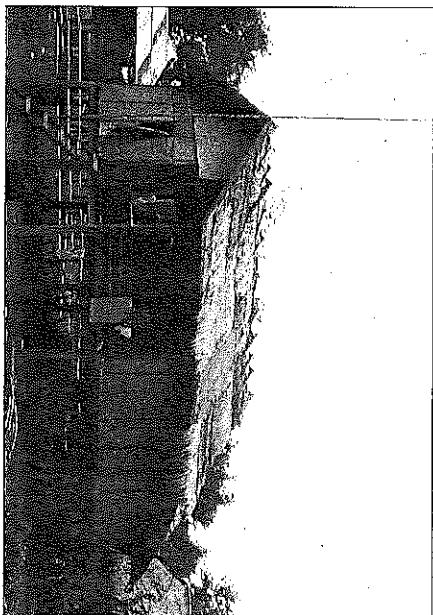
### Cultural Intersections

To the extent that the world ever had any isolated, unique cultures, the modern world in which we live has certainly breached most of the old walls. Culture contact between and among distinctly named cultural groups is the norm. Whereas in the past this contact occurred through personal interaction as people from one group visited, encountered, traded with, fought with, or expanded into other groups, today there are also pervasive media bringing music, film, and dance to almost anyone living anywhere.

In 1991, I (TM) visited a remote village in central Laos accessible by Landrover over miles of dirt roads through other pre-modern villages. As we approached the village, we had to disembark from the vehicle and walk the last mile because the bridge had been destroyed during the Vietnam War some twenty years earlier and was not yet replaced. As we approached one of the larger houses, owned by the village headman, a group of traditionally dressed children, both ethnic Lao and upland minorities, emerged from the house to witness a rare visit by Westerners. After we climbed the ladder into the house, we noticed they had been watching a television powered by a car battery. On the TV were current popular music videos being broadcast from Khon Kaen, Thailand, hundreds of miles to the south. In this village seemingly three miles from the end of the earth, the young generation was fully aware of modern entertainments emanating from Southeast Asian cities.

Throughout history, distinctive musics have resulted not from isolation but through contact. It is the unique mixing of peoples, events, and responses that generates the energy that leads to new and hybrid musical styles and instruments—and sometimes even to completely new genres. The United States offers many examples of this: jazz, blues, and gospel are three results of the energy produced when Europeans and Africans reached to each other during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Many places in the world could be used as case studies, and indeed later chapters will highlight this issue. Some of the most obvious include



A traditional house in the remote provincial capital of Salavane, Laos, with television antenna but no regular electricity



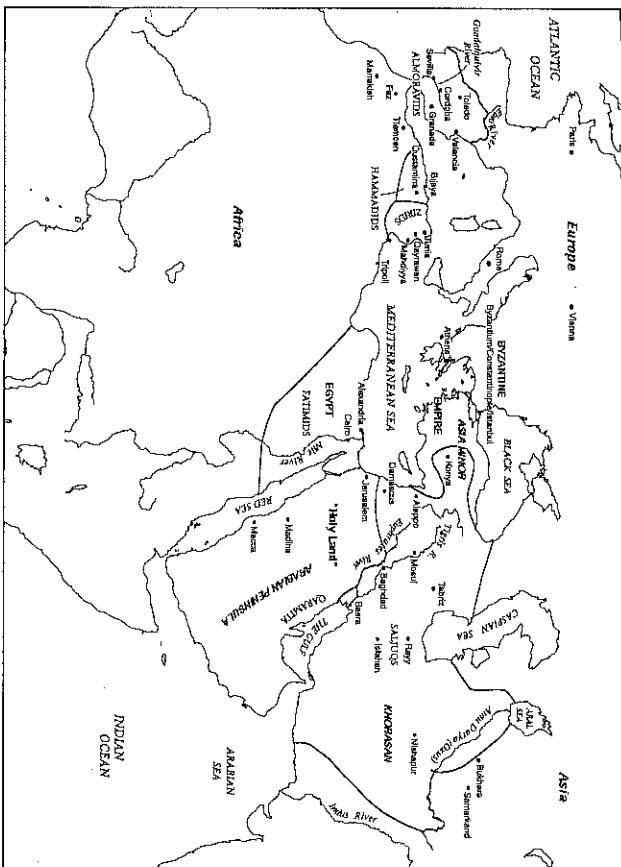
Japan, where indigenous culture was profoundly influenced by the cultures of China and to some extent Korea (especially as a filter through which Chinese culture passed). Southeast Asian culture came about from indigenous civilization becoming infused with new elements from India to the West, China to the north, and later Europe and the United States as well. Caribbean musics have to be defined in these terms, for all of this area's distinctive musics—including calypso, steel pan, reggae, salsa, and rhymin'g spiritual—result from the mixing of peoples and cultures.

### A Case Study of Istanbul, Turkey: A Lesson in Geography, History, Religions, and Musical Exchange

We have chosen the modern city of Istanbul, Turkey, as a case study of cultural exchange. Its strategic location straddling the Bosphorus (a broad river connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean) marks the boundary between Europe and Asia. A remarkable amount of history and culture passed through here, profoundly affecting vast areas from Europe to Central Asia and North Africa. Indeed, travelers to Istanbul will encounter the remains and monuments of each historical layer. Although now seen as an Islamic city—albeit in a secular Turkish state—Istanbul was once a major center of European civilization. How Istanbul's status changed, and its musical implications, is the subject of this case study.

The story begins with the conquests of Greek Macedonian, Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), son of Philip of Macedonia (382–336 B.C.). Soon after being crowned in 336 B.C., Alexander set off to conquer a vast territory that eventually included northern Greece, much of modern Egypt, and vast lands across Western Asia into Central and South Asia, an expansion that continued until his death in 323 B.C. These conquests brought Macedonian Greek (also called Hellenistic) civilization, including aspects of architecture, language, sculpture, art, and most likely music as well, to the conquered peoples, although there is no clear evidence of their influence on Macedonia. The area of the Bosphorus was well within the Greek world, and the small city founded on the European side was called Byzantium.

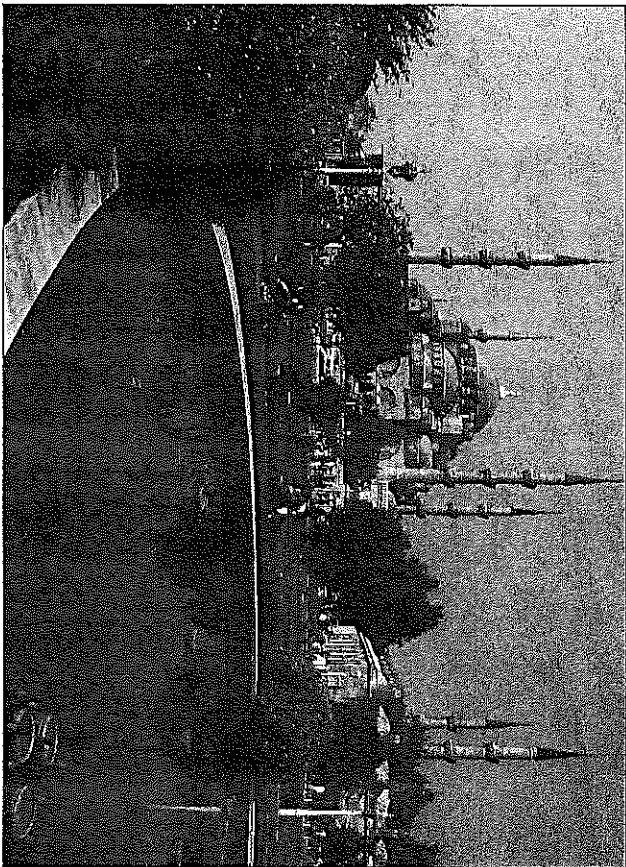
The Roman Empire expanded as Alexander's declined, and by the death of Emperor Trajan in A.D. 117, the Romans occupied much of western, central, and southeastern Europe, northern Africa, and most of the territory conquered by Alexander. Within a few hundred years, Rome's unity would crumble, and the humble village of Byzantium would become one of the world's greatest cities. In 330 Roman Emperor Constantine I made Byzantium the capital of the eastern portion and (humbly) renamed it Constantinople. His successor, Theodosius I, in 395 divided the empire into Western and Eastern halves, giving each



of his sons dominion over them, but with the decline of the Western Roman Empire the eastern half rose to greater prominence.

Whereas Rome was the center of what came to be called Roman Catholic Christianity, Constantinople was the center of the Eastern Rite, also called Byzantine Rite, the origin of a plethora of "Orthodox" faiths, each headed, not by a Pope, but a Patriarch. With the fall of Rome to the Ostrogoths in 476, Constantinople assumed its place as capital of what remained of the Roman Empire (the Eastern Empire) and center of the Eastern Church. The blending of Greek and Middle Eastern civilizations brought about a culture, religious and otherwise, that was distinct from that of Rome. Emperor Justinian I (reigned 527–565) attempted to reform the Church, strengthened the Empire, and built one of the city's noblest churches, the Hagia [Saint] Sophia cathedral.

The birth in 570 of an obscure man named Muhammed in Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula was to change everything. By the death of Muhammed, the Prophet and founder of Islam in 632, Arabia had been converted to Islam, and by 656 parts of North Africa and most of the eastern expanses of the Eastern Roman Empire had been conquered as well. By 814 Islam had spread entirely across north Africa and throughout Spain. At the same time the Catholic and Byzantine Churches engaged in disputes with each other while each was torn internally by disputes.



The great church of St. Sophia in Istanbul, Turkey, built in the sixth century, became an Islamic mosque, with added minarets, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453

By 1054 a formal schism between East and West completed the separation.

As Islam conquered the "Holy Lands," a succession of events led to the Crusades, organized by various European emperors and kings to reclaim Jerusalem from what were termed the "Infidels." There were seven crusades organized at various points in Europe between 1096 and 1270. These great armies spent months, if not years, marching across vast lands, rivers, and mountains in fighting to regain Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Those that traversed the land had to fend for themselves, often raiding and destroying the cities and killing the unlucky residents. Some sailed through the Mediterranean, but storms often reduced such navies to bands of survivors. The ill-fated Fourth Crusade, organized in Venice in 1202, only reached Constantinople in 1204. Although all involved were Christian, the Crusaders plundered the capital of the Eastern Church, even establishing a line of Latin emperors, but failed to reach their goal, the Holy Land. Although there was a restoration of Eastern Emperors and a flourishing of the Church in the eleventh century, Constantinople remained under pressure, not just from Islam, but also from the Muslim Seljuq Turks expanding from the east.

The siege of Constantinople, begun in 1395, ended in 1453 when the city fell to the Ottoman Turks, and the city's name was changed to its present form, Istanbul. The Turkish ruler, Mehmed II, repopulated the city with people brought from elsewhere in the rapidly expanding

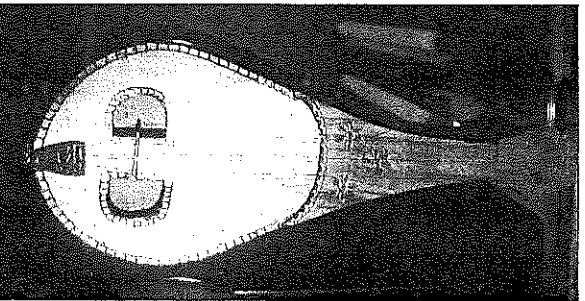
Ottoman Empire and converted the city's great churches into mosques. Not only were the great mosaics of these buildings covered in plaster, but towers, called *minarets*, were added around the building, these both indicating the importance of the mosque and providing a tower from which a Muslim *muezzin* called the faithful to prayer five times daily. Under Mehmed II and especially Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566), great mosques were constructed following the same basic cruciform (cross-like) pattern of the earlier eastern churches.

The Ottoman Empire continued to expand, especially into southeastern and central Europe, reaching its point of greatest expansion at the gates of Vienna in 1680, after which the empire began to recede and crumble. The Ottoman emperors, called Caliphs, ruled from magnificent Topkap Saray Palace overlooking the Bosphorus from the west, accumulating great wealth expressed in the arts, architecture, and music by bleeding the subjugated areas dry of resources. Because the Ottoman Turks were so brutal, many rebellions arose, leading to great battles that make absorbing a full history of the Empire and southeastern Europe daunting.

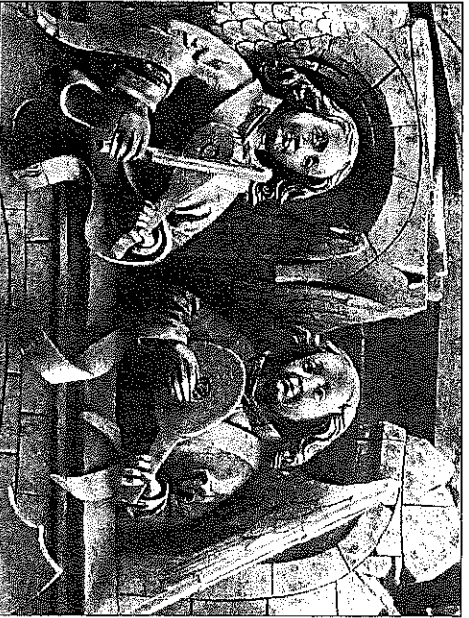
Of importance, because of its musical implications, is the *Janizary* [spelled *Yeniçeri* in Turkish and *Janissary* in some Western writings], a corps of elite troops commanded by the Ottoman Caliphs from the late fourteenth century until their destruction in 1826. Consisting of Christian youths brought from the conquered Balkan provinces, these calibate (until the late sixteenth century) soldiers included bands of musicians who played martial music in parades. What made them distinctive was their use of double reed aerophones (called *zurna*), trumpets, and a battery of percussion including bass drums, triangles, cymbals, and other percussion, including a pole with jingles, later called a "jingling Johnny" in Europe. To Europeans these "exotic" instruments were quite attractive.

After 1680, as the Empire retreated from Europe, replaced by the now-growing Hapsburg or Austro-Hungarian Empire, the government became increasingly corrupt and experienced various coups. After joining Germany as part of the Axis in World War I and being defeated, the Ottoman Empire was ripe for total reform. This came in the form of Mustafa Kemal (later given the title *Atatürk* [Father of the Turks]), who disbanded the Empire in 1922 and reformed Turkey into a modern, European-oriented secular republic. He also changed the writing system from Arabic to the Latin alphabet in the process. At this writing, Turkey is a member of NATO and aspires to membership in the European Union.

The modern traveler visiting Istanbul will be struck by the many layers of its history to be seen, all within walking distance. There are Greek style ruins, an Egyptian obelisk covered with hieroglyphs brought to Byzantium by conquering Romans, the incredible Roman cisterns—football field-sized chambers beneath Istanbul supported by stone columns from dismantled government buildings designed to store water for a city notoriously short of it—great Christian churches with their magni-



Turkish *kemence* (left) and Greek *lyra* (right). Note the similarities to the medieval instruments played by angels depicted in a cathedral carving shown below.



ficent mosaics, and mosques that rival the great cathedrals of Europe. The musical results are many:

- Greek and Arabic music theory were closely related. They in turn became the basis for Medieval European music theory, the foundation for the system used today.
- Certain procedures and melodic styles from Turkey became fundamental in southeastern Europe. Likewise, various Arabic styles penetrated Spain, Portugal, and certain Mediterranean islands.
- When Islam expanded into Europe, it became a permanent part of many countries, including Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. The mosques throughout these lands practice typical Islamic forms of chant, including the Call to Prayer and the reading of the Koran, Islam's holy book.
- Although the Byzantine Church once headquartered in Constantinople (now Istanbul) has long since disappeared, its direct descendant, the Greek Orthodox Church, even today retains many of its musical practices.
- The Rom (often called gypsies) came from India and migrated over a long period of time into northern Africa and Europe. They brought with them much musical culture from Western Asia. In some places the public music of the Rom became, or at least blended with, local traditional musics, making conceptual separation nearly impossible.

Musical interchange occurred for many reasons:

1. The flow of culture from the Greek west to the conquered lands of the east thanks to Alexander the Great, and the return flow of culture from these lands to the west as it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks.
2. The Crusaders, who no doubt brought aspects of European culture to the lands they crossed and the souvenirs, mental and physical, they carried back if they were lucky enough to return home.
3. Intellectual, cultural, and material interchange within each of the great empires that successively occupied these lands. Because the Ottoman Turks were so hated in Europe, many people are still reluctant to admit the degree to which Turkish culture influenced the architecture, cuisine, dress, languages, life styles, and music of the conquered lands, but they are often quite oblivious to an outsider lacking these age-old grudges.

Even a casual comparison of Turkish instruments with many found in Greece, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslav states will reveal obvious relationships. While the patterns of diffusion into both Asia and Europe are complex, we note some of the more obvious examples here:

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES



The Turkish *mey* (Terry Miller and Bob Snider)

1. Fiddles or Bowed Lutes: The distinctive shape of the Turkish *kemençe* seen in the photo below appears in several southeastern European countries, including Greece (*lyra*) and Bulgaria (*gadulka*), among others. We can only speculate on whether these instruments are also related to such instruments as the medieval German *Scheitholt* and the French *rebec*. In some cases the route of entry could have included Moorish Spain during the Muslim Arabic occupation.

2. End-Blown Flutes: The Turkish end-blown flute called *mey*, shown in the photo at left, also appears in southeastern Europe.

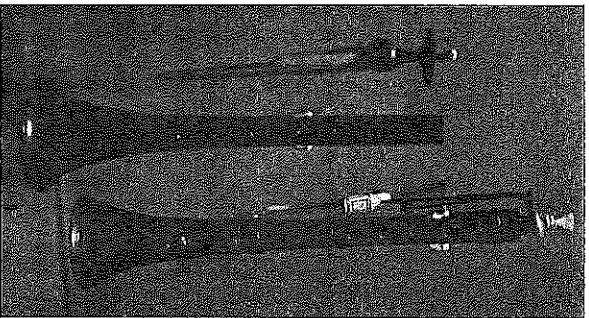
3. Dulcimer or Hammered Zither: Among the most widespread of instrumental types is the hammered zither (organologically called a dulcimer), which nearly always has a box resonator in trapezoid shape. The origin is thought to be the Persian *santur*. The instrument traveled west throughout Europe, transforming into, for example, the Greek *santouri*, the Rom *simbalom*, the German *Hackbrett*, and



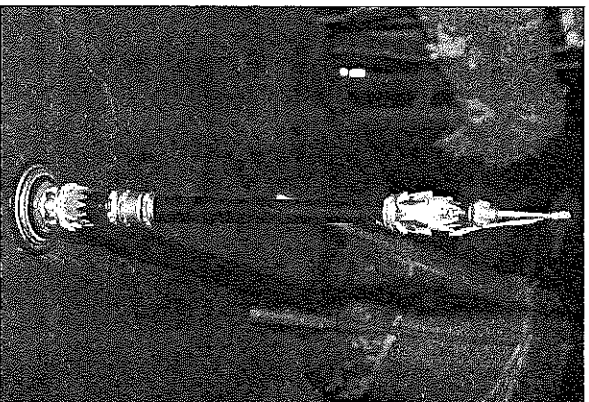
The Persian (Iranian) *santur* (above) and American "hammered dulcimer" (right)



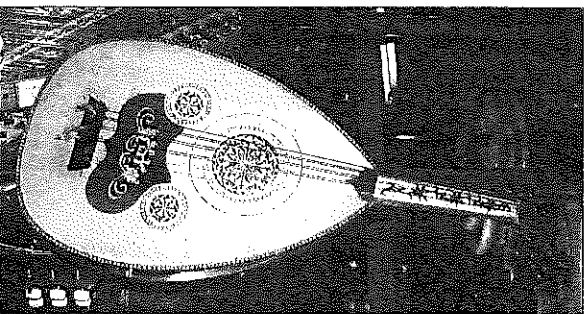
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES



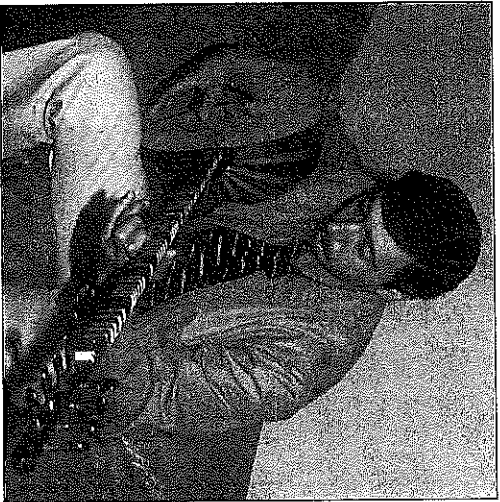
Turkish *zurra* (left) and Malaysian *serunai* (right)



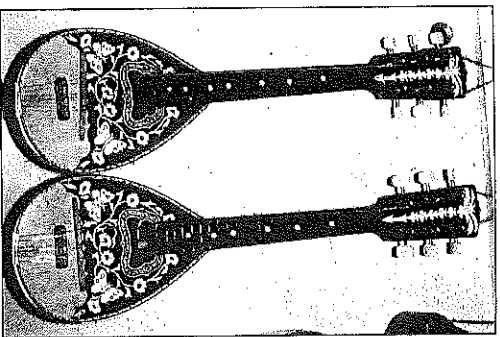
Turkish *ıure ud* (left) and Greek *lauri* (right)



CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES



Turkish baglama (left) and Greek bouzouki (right)



CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: BEYOND THE SOUNDS THEMSELVES

derives from these prototypes. Ironically, the best-known Greek instrument, the *bouzouki*, descends from the Turkish *huzung*, and as a result some nationalistic Greeks refuse to listen to *bouzouki* music, since they consider it a survival of their hated Turkish oppressors.

Our study of Turkish music shows how culture ebbs and flows between and among sometimes strikingly different civilizations over time and place. These processes are always complicated and can never be sorted out precisely, but it is clear that today's world results from a series of events that have been taking place over a long period of time. Without an awareness of these interactions, it is impossible to understand why things are the way they are today.

### Questions to Consider

1. How might an "insider" to a musical tradition hear it differently from an "outsider"? Why are both perspectives necessary for a complete picture?
2. What music best expresses your individual identity?
3. What distinguishes "modern" from "postmodern" scholarship in music?
4. What role does music play in your spiritual life?
5. How has technology changed the kinds of music we listen to and how we hear them?
6. Why is history important to the study of world music?

#### SANTUR

A hammered zither from the Persian classical tradition. Often cited as the origin of hammered zithers found throughout Asia, Northern Africa, Europe, and the Western hemisphere.

#### ZURNA

(Also, ZOURNA)  
A double-reed aerophone from Turkey, North Africa and Greece.

#### BAGLAMAMA

A round-bodied lute from Turkey.

the French *doulentelle*. It also traveled east to Asia, and west to North America, where it is called the "hammered dulcimer."

4. Double Reeds. Like the dulcimer, double-reed instruments have traveled east and west, though it does not seem probable that all are related to those from Western Asia. The Turkish/Arabic *zurina* instruments are the likely predecessors of the Greek *zournas*, in a chain of instruments leading all the way to the French *bombarda* and even perhaps to the capped reeds such as the medieval and renaissance *shawm* or *Schalmei*. It is also possible that all of these instruments descended from the ancient Greek *aulos*, first developed in Western Asia, then transitted back to Europe.

5. Pear-Shaped Lute. The name for a pear-shaped lute in Arabic and Turkish is *al-'ud*, the root of the English word "lute." As the *al-'ud* traveled west it evolved into folk instruments such as the Greek *lauto* and Romanian *cobza*, as well as the highly refined instrument of the Renaissance simply called "lute." The Renaissance lute played in France, Germany, and England most likely entered from Arabic (Moorish) Spain. The *al-'ud* also traveled east, where it became the Chinese *pipa*, the Japanese *biwa*, and the Vietnamese *dan tyba*.

6. Round-Bodied Lute. Round-bodied lutes abound in Western Asia and Southeastern Europe under a variety of names, but they also occur in Europe outside the areas occupied by the Ottoman Turks. The Turkish *baglama* (also called *saz*) is made in various sizes with movable frets, and similar instruments, usually called *tambura* or a variant of this term, are found in, for example, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Serbia. Possibly even the Italian *mandolin*