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The Politics of Silence: Music, Violence and Protest in Guinea

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Abstract. In this article, I consider the factors that lead musicians in Guinea to largely refrain from political critique and rarely express dissent. Representations in the popular and academic literature often emphasize music as a site for resistance, while young Guinean musicians speak of themselves as “warriors for peace.” Their reactions to political violence in 2009, however, were muted and cautious. I argue that this stance stems from long-standing norms of silence and guardedness in Guinea, while musicians in the Guinean diaspora protest from a physical and cultural distance.

Who Owns an Interpretation? Legal and Symbolic Ownership of Norwegian Folk Music

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Abstract. This article examines discourses of legal and symbolic ownership in Nordic folk music. The point of departure is a growing tension between different conceptions of musical property rights: one centered on cultivating a shared heritage of musical style (the tradition); the other based on notions of artistic autonomy, individual rights, and legal ownership (copyright). By means of a case study documenting the use of a traditional song in popular music production, the analysis highlights the incompatibility between market and symbolic economies and explores questions of agency and authorship that pertain to the ongoing debate over “unauthorized” usage of traditional materials.

Transnational Migrations and YouTube Sensations: Korean Americans,
Popular Music, and Social Media

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Abstract. This article addresses the music making of Korean Americans, focusing on their place within the emergent social media environment that has exploded in the last five years and comparing this with the very different environment of the previous decade. Biographical coverage of the careers of three Korean American musicians, two of whom have extensive social media presence, demonstrates how these media, particularly YouTube, represent a fundamental shift in the popular music profession, providing equalizing opportunities that are enabling some to circumvent racial barriers that have long existed and still persist in the major music and entertainment industries in the United States.

Musical Boundary-Work: Ethnomusicology, Symbolic Boundary Studies,
and Music in the Afro-Gaucho Religious Community of Southern Brazil

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Abstract. This article combines ethnomusicology and symbolic boundary theory to explain musical boundary-work: the creation, interpretation, and use of music to reinforce, bridge, or reshape symbolic boundaries for social, political, spiritual, or other purposes. The multi-faith and multi-ethnic Afro-gaucho religious community of metropolitan Porto Alegre, in southern Brazil, serves as the case study, because practitioners use musical liturgy to combine and segregate the Batuque, Umbanda, and Quimbanda religions and their denominations. This essay introduces the community, highlighting ethno-racial identity politics, and describes processes of musical boundary-work within the community, focusing on local concepts of crossing and purity.

Envisioned, Ensounded, Enacted: Sacred Ecology and Indigenous Musical Experience in Yoreme Ceremonies of Northwest Mexico

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Abstract. This paper explores an ecological approach to the perception of musical meaning. Ethnographically informed by a Yoreme understanding of seeing and hearing as interrelated perceptual activities, this paper critically evaluates the concept of soundscape and the dichotomization and hierarchization of our (Western) perception faculties. It is a contribution to the growing number of publications with an integrative humanistic-scientific theoretical approach to ethnomusicology, based on insights gained from indigenous cosmovision, perception of sound, and human-animal-environment relationships.

Mapping Music: Cluster Analysis Of Song-Type Frequencies Within And Between Cultures

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Abstract. Understanding cross-cultural patterns of musical diversity requires some method of visualizing these patterns using maps. The traditional methods of cross-cultural comparison have been criticized for ignoring the rich diversity of musical styles that exists within each culture. We present a compromise solution in which we map the relative frequencies of different “cantogroups” (stylistic song-types) both within and between cultures. Applying this method to 259 traditional group songs from twelve indigenous peoples of Taiwan, we identified five major cantogroups, the frequencies of which varied across the twelve groups. From this information, we were able to create musical maps of Taiwan.