

## Editorial: Musicology and the Discourses of Global Exchange

Federico Celestini and Philip V. Bohlman

In a recent “Editorial” (*Acta Musicologica* 84, no. 1 [2012]) we wrote about the commitment of the IMS and of this journal to a diverse musicology of plurals. The history of that commitment is particularly notable because of its insistence on the capacious embrace of the international and the many forms it has taken. For many years, *Acta* published reports about musicology in individual nations, and the geographical reach of music history was significant for the ways it was not constrained by Western music history. The expansion toward the international that we now witness in the pages of *Acta* took shape over the course of a long intellectual history.

That history notwithstanding, it is also clear that we are witnessing an expansion with even greater dimensions, which forms at a critical moment of transition toward an increasingly common, indeed, shared, intellectual history. There is a palpable shift and recombination in the musicologies, a move away from an approach to single areas distinguished by their specific qualities and forms of uniqueness to a larger global history that embraces different musics by connecting them in a broader field of plural narratives, perspectives, and methodologies. This move is notably present, for example, in Reinhard Strohm’s Balzan Prize Project, “Towards a Global History of Music,” and in the volumes that will appear as “Grove Music in Global Perspective.” Musical thought that produces reflection on history, culture, and sound moves across a dynamic field, knowable only fully upon taking account of global dimensions. This is a synecdochically unbounded musicology, in which some aspects of much more expansive—to some degree global and international—dimensions are a part of our most local studies.

New areas have come to constitute the dynamic discourses across which musicological research and reflection move. *Regions* have emerged as geographical, linguistic, and political areas whose complexities deserve as much if not more attention as nations. *Borders* and *contact zones* not only multiply the sites of research, but they reveal the ways in which musical change is more dynamic and exchange more complex when it flows away from the center rather than coalescing as the center’s canons. Music history, accordingly, results from *fluid geographical transfers*, often those that are dissonant and disruptive, yet responsive to the movement and mobility of human populations. The flow of musical transfers across border regions can be both intimate and expansive. Modal theory, structure, and practice, *māqam* and *rāga*, for instance, have flowed across vast stretches of the Mediterranean and

Asia for centuries, leaving their mark on the local practices no less than on the classical repertoires that constitute entire regions. The migration of musical instruments, similarly, allows us to chart the material affordance of globalization across millennia. Even apparent enclaves of exclusiveness, such as the post-war European avant-garde, reveal deep and significant traces of intercultural exchanges.

At all geographical sites formed from mobility there is a long history of exchange and in-betweenness. In some cases, as in the encounter resulting from the spread of empire and colonialism, patterns of musical exchange are disruptive and destructive. Music shaped under conditions of violence and misunderstanding bears witness to musical exchange that is skewed toward those with power. Still, musicological exchange also stimulates other responses to the cultural flow generated through geographical contact zones. The history of Hindustani music, for example, unfolds along the borders between religions and empires; the larger question is not whether it is predominantly Hindu or Muslim, but rather how it accommodates both and the much more complex aesthetics that these religions and others in South Asia share. If we recognize the ways in which al-Andalus was a historical contact zone, we embark upon new possibilities for remapping the Mediterranean as a region with music cultures shared among the Abrahamic faiths, not as a tectonic space that historically separates the music history of European selves from African and Asian others. A consequence of such a “deterritorialization” and successive “reterritorialization” would be, for instance, the emergence of a new disciplinary space for the interrelated study of European, Arabic, Jewish, and Byzantine music in the Middle Ages.

We believe strongly that *Acta* can and should play a critical role in paving the way as musicology crosses the borders of geographical and historical disciplinarity that transform it into a discourse for global exchange. The *music histories* of that musicology would bear witness to unifying processes, which engender exchange and open channels for a shared historiography, perhaps like the channels between China and Japan that Yuanzheng Yang traces in the pages of *Acta* that follow. *Musical thought*, too, crystallizes around patterns that are no longer isolated, rather depend on the histories of speculation about music theory that arose over centuries in the Middle East and South Asia. Music *aesthetics* would accommodate exchange rather than detach the ontologies of music. How different, for example, the history of Chinese aesthetics looks when we perceive the ways in which the additive processes engendering inclusiveness are focused on the ways in which Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist aesthetics owe much to common epistemologies and practices of music. *Religion*, so frequently a context of the intellectual and social contexts of music, significantly assumes different roles when its potential for facilitating global exchange is explored. Islam and Buddhism, to take two obvious examples, have achieved global dimensions at least as great as Christianity. When sacred music is exchanged globally, numerous historiographic reconfigurations are set in motion. It would become necessary to challenge Christianity as the template for Western music history. The

study of ritual as local musical practice could give way to understanding ritual as global. Sufism, for example, could be viewed as a complex global system, in music history and practice, viewed through the performance of rituals such as *dhikr* and repertoires such as *qawwālī* across the world. The *materiality of music*, the physical objects and beings that sound music, acquire different meaning when considered from the perspective of a musicology of global exchange. There is, perhaps, no better case for such exchange than the organological system developed by Curt Sachs and Erich Moritz von Hornbostel, which they consciously based on the systematic description of music instrument types included in the Sanskrit *Nāṭyaśāstra*, compiled in India during the early centuries of the first millennium of the Common Era. The study of compositional processes also requires a global perspective, for New Music is a global phenomenon. There is no reason, furthermore, to confine structural analysis to Western art music and cultural contextualization to ethnographic and sociological fields. In recent decades, New Musicologies and innovative approaches in ethnomusicology have shown that structural and contextual analyses are methodological perspectives that demand combination and interrelation.

What does a musicology formed around discourses of global exchange look like? First of all, the borders—geographical, disciplinary, historical—would disappear and their role in facilitating exchange would be redeployed. Second, the distinctions between self and other, center and periphery—often used too conveniently to separate rather than connect—would be reconfigured to explore the many levels of exchange rather than the surface level of exclusion. Third, multi-sited research would become the norm rather than the exception. Finally, specialties would coalesce around contact zones where scholarly exchange reflected the musical exchange that we joined with others to understand better. *Acta*, we believe, can and should stand and lead at the forefront of the shift toward a global musicology. The journal serves the members of the International Musicological Society as a forum in which connections are formed and differences converge. *Acta* is in the intellectually and ethically enviable position of setting the standard for a musicology responsive to the discourses of global exchange.