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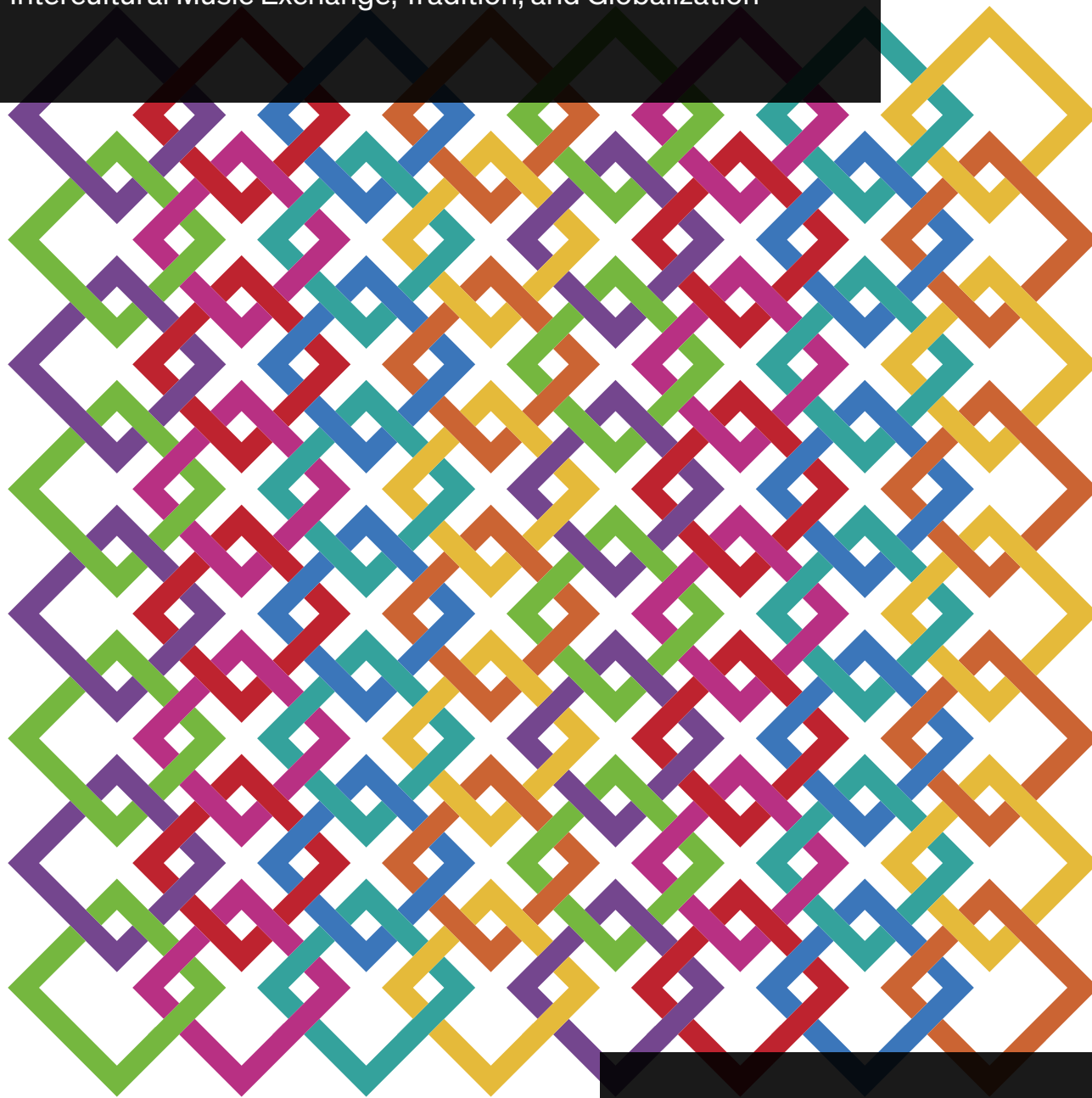
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# Framing Ethno-World

Intercultural Music Exchange, Tradition, and Globalization



**Roger Mantie and Laura Risk**



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# Introduction

This white paper report is intended to serve as a conceptual framework to advance the research agenda for a comprehensive study of the Ethno program overseen by Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI). The white paper has been generated on the basis of a literature review and critical analysis informed by:

- Publicly-oriented (outward-facing) descriptions of and claims about the JMI Ethno program;
- Issues discussed in extant research literature;
- Deliberations at Ethno Research meetings held at York St. John University (May and December, 2019);
- Issues presented in 7 ethnographic case studies of Ethno camps undertaken in 2019 by members of the Ethno Research team; and
- The experiences of the Ethno Research team who attended Ethno France (February 2020).

## WHAT IS ETHNO-WORLD?

Starting from modest beginnings as a folk music camp in Sweden (1990), the Ethno program, hereafter referred to as Ethno-World, has evolved over the subsequent 30 years to become a network of international music camps (typically 7–14 days in length) for “youth” (variously defined, but officially listed as 13–30) that take place in an ever-increasing number of countries around the globe. In recent years Ethno-World has broadened its activities to include workshops, trainings, and a concert tour program (“Ethno on the Road”). The Ethno program is described on the JMI website (<http://jmi.net/programs/ethno>) and the Ethno-World website (<https://www.ethno-world.org/info/>) as “Jeunesses Musicales International’s program for folk, world and traditional music.”

## WHAT DOES THE ETHNO-WORLD PROGRAM PURPORT TO DO?

According to the JMI website, the stated mission of the Ethno program is “to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage amongst youth.” The wording is slightly different on the Ethno-World website, which reads, “to revive, invigorate and disseminate our global traditional musical heritage.” The JMI website describes four aspects of the program: (1) intercultural learning through peer education in traditional music, (2) sharing music traditions and learning from one another, (3) personal development through exchange,

and (4) traditional music, social inclusion and respect. The language on both websites emphasizes such points as the importance of “intercultural dialogue and understanding,” “democratic peer-to-peer learning,” “building respect and tolerance” (combating “xenophobia, intolerance and racism”), and “preserving cultural heritage.”

The Ethno-World website lists the following objectives of the program:

- Preservation/conservation of cultural heritage, keeping traditional music alive amongst young people;
- Fostering intercultural dialogue;
- Promoting non-formal music education through peer-to-peer and experimental learning;
- Facilitating mobility of young musicians and emerging talent, locally and abroad;
- Creating equal opportunities for musicians of all genders;
- Celebrating young talent in an inclusive environment;
- Enabling young musicians to gain performance experience under professional conditions;
- Building confidence in young people’s talents and inspiring them to further their musical and creative development;
- Growing self-respect and respect for others;
- Creating awareness of oneself, one’s own culture and the world; and
- Creating a democratic space for the creation/performance of music without hierarchy.

## **COMMENTARY**

By their nature, research agendas are intended to serve particular audiences. The agenda outlined in this white paper is intended to provide a conceptual framework for the 3-year Ethno Research project rather than to test, critique, or evaluate the aims and ambitions of the Ethno-World program. This white paper also aspires to contribute to the scholarly community by connecting recent scholarship on cultural globalization, tradition and revival, interculturality, sites of musical exchange, and peer-to-peer learning with ethnographic detail generated by the Ethno Research project.

The following two sections offer a broad contextualization of the Ethno-World program through a range of scholarly lenses, grouped loosely under the headings “Globalization and Culture” and “Intercultural Music Exchange Encounters.” The final section of the white paper proposes an agenda for the final two years of the Ethno Research project. While many sections of this white paper are primarily descriptive, the writers recognize that the selection of scholarly frameworks and ethnographic examples has been influenced by our own individual and collective perspectives.

# Globalization and Culture

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Midway into the writing of this report, the world was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented global spread of the virus put a fine point on the interconnectedness of 21st century global living. Unlike contagious diseases such as Ebola, which has been, for the most part, confined to and strongly associated with just one part of the world, COVID-19 has proven to be universal in its reach, showing little regard for arbitrary nation-state boundaries. Although nationalism was highlighted in the ways various governments responded to the pandemic, the virus itself carried no passport. Marshall McLuhan's "global village" could not have been more prescient, albeit in ways he did not anticipate.

*Globalization* has been much discussed in economic, political, social, and cultural circles since at least the 1980s in the wake of neoliberal free-market forces pushing an agenda of free-flow capital around the globe, unimpeded by national boundaries. The effects of globalization are highly situated and contextual. Max Peter Baumann (2000) argues, for example, that, while economic globalization is often accepted as inevitable, if not desirable (for those embracing the logic of capitalism), cultural globalization tends to raise concerns and fears. These fears often reflect theories of rationalization (per Max Weber), cultural imperialism (per postcolonialism), and homogenization and standardization (per the Frankfurt School), whereby market rationality will inevitably lead to the colonization and loss of cultural values and practices (e.g., Ritzer's "McDonaldization").

Complicating understandings of culture in the context of globalization is what Baumann (2000) describes as "the principle of territoriality" and its "association with a specific interpretation of culture and home" (124). The "logic" of a singular national culture is tied to the emergence of the nation state in the 17th and 18th centuries, a phenomenon that led to what Baumann calls the "cult of cultural identity" (122). Essentialist conceptions of culture based on territoriality were challenged by mass migrations that began in the late 19th and early 20th century. Although initially met by assimilationist policies and practices in many countries, "affirmation[s] of cultural plurality" in the latter 20th century gave rise to an awareness of the "diversity of the local" and desires for a "revitalization of the past" (121–122).

JMI's stated mission for the Ethno-World program to "revive and keep alive global cultural heritage amongst youth" situates the program firmly within the context of globalization, particularly in light of such concepts as McLuhan's mass media-saturated global village (exacerbated by technological change, most notably the internet) and Alan Lomax's portended "cultural grey-out." The mission to "revive and keep alive" invokes the

imperative to guard against the potential of loss. “Global cultural heritage” implies that specific cultural practices are not just a manifestation of local communities, but that, in line with UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (discussed below), they represent tangible value and worth for all humanity.

This section of the white paper focuses on the larger contextual issues against which Ethno-World may be placed. These include the functioning of JMI as an “international non-governmental organization” operating in the cultural sphere, the “imaginary” of nationality, the effects of globalization on culture and cultural agency, efforts aimed at cultural preservation (including revivalism and professionalization), the emergence of world music and world music pedagogy as forces of cultural production (including the problematic of authenticity), and, finally, interculturality and colonialism. Taken together, the issues covered in this section are intended to provide a backdrop for the issues taken up in “Intercultural Music Exchange Encounters.”

## INGOS

With lessons learned from the failure of the League of Nations following World War I, the United Nations (UN) was founded on the heels of the Second World War with the aim of preventing future world wars. As an organization represented by nation-states, the UN—an intergovernmental organization (IGO)—embodies the logic of nationalism. By contrast, non-governmental organizations with an international focus, known as INGOs, operate above and beyond the logic of nationalism (even though, of necessity, individual INGOs incorporate in a given country). Although a majority of INGOs, such as Oxfam and CARE International, tend to focus on aid and development, some INGOs, such as the International Music Council, Musicians Without Borders, and Jeunesses Musicales International, operate in the cultural sphere.

Boli and Thomas (1997) describe five principles that tend to characterize world-culture INGOs: universalism, individualism, rational voluntaristic authority, human purposes of rationalizing progress, world citizenship. All five apply, to varying degrees, to JMI:

- 1.** INGOs attempt to capitalize on aspects of human life and human practices that are *universal*. “Techniques for playing better chess,” Boli and Thomas point out, “are not country-specific” (1997, 180). In the case of JMI, the trope of music as a “universal language” provides a fertile *raison d’être*.
- 2.** On *individualism*, Boli and Thomas write, “INGOs habitually invoke the *common good of humanity* as a goal. The cultural dynamic at work parallels that characterizing national polities” (181; emphasis added). JMI’s appeal to “global cultural heritage” is salient here.



3. *Rational voluntaristic authority* provides both the legitimacy and the illegitimacy of INGOs. Boli and Thomas point out that INGO authority is informal—“cultural, not organizational. It is the agency presumed to inhere in rational individuals organizing for purposive action. Its basis can only be the diffuse principles of world culture, for INGO authority does not flow from any legal-bureaucratic or supernatural source” (1997, 181). At the same time, because INGOs are accountable to no one but their funders, they are subject to abuse (many INGOs have been criticized for higher-than-average administrative costs) and a questionable relationship with those served (who have no vote and little say in the operations of the INGO) (Boli and Thomas 1997, Crack 2013). This is not to question the motives or intentions of cultural INGOs, such as JMI, but to acknowledge that their authority is self-proclaimed.
4. On *human purposes*, Boli and Thomas draw attention to the tension within culturally-focused INGOs between the rational and the irrational. On the one hand, INGOs seek “rational progress” (i.e., development). On the other hand, some INGOs operate against the dehumanizing “rational” forces of Western science, capitalism, and bureaucracy (i.e., by encouraging respect for local culture/ knowledge) (Boli and Thomas 1997, 181). JMI’s focus on cultural preservation of world culture intersects with the “common good of humanity” (#2 above).
5. Finally, *world citizenship* tends to figure prominently in the ethos of INGOs. This, Boli and Thomas suggest, is “prominently codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which depicts a global citizen whose rights transcend national boundaries. . . Acting as the primary carriers of world culture, INGOs translate the diffuse global identity and authority of world citizenship into specific rights, claims, and prescriptions for state behavior” (1997, 182). Ethno-World’s objectives and activities align directly with a value system of world citizenship.

## “ETHNOS” AND THE NATIONAL IMAGINARY

That JMI (Ethno-World) chose to label (and continue to label) their music camps as “Ethno” is both curious and telling. The modern word “ethno” derives from the Greek *ethnos*—a people, nation, class, caste, or tribe (etymologyonline.com). The Ancient Greek concept of *ethnos* was thus intended to identify or distinguish one group from another. Historically, an *ethnos*, as an identifiable group of people, was bound by time and place. This is not to imply the absence of mobility or intergroup contact, but rather that groups

were differentiated according to geographic locality, which was coincident with cultural practices. As a result, culture has been commonly understood as “having a special and almost defining relationship to geographical place” (Tomlinson 2012, 5). The Ethno-World practice of attendees “bringing” a piece of music from their country or region to be shared with other attendees reinforces the idea that individuals are tied culturally and identifiably to their place of origin.

In some ways, Ethno-World’s operating premise of culture as geographically located is consistent with the academic study of the world’s musics. Until the mid-20th century, the linked disciplines of anthropology and *ethnomusicology* operated from a presumption of “discontinuous” cultural and musical variation. From this viewpoint, there are “aggregates of people who essentially share a common culture, and interconnected differences that distinguish each such culture from all others. . . [and therefore] it would follow that there are discrete groups of people, i.e. ethnic units, to correspond to each culture” (Barth 1969, 9). Similarly, ethnomusicologists in the 1950s and 1960s conceived of the musical world as a set of discrete, bounded musical units, nearly always defined along ethnic or racial lines (i.e., *ethnos*), inside each of which was a “pure” and “authentic” tradition (Kebede 1986, 59).

The emergence of the modern state as a geopolitical entity isomorphic with a “nation” in the 18th and 19th centuries is a complicated topic that exceeds the bounds of this report. Suffice it to say that the problems of territory and government have a long history (Foucault 2007). That culture and identity figure in such problems is evident historically (e.g., the former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union, etc.). Following Anderson (1991), Chua and Tan (2012) write that “national identity” as a shared sense of communion among people with a common flag is best understood as an “imagined political community.” Steger (2012) similarly writes of the contemporary nation-state as a “social imaginary.” Over time, he suggests, the “national imaginary” became the “taken-for-granted framework of modern societies” (1). This is to say that, unlike the Ancient Greek *ethnos*, which denoted distinct peoples as “nations” based on identifiable, bounded practices and characteristics, today’s nation-states create a sense of belonging and attachment based on the imaginary of the geopolitical nation. As evidenced in both romantic nationalism and, more recently, hyper-nationalist movements throughout the world, this national imaginary sense of belonging is no less powerful than what might occur within the kinship caste or tribe (*ethnos*).

In a contemporary context, there is an increasingly complex relationship between culture and locality. Within historically monocultural countries, culture may, at least to some degree, map onto the demarcated territories of the modern nation-state. Hence, “national culture” (Anderson 1991) may, in some contexts, be relatively unproblematic. Colonization and immigration, however, complicate understandings of what is understood and accepted as clearly defined and homogeneous culture. This is especially true in countries embracing policies of multiculturalism where

assimilation into the dominant national culture is neither required nor expected. As a result, territories lose their cultural specificity. Increased intergroup contact by way of advances in transportation and communications have further created conditions that undermine the Ancient Greek concept of *ethnos* as people combine and integrate previously distinct practices, thus raising fears over cultural homogenization. As Chua and Tan (2012) point out, however, fears over cultural loss due to globalization often lead to a situation whereby national boundaries become even more important—something witnessed today in rising xenophobia and hyper-nationalism.

## CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION

Arjun Appadurai's influential essay, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," was published in 1990, the same year as the first Ethno camp. Beyond this timely coincidence, "Disjuncture and Difference" provides ideas highly salient to understanding the emergence and development of the Ethno-World camps. Invoking the phenomenon of deterritorialization, whereby the breakdown of place-based stability of culture accelerated in the 1980s, Appadurai writes, "because of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national policies and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large) has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders" (1990, 306).

To better describe the complex interplays of globalization, Appadurai sketches out what he calls "five dimensions of global cultural flow": *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes* (1990, 296). As Frank Lechner (2012) explains, the flow metaphor allows for an understanding of how, on the one hand, the diffusion of flows "creates more common worlds," while at the same time recognizing how "local ecologies in the various scapes alter the strength and impact of the flows" (3). Most salient of Appadurai's five "scapes" for an analysis of Ethno-World is the *ethnoscape*, which he defines as "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" (1990, 297). As Chun (2012) summarizes:

**From Appadurai's description of ethnoscapes, it is clear that mobile groups and populations are now an essential or staple feature of societies everywhere, and that these ever-evolving communities and transient, hybrid, and transnational imaginations that epitomize such lifestyles and identities were engendered by underlying disjunctures that have given birth to all other scapes and linked them functionally in a...borderless world. (1)**

The idea of a “borderless world” (Ōmae 1990, Bauder 2018) in many ways underpins the spirit and intentions of both JMI and Ethno-World—though the implications of precisely what “borderless” means for culture and ethnicity is far from clear.

In 1969, Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth called for anthropological investigation to move away from the study of discreet, bounded cultures and examine the “constitution of ethnic groups and the nature of the boundaries between them,” arguing that these boundaries were, for the most part, socially constructed (Barth 1969, 9). In a similar vein, and consistent to some extent with Appadurai’s ethnoscape, James Clifford (1997) has pointed out how the relationship between culture and location is more about understanding the “routes” people take than the “roots” they put down.

An understanding of routes rather than roots may be helpful in better understanding culture and location, but is still dependent to some degree on assumptions of purity, authenticity, and stability. A sense of belonging or identity in the “ethnos” sense depends on identifiable or distinct characteristics. The complexity of globalization has resulted in a condition where, on the one hand, the accelerated flow of ideas creates a certain kind of universal homogeneity through processes such as hybridization and creolization. On the other hand, the value of heterogeneous “global culture” is enshrined in the privileging of differences under the banner of cosmopolitanism. As Appadurai argues, “the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another and thus to proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular” (1990, 307–308).

## Cultural Agency

In Lechner’s assessment, “world culture results from globalization” (Lechner 2012, 2). World culture is thus not a “thing” but an active process: “each place and people will struggle with how to balance the tension between homogenization and heterogenization” (3). The effects of flows of various kinds (people, media, technology, finance, ideology) have been discussed thoroughly in the globalization literature. With respect to culture, debates since the 1980s have tended to centre on (a) inequities perceived as increasing (due to growing corporate power), or (b) the perception of cultural loss to homogenization. Britta Sweers (2014), for instance, draws upon the interdisciplinary volume *Global Transformations: Politics, Economy and Culture* (Held et al. 1999) to examine revivalism (discussed below) in a Latvian context. She uses three perspectives on globalization: *sceptic*, *hyperglobal*, and *transformationalist*, which serve here as useful concepts to help frame the activities of Ethno-World.

In short, the *sceptic* perspective equates globalization with the homogenization of culture (i.e., cultural loss). The *hyperglobal* views globalization primarily through an economic lens (generally taking a positive viewpoint). In the case of culture, the hyperglobal view is prominent within the music industry and the media. The *transformationalist* perspective, in Sweers's reading, sees global networks as helping to create new musical forms, structures, and practices (Sweers 2014, 475). Taken together, these three perspectives help add nuance to considerations of cultural globalization.

Appadurai was quick to point out that the globalization of culture "is not the same as its homogenization" (1990, 307). Hence, while sceptic critiques may rightly point to specific instances of Westernization, Americanization, McDonaldization, and so forth, it is problematic to outright dismiss the agency of local peoples, as if the juggernaut of Western corporate cultural influence were irresistible. Indeed, Sweers (2014) points out how, in the case of global hypermedia, the internet can in fact be a means of survival for musicians in smaller countries.

The term *glocalization* was first used in Japanese business circles in the 1980s (see Giulianotti and Robertson 2012), and was adapted in social theory by Robertson (1992) to recognize and describe the universal and the particular within globalization processes. According to Giulianotti and Robertson (2012), "Glocalization registers the intensified interpenetration of the local and the global, the universal and the particular, and homogeneity and heterogeneity. Glocalization is characterized by the societal co-presence of sameness and difference" (1). Put within the context of musical practices, glocalization resonates with a *transformationalist* perspective that views the flows of the ethnoscape as helping to constitute what might be considered "world culture"—not in the sense of homogenized sameness, but in the sense of interconnectedness (per the ethnoscape).

## Heritage Musics

Music-making at Ethno camps takes place at the intersection of nation and individual, with traditional music used both as a surrogate for national identity writ large and as a means of constructing a public-facing, nation-identified self (at least for the duration of the camp). For some participants, the selection of repertoire is fraught with difficulties. One described (to the Ethno Research team) a feeling of "rejection" upon receiving an email before camp requesting that she prepare a tune or song from her country to teach to the group; she loved traditional music from several other countries but felt that her own national music rarely "touches the bottom of my heart." By contrast, another participant felt that Ethno had "opened my eyes about my culture" and instilled a sense of obligation to delve deeper into his own musical traditions (which he had already studied intensively for several years): "If people abroad don't know about my culture, I should know. I should be able to teach [it and] to perpetuate [it]."

In both cases, the underlying premise of Ethno-World—that intercultural exchange occurs through a nation-based system of musical exchange within which participants must represent their home countries—assumes that all Ethno attendees have a clear national identity that they feel comfortable representing and, more generally, that both musical repertoires and individual constructions of identity align with political borders. The problematic nature of such assumptions is highlighted by Westerlund et al. (2015), who contrast Arab musicians in an intercultural project who “grew up in their folk tradition” with revivalist Klezmer musicians who have “no Klezmer country” to go to (66). What allows these assumptions to retain their hold at Ethno camps seems to be the recognition that, although this vision of traditional music does not withstand scrutiny, it does provide a reference point—a *point de repère*, as one artistic leader put it—for the conversations on sameness and difference that thread through Ethno camps.

Following Appadurai (1990), ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin proposed an influential theory of “micromusics” composed of three levels of “musical visibility”—local, regional, and transregional—through which Appadurai’s five “-scapes” interact (Slobin 1993).<sup>1</sup> Slobin then delineates three potentially overlapping musical spaces within this fluid, ever-changing landscape: superculture, subculture, and interculture.

- The *superculture* includes the music industry, with its ties to the techno-, media-, and finanscapes; the “institutionalized rules and venues” of the state (30); and sociocultural assumptions about musicians and music-making.
- *Subcultures* are local musical groupings parallel to Finnegan’s musical “pathways” (Finnegan 2007). Slobin argues that, while individual musicians may believe themselves to be involved in a given musical subculture for reasons of self-fulfillment or community, their involvement is likely also the result of family, gender, age, religion, generation, or other social groupings.
- The *interculture* invokes the “far-flung, expansive reach of musical forces that cross frontiers” (61) and includes industrial intercultural (the music industry, the state, consumers); diasporic intercultural (“links that subcultures set up across national boundaries” [64]); and affinity intercultural, engendered by a “contemporary global culture” that “allows anyone anywhere to be attracted to musics of choice, many of which can now be heard close to home” (68).

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<sup>1</sup> Slobin defines local musics as known only to “small-scale bounded audiences” (17). Regional musics may be defined geographically or diasporically and often grow out of local musics: the latter often “feed into regional styles as isolated groups become part of a network” due to the “increasing mobility of émigré groups” (18). Transregional musics “[spill] across regional boundaries,” sometimes “becoming global.” The “high energy” that drives transregional musics often derives from a mediascape, though not always: Slobin credits the “ideoscape of activism” and “an ethnoscape of estrangement” with transforming protest songs sung with guitar accompaniment, for instance, into a transregional genre (19).

Supercultures, subcultures, and intercultural are not mutually exclusive and are most usefully conceptualized as lenses through which one might productively analyze a given musical activity. Slobin, for instance, applies this framework in his monograph *Fiddle on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* (2003). Positioning klezmer as a “typical hybrid system” that combines subcultural and supercultural elements “in a unique way that resonates for both ‘ethnic’ insiders and larger audiences that pick up on its energy and distinctive sound” (8), Slobin examines the economic, personal, and evocative forces that draw musicians to klezmer and the various levels of community at which the music operates (local and national, historical and current, generational, imaginary).

Slobin’s study of klezmer introduces an additional term of particular relevance to Ethno: *heritage musics*, i.e., present-day cultural productions that reference the past. Following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998), Slobin argues that heritage is the “word of choice for identification through presumed historical connection, even the most attenuated or stereotyped,” and an essential component in the “packaging” of both people and places for touristic purposes (2003, 13). While klezmer at the turn of the 21st century is best described as a “diasporic” or even “post-diasporic” heritage music (18–19), Slobin introduces two additional types of heritage music better suited to parsing Ethno-World events. “National” heritage musics purport to represent either the “overarching identity” of a nation or the multitude of “small-group identities” that make up a multiethnic society, while “exotic” heritage musics play into Euro-American fantasies of the “primitive” or “orientalist” Other (Slobin 2003, 15). A given musical repertoire and playing style may be a national heritage music in certain circumstances and an exotic heritage music in others, depending on performers, performance context, and reception.

## **SAFEGUARDING WORLD CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

Central to the concept of heritage is something inherited or passed along from one’s ancestors. This “something” can be tangible (e.g., objects, goods) or intangible (e.g., cultural practices such as music). Also central to the idea of heritage is the necessity of *selectivity*: not everything can be passed on, and therefore some things (tangible or intangible) must be considered more important than other things. At the individual or familial level, selectivity remains relatively unproblematic. At the national or international level, however, decisions about what is considered worthy of preserving and passing on and what is not become highly political.

The idea of “world heritage” as societal achievements and natural features (“wonders”) that have value for all of humanity came to the fore following the Second World War with the establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1946 (Elliott and Schmutz 2012), a time coincident with the founding of

JMI. It is not surprising, then, that JMI describes their Ethno program as a platform for “preserving cultural heritage by ensuring that traditional, folk and world music live on within young people.”<sup>2</sup>

UNESCO’s activities flow out of and interact with other intergovernmental policies, such as the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the laws and policies of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The UDHR, for example, introduced and entrenched the idea of culture as a “right.” Notably, however, the UDHR focuses on individual, not group rights. The WIPO, on the other hand, an organization that has evolved over time (originating in 1883 as the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property), treats culture as a commodity—the product of an individual (or small group of individuals) with exchange (i.e., profit) potential. To regard music as the “property” of an individual (or small group) is thus in tension with the idea of music as the achievement of defined ethnic or cultural groups whose “ownership” claims can be only moral, not legal. As Weintraub and Yung (2009) observe, intergovernmental policies, such as those created by WIPO, display a decidedly Western bias: “Numerous problems arise when music is treated as intellectual property. Intellectual property rights laws were created for Western music made for (potential) profit, with specific characteristics (namely, an original work by an author that is fixed in a tangible form of expression)” (7).

In 1989 (the year before the first Ethno camp), UNESCO released their Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore. This policy document introduced two key ideas, safeguarding and folklore, and defined the latter as “the totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity” ([http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13141&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13141&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)). “Safeguarding” is defined in Article 2, No. 3 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which states:

**“Safeguarding” means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage. ([http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=17716&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html))**

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO’s “three pillars” of world heritage are the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Each year, UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee meets to discuss and assess items identified as representing world heritage in order to develop policy and strategic action.



Since the mid-20th century, a number of indicators can be pointed to as evidence of activity centred on concerns related to preserving cultural diversity, such as the founding of The International Council for Traditional Music (1947) and the Society for Ethnomusicology (1953); the activities of UNESCO, such as the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity (see also: *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*; <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127162>); the “Save Our Sounds” project of the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress (<https://www.loc.gov/folklife/sos/>); and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, the goal of which is to “work with communities to strengthen and preserve their cultures“ (<https://festival.si.edu>). One of the issues such activity raises, however, is who has the authority to speak on behalf of a group’s culture or determine what constitutes a genuine or valuable form of cultural expression. How are the varying interests and concerns of scholars, academics, cultural institutions, IGOs, and INGOs to be arbitrated? Who, for example, has authorized JMI to determine what constitutes “legitimate” global cultural heritage and what does not?

The International Council for Traditional Music Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology “advocates the use of ethnomusicological knowledge in influencing social interaction and course of cultural change” (<http://ictmusic.org/group/applied-ethnomusicology>). However, as Weintraub and Yung point out, “Discourses of preservation and protection have been criticized for standing in for colonial relations of power and representing outsider modes of authority” (2009, 9)—an issue problematized, in part, by Ted Solis (2004), in an edited volume addressed to university ethnomusicology professors teaching “world musics.” Similar critiques have been levelled toward the motives and actions of IGOs:

**Claims about the need to protect cultural diversity are in many cases genuine expressions of the interests of local communities... However, this is not always the case. Sometimes such claims are made on behalf of other more problematic cultural-political agendas, as can be seen by considering the debate over cultural diversity that has taken place within UNESCO and other United Nations bodies in recent years. (Tomlinson 2012, 5)**

The complicated issue of wanting to safeguard folk and traditional musics that are not one’s own leads Weintraub and Yung to ask: “Who has the right to make public policy that privileges certain kinds of music over others? What gives social institutions the right to make decisions regarding access, use, representation, and ownership of music?” (2009, 5). They conclude: “sometimes culture has to be protected from the protectors” (9).

## REVIVING TRADITION

Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) has inspired much discussion over the years. Nuances and specifics of their arguments aside, Hobsbawm and Ranger ultimately remind us that "tradition" is the result of deliberate acts to promote and advance some practices rather than others, usually with reference to historical precedent—regardless of the actual veracity of historical claims. The "roots" metaphor (i.e., historical precedent) is often invoked to support the continuity of practices: "As a tree lives through and from its roots, humans live through and from their traditions, their cultural heritage" (Ronström 2010). By extension, the failure to keep roots alive results in the death of the tree. In a subtle but easily overlooked point, however, Ronström draws attention to the fact that the relationship between a society and its cultural heritage "is not natural but symbolic" (2010, 317).

Put differently, the connection between tradition and cultural heritage is an imaginary that serves to recognize and promote particular cultural values and activities as important to and representative of a people (*ethnos*). That traditions are "invented" means that they are political: some activities must be selected as more important for continuation than other activities. Those who play, or desire to play, clawhammer banjo professionally, for instance, or who feel clawhammer banjo playing is associated with values considered symbolically important for "cultural heritage" are likely to claim that such playing needs to be safeguarded from extinction.

In the case of music, particularly folk or "traditional" musics, the invention of tradition-as-cultural-heritage can be witnessed in the revival movement (see Hill and Bithell 2014). Ronström describes revival as a "world-wide phenomenon, highly complex and rich in form and meaning...[involving the] most potent and powerful concepts of modern Western civilization: nation, folk, tradition, identity, ethnicity and culture" (2010, 315). One is reminded here again of JMI's stated mission for Ethno-World: "to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage amongst youth."

Key to music revivals is a reliance on informants and/or historical sources; revivalists use these sources to "[formulate] the revival tradition's repertoire, stylistic features, and history" (Livingston 1999, 71). Revivals are embedded in discourses of "authenticity" that place great value on "historical continuity and organic purity of the revived practice" (74) and often build on notions of the "folk" as a "mythical people living in a land and time far removed from modern society" (75). This vision of the folk derives in part from Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), whose *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* famously describes Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian songs as reflective of peasants and uneducated peoples, a view that Sweers suggests helped to shape definitions of folk music until the International Folk Music Council finally proposed one in 1954/55 (Sweers 2014, 469).

In an influential article, Livingston (1999) defines music revivals as “social movements which strive to ‘restore’ a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society” (66). In Ronström’s assessment,

**revival is only partly about “what once was.” More importantly, it is about “what is” and “what is to come.” Or to put it differently: in essence revival is a process of traditionalization that goes on in the present, to create symbolic ties to the past, for reasons of the future. (2010, 325)**

Revivals are typically generated by an individual or small group of “core revivalists” who “feel such a strong connection with the revival tradition that they take it upon themselves to ‘rescue’ it from extinction and to pass it on to others” (Livingston 1999, 70). What the revivalists actually do, however, is “create a new ethos, musical style, and aesthetic code in accordance with their revivalist ideology and personal preferences” (70).

For the purposes of this report, the invention of tradition-as-cultural-heritage by way of revival is important due to its role in the construction of *cultural identity as national identity*. Ronström (2010) proposes three key aspects salient to cultural identity and revival: *similarity*, *continuity* and *legitimation* (319–320). *Similarity* is achieved by transforming processes into standardized forms. Standardized forms (commodification) involve categorization and classification (along with simplification, standardization and homogenization), which then serve to objectify and reify, thus producing *continuity*. “A historically grounded continuity is a prerequisite for the manufacturing of authenticity, and authenticity is the mark of quality that creates *legitimation*” (319; emphasis added).

## Revival and Authenticity

Ronström (2010) observes that, despite its diffuse nature, the literature on revival can be roughly divided into a first category of studies focused primarily around questions of authenticity, and a second category of studies that focus on functions, meanings and change. He claims the former category privileges questions about what, who, when and how over questions of why, leading to inevitable conclusions that revived forms, styles, and so on are “inauthentic” or imperfect imitations of the real thing. Terms such as revival, revitalization, recreation, reorientation, and re-enacting all suggest, he says, that something has died and been “brought back to live again.” These terms, he notes, “imply a difference between original and copy, real and unreal, authentic and inauthentic” (315). Although this is, in his opinion, problematic, so too are the second category of studies because, by focusing almost exclusively on processes of change and ignoring

the music itself (i.e., style, form, genre or aesthetics), such studies overlook what is, for many participants in revival movements, what motivates them. According to Ronström, “aesthetics is what matters above all” (315).

Livingston (1999) argues that revivals are a middle-class phenomenon, particularly in North American, Western European, and postcolonial contexts (Livingston 2014, 64), and that revivalist ideologies and discourses—notably of authenticity—are shaped by the “internalized dispositions,” or *habitus*, of the middle-class (Livingston 1999, 77, see Bourdieu 1977). Revivals are often marked by a particular set of “aesthetic preferences” that Livingston associates with the middle class, including “precision in playing and of tone production, tight arrangements, privileging of contrast over continuity” and, in some cases, the exaggeration of “‘exotic’ elements of the music” (1999, 77).<sup>3</sup>

Placed in a wider context, authenticity can be understood as an imaginary. As Hill and Bithell emphasize, following Weisethaunet and Lindberg (2010), authenticity is a “quality ascribed to representations” rather than “an essence inherent in an object” (Hill and Bithell 2014, 20). This becomes clear when one considers, as Sweers (2014) points out, how revivalist processes have removed various folk musics from their oral, “peasant,” and rural contexts by notating and recording them (thus standardizing and commodifying them), and by placing them in academic and institutional contexts (467). Sweers concludes, “[A]ny revival, no matter how carefully concerned with reconstruction, transfers traditional musics into a different sociocultural context. This usually means that the music is performed on a stage, which was rarely part of the original performance situation” (480). Claims and allusions to authenticity, then, are more about an imagined tradition that is invented and asserted as real. The imaginary thus provides the basis for identity work. By participating in and celebrating traditions, “people temporarily become members of ritual, symbolic communities of which they normally are not members” (Ronström 2010, 322).

In the context of a revival, authenticity is ascribed by way of a two-part process: first, via the “highly selective and subjective identification of particular aspects or elements in a music-culture,” and second, via the decision that those aspects or elements “should be [valued and] perpetuated” (Hill and Bithell 2014, 20). Hill and Bithell describe three types of criteria for determining authenticity: *product-oriented* (e.g., manuscripts, scores, historical instruments), *person-oriented* (e.g., culture-bearers), and *process-oriented* (e.g., mode of transmission, creation, reception) (2014, 20–23).

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<sup>3</sup> More recently, and following Turino (2008, 118), Livingston (2014) has proposed “cosmopolitanism cultural formations” as a more useful framing concept for revivals while noting that such formations are “cross-cut” by other social formations, both affinity groups and social groupings based on age, race, gender, social class, etc. This approach “provides a framework for talking about broadly shared habits and beliefs without losing sight of the individual and his or her socially and individually constituted identity, and it reminds us of the necessity of grounding the global in the local” (64–65).

As Livingston notes, revivals fill both individual and societal needs (2014, 65). Hill and Bithell (2014) describe four “general motivational categories” for revivals, including 1) responding to “a dissatisfaction” with elements of modern society, such as “depersonalization, ethical or moral degradation, or existential meaninglessness”; 2) bolstering national, ethnic group, or minority group identity; 3) supporting a specific political agenda, either left-wing or right-wing; and 4) responding to a natural or human disaster (Hill and Bithell 2014, 10–12). These are not mutually exclusive and many North American and European folk music revivals of the later 20th century could align with several of these motivational categories. While Ethno-World might seem, on the surface, to respond to the second category—bolstering national or ethnic group identity—the camps themselves do not bear this out. Ethno camps do not, for instance, seek international recognition (such as, Intangible Cultural Heritage status from UNESCO) for the “professedly ancient heritage of a specific ethnic group or nation” or seek to “restore some sort of ethnic purity or demarcation” (Hill and Bithell 2014, 11). Rather, they use these identities as a prop of sorts, enabling a participatory ethos wherein attendees claim national identity only to the extent that it serves a larger, transnational vision. Ethno-World more properly relates to Hill and Bithell’s first motivational category, which generates revivals that prioritize “participatory music-making, face-to-face interaction, community building, self-expression, and/or creativity” (2014, 11). Hill and Bithell note that this category of revival may be especially appealing to classically-trained musicians seeking freedom from “the stylistic constraints of the classical orthodoxy and its often authoritarian, competitive ethos” (2014, 11). Anecdotal evidence suggests that that may hold true for Ethno.

## Professionalization of Folk/Traditional Music

Revivals often result in altered processes of musical transmission, new pedagogical approaches, new sites for performance and new types of performativity, new settings for informal or non-formal music education and new approaches in formal institutions, new governmental and non-governmental policies, and new sales and promotion infrastructure (Hill and Bithell 2014, 3–4). In the post-WWII decades, North American and European folk revivals generated a new class of professional folk musicians and an accompanying infrastructure of festivals, record labels, specialty magazines, and so on. While many of these changes also mark a shift from a participatory to a presentational paradigm (Turino 2008)—a move from the kitchen to the stage, as it were—others, like camps and workshops (see below) signal new modes of participatory music-making and new sites for community music transmission.

Ethno emerged, in part, from the Swedish folk music revival of the 1970s and 80s. With the “popularisation of folk music” in those years, note Ronström, Malm and Lundberg (2001), “a new generation of young doers... moved folk music from the urban

salons and the national manifestations, to large popular outdoor celebrations” and “a new and earlier almost insignificant type of actors” emerged: record producers, managers, festival organisers, and so on (56). This move towards professionalization and commodification is typical of music revivals, as Livingston (1999) notes:

**In order to create a sense of community, revivalist magazines, journals, recordings and radio stations help to bring people separated by geographical space together, while festivals and competitions bring people physically together. These events are crucial to the revivalist community because revivalists meet each other face-to-face to share repertoire and playing techniques, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of artists within the tradition, to actively learn and experience the revivalist ethos and aesthetic code at work, and to socialize among other “insiders.” (73)**

Magnus Bäckström was one of these “young doers” in Sweden. He co-founded the Giga record label with Per Gudmundson in 1976, launched the Falun Folk Music Festival in 1986, and created the first Ethno camp, all with the goal of changing prevailing romantic nationalist perceptions of Swedish folk music. Bäckström sought to “move the borders of folk music by strengthening it, giving it more significance in the society,” and to “show the people of Sweden the artistic, cultural values to be found in Sweden and elsewhere” (Roosioja 2018, 54–56).

As Roosioja (2018) notes, Bäckström had multiple motivations for founding Ethno. These included not only expanding the JMI concept of “uniting young musicians around the world” to include folk music, and supporting “individuals and cultures...thriving and finding their own identity,” but also bringing “folk musicians together in order for them to get to know each other, [and to] create international connections and networks for [a] professional future” (56–57). Ethno was, and has remained, both an idealistic vision of global harmony through musical exchange and a pragmatic training ground for the professional folk music circuit, including festivals such as the Falun Folk Music Festival.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

As Higgins (2020) notes in a case study of Ethno Portugal for the Ethno Research project, professional development is one of the three primary reasons participants have cited for attending Ethno camps. Participants described a variety of opportunities to develop professional skills, such as learning to “effectively make music amongst diverse approaches and instrumentations,” working with an orchestra to arrange one’s own musical contribution, acquiring “an enhanced repertoire of tunes from around the world,” learning aural pedagogy skills, and, for those working in community music,

“skill development and modelling in areas such as facilitation and workshop leadership” (20–21). In general, participants view Ethno camps as providing valuable professional networking opportunities, and feel that “being exposed to ideas surrounding arranging, orchestration, conducting, and teaching increased their economic potential” (25–26).

## World Music Authenticities: Pedagogy

The notion of professional development introduces the question of what is being developed and how it is being developed in and through Ethno-World camps. Given the explicit emphasis on peer-to-peer learning and the practice of individuals (or sometimes small groups) sharing musical material from their country or region of origin, attendees would appear to be functioning as musical ambassadors who represent a form of cultural authenticity. Ethno Research to date has not discovered instances of musical-cultural authenticity being questioned. Unlike the professionalized world of music learning and teaching, where expertise is the basis of practice, the authority to share and represent culture at Ethno camps is granted by virtue of nationality.

Operating primarily out of universities, ethnomusicological work aimed at preserving and documenting music grew steadily over the course of the 20th century. For the most part, this remained a rather siloed, academic affair. Following on the heels of 20th century revivalism, however, forces of globalization (Appadurai’s “scapes”) helped to heighten preservationist sentiments aimed at preventing cultural loss. In the formal education sector, a proliferation of “multicultural” discourses arose, aimed not just at cultural preservation, but at recognizing difference, plurality, and power asymmetries between cultures. As a result, ethnomusicological work took on greater significance. By the early 21st century, “world music” was no longer something music students learned *about*, it was something they *did* through an ever-increasing number of “world music ensembles” (e.g., gamelan, West African drumming, etc.). At the same time, however, a parallel interest in learning musics of the world arose in school music education in the 1990s in tandem with multicultural movements in education more broadly, and a growing awareness of the importance of the need to teach musics beyond the Eurocentric art music canon (see, for example, the Cultural Diversity in Music Education group: <https://cdimenetworkdotcom.wordpress.com/about/>).

Differences in motives for teaching and learning world musics are worth considering. From a higher education perspective, it is typically understood as valuable to learn about world musics simply because they exist; it may also be valuable to learn to “do” world musics as a form of musical training. From a primary or secondary school perspective, however, motives for studying or learning world musics have, generally speaking, been driven by concerns about diversity (usually read as non-white, non-European). As a recent text entitled *Music, Education, and Diversity: Bridging Cultures and Communities* explains, “The text highlights World Music Pedagogy as a

gateway to studying other cultures as well as the importance of including local music and musicians in the classroom” (<https://folkways.si.edu/course-resources>). A non-exhaustive list of texts from the late 1980s through today includes titles such as:

- *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education*
- *Thinking Musically: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*
- *Teaching Music Globally: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*
- *Cultural Diversity in Music Education: Directions and Challenges for the 21st Century*
- *Facing the Music: Shaping Music Education from a Global Perspective*
- Six volumes of the series, *World Music Pedagogy*

Embedded within the tenets of formal education institutions is a right/wrong teleology, one consistent with the ideal of authenticity. With respect to the teaching of world musics, this very quickly raises the question of whether one can rightly teach the music of “others” (i.e., those one is not “born into”). One of the first efforts to problematize this from the perspective of university teaching was Ted Solis’s *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (2004). The issue of “getting it right” goes beyond just the act of music-making itself, however. Issues of musical ownership (e.g., Who is authorized to teach? Who has the right to profit?), musical respect (e.g., Is everyone entitled to play all musics, even those considered sacred to a particular cultural group?), colonization, and power asymmetries all factor into authenticity in the context of pedagogy. Can just anyone be a “culture bearer,” or does one need to meet certain criteria?

Huib Schippers (2010) provides what may be one of the most useful frameworks for understanding what he calls “music transmission in culturally diverse environments” (124). His “Twelve Continuum Transmission Framework” has four primary categories, each encompassing a continuum of concepts: *issues of context*, *modes of transmission*, *dimensions of interaction*, and *approach to cultural diversity*. Issues of context in relation to Ethno-World lean heavily in the direction of what Schippers calls “constant flux,” “new identity authenticity,” and “recontextualization.” Although attendees provide the “basic” musical material (usually songs in unadulterated form), the goal of Ethno camps, in the context of bringing musicians from multiple countries together, is to create something new (i.e., to recontextualize). Modes of transmission at Ethno camps tend in the direction of what Schippers describes as the intangible, aural, and holistic (as opposed to the tangible, atomistic/analytic, and notation-based). Dimensions of interaction at Ethno camps lean heavily in the direction of small power distance (e.g., peer-to-peer), gender neutral, tolerating uncertainty, and short-term orientation. Only the dimension of centrality (i.e., individual versus collective) might be viewed as neutral, as Ethno performances typically involve a rotation of soloists representing



each country's musical material. Finally, approaches to cultural diversity, which range from monocultural to transcultural, could be considered to fall somewhere between intercultural and transcultural at Ethno camps insofar as the underlying ethos is to elide borders through hybridized arrangements reflective of a "global" sound.

Professional development through Ethno-World can be understood as enhancing practical skills for musical collaboration in a wide range of folk, world, and traditional genres, strengthening teaching skills, honing presentation skills, and acquiring new repertoire. Attending an Ethno camp may also lead to new performance opportunities, as evidenced by the numerous bands and collaborations sparked by Ethno attendance. However, the phrase "world music pedagogy" (or its implied conceptualization) does not appear to be part of the Ethno-World lexicon. While participants appreciate learning repertoire from many different countries, few describe Ethno camps as a place to deepen their stylistic knowledge of traditional repertoire, nor do many speak about the cultural aspects of music learning in terms of cultural diversity. Rather, Ethno participants prize the opportunity to explore collaborative music-making in ways that may not be available to them in other pre-professional settings.

## World Music Authenticities: Cultural Production

The specifically Swedish history of the birth of Ethno is one strand of the larger story of the commodification of "world" music in the 1980s. The first Ethno camp took place only three years after the now-legendary meetings at which the genre label of "world music" was first coined, and eight years after the first WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) festival in England.<sup>4</sup> This new genre advanced rapidly, and 1994 saw the first WOMEX (World Music Expo), a trade fair that brings together record labels, presenters, and musicians to promote individual performers and the genre as a whole, and a key element in the emerging infrastructure of world music as a commercial genre.<sup>5</sup> While Ethno does not describe its activities as either drawing on, or producing music for, the world music industry, the sonic output of Ethno camps (sometimes described by participants as the "Ethno sound") often aligns with the sounds of the world music stage, combining Other (here including European and North American traditional repertoires) and Western

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<sup>4</sup> Sweeney (1991) describes how, in 1987, independent record labels, concert producers, and broadcasters gathered at a North London pub to devise a common strategy for promoting a wide variety of musical sounds. Their "world music" campaign was extraordinarily successful and within a few years the term was in common usage in the "mainstream music industry" in Europe and North America (ix). This new label "encompass[ed] everything from field recordings made by ethnomusicologists to the latest in pop and rock from outside Europe and North America" (Taylor 2014, 3). The label "world music" itself may now be on its way out, as evidenced by a July 24, 2019 Guardian article headlined "'So flawed and problematic': why the term 'world music' is dead" (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/jul/24/guardian-world-music-outdated-global>).

<sup>5</sup> WOMEX is organised by the Piranha record label (now Piranha Arts, <https://www.piranha-arts.com/>). This annual trade fair now brings together several thousand industry personnel, including approximately 260 artists (<http://www.womex.com/about/womex>). Many local performing arts conferences host series and events aimed at the world music market. The Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP), for instance, includes a pre-conference gathering for "world music professionals in the U.S." as part of its annual conference in New York City (<https://www.apap365.org/Conference/Program-Schedule/Pre-Conference>).

(via popular music-inflected arrangements) in economically viable proportions. In recent years, the Ethno-World program has also attempted to promote “emerging artists by touring selected groups of talented musicians through its Ethno on the Road initiative” (JMI website)—evidence that Ethno-World participates in the commodification and commercialization of world music even though this is not necessarily a primary focus of the organization. To some extent, Ethno camps serve as training grounds for performers on the folk/traditional and world music circuits while simultaneously building economic capacity for those musics.

Taylor (2014) describes world music as a field of cultural production (see Bourdieu and Johnson 1993) containing a multiplicity of musical sounds and styles. Within that field, *authenticity* functions as a form of capital. Taylor identifies three forms of authenticity circulating in the field of world music in the late 1980s and early 1990s: *positionality*, *emotionality*, and *primality*, which refer to Western expectations that world music artists will, respectively, come from “a pre-modern life or hardship”; will “articulate their supposed hard life experiences in their music”; and will be close to “nature” and to “the earth” (Taylor 2014, 167; also see Taylor 1997).

With the increasing mainstream popularity of world music acts by the late 1990s, these three authenticities became affiliated with what Taylor identifies as the authenticities of rock music: *authorship* (writing one’s own songs) and *autonomy* (being perceived as anti-commercial) (2014, 167). For world music artists, these multiple authenticities have played out as a balancing act between self-exoticization and economic viability: “World music artists need to include enough (but not too much) sounds of otherness to make it audibly clear that they are Others in the world music category. If they sound too ‘Other’, too exotic, they won’t find an international audience, which many seek. If they sound too American or European, they run the risk of accusations of seeming to have sold out to commercial interests and betraying their heritage” (Taylor 2014, 167).

The “Ethno sound” derives, in part, from this same balancing act. The Världens Band, discussed below, provides a case study of how Ethno participants and alumni respond to the “authenticities” of the commercialized world music scene. For instance, a 2015 press release simultaneously claims otherness and reassures audiences that their performances won’t be, in Taylor’s words, “too exotic”:

**Fourteen musicians, seven countries, three continents, one band.... Swedish melodies meet Scottish reels, English guitar accompanies Indian classical song, Galician pipes play Balkan melodies and the Senegalese kora blends with Mediterranean rhythms.... They are a seemingly impossible group that always had the potential for possible conflict with religious and political differences; by using music as their universal language and common ground, they have**

blossomed into an explosive orchestra that aims to challenge norms and prejudices. (<https://www.prescriptionmusicpruk.com/press-releases/2015/9/25/vrldens-band-transglobal-roots-fusion-new-album-due-out-30-october>)

## Case Study: The Världens Band

The Världens Band (English translation: “World Band”) was founded by two Swedish brothers in 2012 as a “utopian social experiment” (Balosso-Bardin 2018, 81). The Världens Band is significant for a number of reasons, not least being the group members’ common experience as participants in Ethno camps. This informed the band’s conceptualization of their music as “Transglobal Roots Fusion” and its democratic, gender-balanced organizational and artistic leadership practice with an emphasis on “peer-to-peer” learning and teaching.

The Världens Band is also significant for the issues it raises with respect to cultural practices, cultural differences, musical syncretism, the imaginary of national boundaries, and the intersection of culture and commerce. Billing itself on its website ([varldensband.com/about](http://varldensband.com/about); accessed December 15, 2019) as thirteen musicians from three continents—all of whom are “*experts in their native traditional music*”—the band claims to perform “a mix of folk and roots music from its *members’ native countries*” (emphasis added). They also claim to perform “World music...that unites across borders.” As a commercial entity, the Världens Band provides an excellent case study that illustrates the tensions present in attempts to simultaneously transcend and recognize difference.

In a scholarly article published in the ethnomusicology journal *The World of Music*, band member Cassandre Balosso-Bardin (2018) provides an ethnographic account of the Världens Band that is both celebratory and critical. Balosso-Bardin draws attention, for example, to how band members embrace a “No Border ideology” in their espoused values while simultaneously advertising border *crossing* in their promotional material (2018, 97). This contradiction can be partly explained by the underlying antimony between the desire of individual members to elide or ignore borders in their music-making efforts, and the logic of market-based forces in which the imaginary of “border-crossing” has currency. Put simply, the forces of commerce require the band to extol the virtues of “uniting” (in which difference is foregrounded), in contradiction to the band’s preferred ethic of transglobalism (in which difference is downplayed).

There are many parallels between Ethno and the Världens Band. One, both share what Balosso-Bardin describes as an “egalitarian peer-based intercultural music-making ethic” (2018, 82). Notwithstanding the fact that Ethno-World uses the moniker “artistic leaders” for its music facilitators, music-making at Ethno camps is the result of a process that attempts to resist “leader-based” music-making. Two, there is little

attempt to replicate or perfect a given style. Unlike higher education world music approaches that emphasize imitation in order to resist charges of misinterpretation or cultural appropriation, the creation of a “new sound from the amalgamation of all the individual voices seems to take precedence over the perceived authenticity of a tune taken from a non-inherited culture” (Balosso-Bardin 2018, 97). Three, the music is “anchored” in a perception of nativeness reflecting “musical genres, native languages, vernacular instruments, stage costumes, physical appearance and spoken accents” that problematizes the distinction between inherited and acquired (Balosso-Bardin 2018, 86). The imaginary of national origin, in combination with an egalitarian ethos, is sufficient to provide what Balosso-Bardin describes as “a new musical space where composition and collective arrangements devised under a democratic and rotational leadership system allow the musicians to control the authenticity discourse” (100). Unlike the Världens Band, however, which has, over time “increasingly rejected the notion of borders,” preferring to present their music “as a unity rather than as individuals from different nations” (Balosso-Bardin 2018, 95), Ethno camps continue to celebrate national identity as cultural identity through their practice of presenting musical selections in nation-by-nation order. Although the musical arrangements at Ethno camps convey the cosmopolitanism of today’s commercialized “world music” sound (e.g., the “Ethno sound”), the underlying ethos continues to emphasize plurality and difference (e.g., a world of nations) over universality and sameness.

## INTERCULTURALITY AND INTERCULTURALIDAD

*The cultural challenge that faces each multicultural society is to reconcile the recognition and protection of, and respect for cultural particularities with the affirmation and promotion of universally shared values emerging from the interplay of these cultural specificities. – Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue (UNESCO 2009)*

*Whenever interculturality is framed in terms of cultural differences, its language inescapably reproduces the colonial difference. (Amna 2018, 82)*

The first Ethno camp in 1990 (Ethno Sweden) coincides with the inception of the academic journal *Intercultural Education* (formerly known as the *European Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 1990–1999), a publication that arose out of meetings of the International Association for Intercultural Education. The IAIE originated as a European organization, informed by the work of UNESCO. From the start, the IAIE emphasized anti-racist and human rights values. Notably, the choice of the term “intercultural” was a deliberate reaction against the discourse of multiculturalism, which some felt

(and continue to feel) emphasizes cultural differences (as co-existing but separate) rather than group interaction, and fixes cultures in place. As an organization headquartered in Europe, JMI's/Ethno-World's emphasis on "intercultural dialogue and understanding" can be viewed as reflecting the European origins of interculturality.

Robert Aman differentiates interculturality as an ontological category from interculturality as a set of theories. He also identifies three common applications of the term: *intercultural education*, *intercultural competence*, and *intercultural dialogue* in Europe. Although he acknowledges the widespread acceptance of interculturalism and accepts the strategic reasons for its deployment—especially in "dealing with otherness in educational debates" (Aman 2018, 53)—Aman is highly critical of both the Eurocentrism of interculturality and its potentially problematic epistemological assumptions that fail to acknowledge underlying colonialism. He notes, for example, how calls for dialogue "are rooted in a request for action emanating from a dominant group which makes a demand of the Other to respond, interact and follow suit" (56–57).

The specifics of Aman's argument are likely more of interest for scholars of interculturalism. The salience here is how Aman's description of *interculturalidad*, a concept from South America that pushes back on the Eurocentrism of interculturality, may serve to problematize Ethno-World's claims to "intercultural learning" and the fostering of "intercultural dialogue and understanding." For Aman, the issue is how UNESCO and the European Union have turned interculturalism into a problem of knowledge. With the presupposition that knowledge will somehow eradicate borders, the question under interculturalism becomes, "What does one need to know in order to become intercultural?" (Aman 2018, 3). The result, he cynically suggests, is that intercultural education produces "Global Westerners, local others" (57).

Part of Aman's concern is that, by treating interculturality as a problem of knowledge, it "occludes the colonial dimension" (2018, 18). This should come as no surprise, given that, as Aman points out, English is the *lingua franca* of interculturality. Indeed, one of the striking aspects of Ethno-World camps is that—consistent with many international organizations—English is the operational language. This is understandable on a functional level, of course, as English has become the most common second language throughout the world. The point, however, is not that camps should operate in some other language, but rather, that the concept of interculturality has been developed by authors who only write in English (Aman 2018, 6). Moreover, given JMI's location in Europe and the strong European influence on UNESCO and the advancement of interculturality, there is a blind spot with regard to genuine engagement with the rest of the world. As Aman points out, "Intercultural dialogue cannot be accomplished on equal terms as long as both the conditions and the content are dictated by the European Union—that what is being referred to is rather an *intracultural dialogue*" (37).

For Aman, the concept of *interculturalidad* helps to acknowledge that the utopian promises of interculturality ignore the epistemic dimensions of knowledge, and conveniently overlook that not all participants sit at an evenly balanced table (Aman 2018, 64–66). To illustrate his point, Aman draws attention to the problem of migrants (“others”) of Europe. He writes that in the “performativity of Europe, ‘immigrants’ are construed as neither Europeans nor part of European history and culture, possibly possessors of characteristics conflicting with the rules and values of Europe” (33). While the experiences of each Ethno-World camp are to some extent unique, reflecting the composition of the participants, there appear to be clear differences between the experiences of participants from the Global North and those from the Global South. While some Ethno-World camps (e.g., Ethno New Zealand 2020) appear to be making explicit efforts to recognize colonial histories, others seem to ignore these histories, maintaining a Eurocentric view of interculturality.

One of the most memorable moments from Ethno France 2020 occurred when a participant shared with the Ethno Research team her experience interacting with one of the camp volunteers (a migrant from central Africa) who refused to sit with the camp participants during meal times because, she said, he felt unwelcome. She spoke of the awkwardness she herself felt participating in Ethno, which she described as “a super connected international community privileged to play...traditional tunes from all over the world.” To her, Ethno felt “a bit like a plastic Disneyland displaying nationalities” compared with people (like the camp volunteer) who engage in local music scenes far removed from the tourism gloss of Ethno. “We live in separated worlds,” the camp volunteer told her.

As evident in the ethnographies conducted by the Ethno Research team in 2019, the intercultural aspects are of central interest to Ethno camp attendees. To date, however, it would appear that the Eurocentrism and colonial aspects of interculturalism have not been widely acknowledged, though one participant at Ethno France did express concern that the camps embodied a sort of “new colonialism.” This is not to dismiss the value of the experience, however. As Aman points out, interculturality is often “a way of learning about oneself as much as learning about Others” (2018, 44).

# Intercultural Music Exchange Encounters

Many participants describe their experiences at Ethno camps as life-changing. Entering the Ethno space is, for some, akin to a transformative ritual that alters one's experience of the world and deepens one's own self-understanding. "For quite a few years I lost my sense of self and direction in my life and every time I came here, I regained a little bit of it," said one artistic leader (Gibson 2020, 24). A participant at Ethno France described the camps as profoundly marking both her professional and personal life, opening her ears to new styles and new ways of learning and playing music while also giving her tools for friendships, relationships, and "the way you connect to people." For her, Ethno camps are "a safe space where you can really just share and be."

Intercultural encounters are often mentioned by participants as central to the transformative potential of the camps. Awareness of cultural difference generates a degree of concern over potential conflicts which, when not realized, then generate a heightened sense of excitement and, for some, heightened learning opportunities. Said one participant at Ethno France, "The world is so much at war... and then you go to an Ethno and you're like, 'How does this happen? How is this possible?' Everything in your daily life, what you watch on the news, what you hear on the radio—it's like we're all separated and we don't get along at all. But then you come to an Ethno and you see this is not true. We can get along. Look at us." Or as another attendee stated succinctly, "As a musician and as a human being, we always learn from the difference."

How exactly intercultural music exchange works at an Ethno camp is a function of many elements: the people present, the day-to-day activities (both planned and unplanned), the physical space, and the many personal beliefs and expectations—both conscious and unconscious—that individuals bring to the occasion. While Ethno camps understandably feel one-of-a-kind to participants, they take place in a larger European—and to some extent, North American—landscape of formal, informal, and non-formal music education initiatives, including an extensive network of opportunities to study folk or traditional music in structured settings, from universities and conservatories to camps and community music workshops. The utopian appeal of Ethno-World camps strikes a chord for many attendees. Like all forms of group music teaching and learning, however, the camps are grounded in certain pragmatics. Each Ethno camp has some sort of vetting or filtering system for attendance, for instance. These are not spaces for rank beginners and many participants, though not all, have had years of formal musical training (i.e., private or small group lessons, conservatory studies). Different countries

also enact Ethno in different ways. One artistic leader at Ethno France noted, for example, that in France many people come from the French *conservatoire* system. Two differences in participant motivations and experiences deserve particular notice: those with and without professional aspirations in music, and those from what may be loosely termed the Global North and the Global South.

## **FOLK AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

A number of Ethno participants have studied music in conservatory or university, though anecdotal evidence suggests that these studies were primarily in Western classical music or, less commonly, jazz. Some see their Ethno experiences as building on those studies, while others describe the camps as offering a radically alternative approach to music training. Oddly, the place of higher education programs focusing on folk or traditional music seems to receive little attention by Ethno attendees, although this may vary by locale. None of the European participants at Ethno France 2020, for instance, reported attending a folk/traditional higher education music program, whereas Ethno Estonia has a direct relationship with the Viljandi Culture Academy (Čorić 2020, 6–9). Higher education folk music programs are central to the present-day traditional music landscape of Europe; not only do they serve as training grounds for increasing numbers of performers and teachers and as prime networking sites for pre-professionals—where young musicians might expect to meet the other members of their future band, for instance—but they have also quite literally changed the sonic landscape (Hill 2009).

As noted in Dickson (2018), most European conservatories and universities now offering folk or traditional music degree programs focus on the traditional music of the country or region in which they are located, such as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (B.Mus. Traditional Music), University of Limerick (B.A. Irish Traditional Music), Dublin Institute of Technology, Conservatory of Music and Drama (B.Mus. Irish Traditional Music Studies), University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland (B.A. Gaelic and Traditional Music), Telemark University College (Norwegian Folk Music Studies), and the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (B.Mus. Swedish Folk Music). A different approach is taken by Newcastle University (B.A. Folk and Traditional Music) and the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts in Helsinki, Finland (B.Mus. and M.Mus. Folk Music). Following Hill (2009), Dickson notes that the name of the Sibelius program was chosen to reflect the designers' view that "folk and traditional music around the world is ultimately 'one' in the context of the genre's improvisatory and oral-formulaic nature" (2018, 90); since its inception, this program has envisioned modern-day Finnish folk musicians as "[connected] with like-minded artists in other cultures" and "participating in a modern world music scene" (Hill 2009, 209).



University and conservatory programs both reflect and contribute to the growing professionalization of folk and traditional music. Contrary to a revivalist aesthetic that values knowledge of the “cultural, political, historical and ethnological” contexts for traditional music, the current generation of young traditional music professionals seek the skills to perform on the folk and world music circuits (Dickson 2018, 89).<sup>6</sup> The B.Mus. program at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), for instance, has chosen to deemphasize ethnological inquiry in favour of a focus on “performance practice,” “creativity at every level” and “the porous and deterritorialised nature of Scottish traditional music today” (Dickson 2018, 92). This parallels Ethno camps, where nationally-identified repertoire seems to serve primarily as a hook on which participants hang their creative ideas. As Dickson notes, this shift away from a “revivalist” or “folkloric” lens and towards a “post-revivalist” or “vocational” lens—i.e., a professional development lens—may be linked in part to the exponential growth in internet connectivity and content availability (2018, 83–84). With thousands of archival recordings and reference materials for folk and traditional music now available online, immersing oneself in the sociocultural contexts for a given repertoire no longer holds the same challenge or, perhaps, offers the same reward.

## Traditional Music Authenticities

Constructions of authenticity in traditional music have shifted over the past several decades, in parallel with the growing professionalization of folk and traditional music. At its founding in 1996, for instance, the RCS program differentiated the study of folk music from that of Western classical music not only by emphasizing “social, cultural, linguistic, participatory and ethnomusicological foundations” as markers of traditional music authenticity but also by deemphasizing “explicit technical performance training” (Dickson 2018, 88). This is no longer the case in today’s higher education landscape, where traditional musicians see themselves as equal to their classical and jazz counterparts and “expect a similar learning journey” (Dickson 2018, 88).

Traditional music authenticity today combines knowledge of “what has been passed down” with the ability to reinterpret that knowledge “according to new experiences and influences – in other words...[to construct] one’s own artistic space in a traditional or folk context” (Dickson 2018, 87). At the Swedish Folk Music program in Stockholm, for instance, a “firm foundation” in tradition allows “the student to construct their own parameters of authenticity over time” and arrive at a sense of personal authenticity via what the head of the Folk Music Department terms “‘traditional’ maps and landscapes”

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, according to a 2014–2015 student survey at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, students attend the traditional music program primarily to gain composition and arrangement skills, “performance skills in a soloist context, performance skills in an ensemble context, [and] creativity in terms of artistic innovation and stretching boundaries” (Dickson 2018, 86).

(Dickson 2018, 90–91).<sup>7</sup> At many of the folk and traditional music programs listed above, this includes interfacing with other contemporary musical styles, such as jazz, rock, pop, classical (particularly avant-garde art music, in the case of the Sibelius Academy [Hill 2009, 217–218]) and other styles of traditional or folk music. From this perspective, the musically eclectic “Ethno sound,” which often combines traditional repertoire with contemporary arranging techniques, might be read as an expression of traditional music authenticity, whereby individual participants assume the obligation of knowing “what has been passed down” and the collaborative group arranging process serves to construct “one’s own artistic space.”

Increasingly, traditional music authenticity seems to reside not only in repertoire, stylistic knowledge about how to play that repertoire, and the historical contextualization thereof, but also in a set of convictions regarding the ways in which music ought to be transmitted and (re)interpreted, and the ways in which musical communities ought to operate. For instance, Hill (2009) describes the key elements of the Sibelius Academy program as oral transmission, aural memory, and improvisation, where the latter may refer to everything from melodic variation to improvised arrangements to free improv, with improvisational ideas and frameworks drawn primarily from “avant-garde art music and various folk/traditional/world musics” and, to a lesser extent, jazz and popular styles (218). Egalitarianism is also highly valued, and “manifested especially in the belief that all musicians of all ages and skill levels have the right to be creative, to compose, to improvise, and to make their own music” (Hill 2009, 224).

One key authenticity seemingly lacking in academic folk music programs is that of nationalist discourse. According to Hill (2009), the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy, and specifically its founder Heikki Laitinen, “rebelled against the use and analysis of folk music as nationalism.” Rather, the program “embraced a worldview that idealises a ‘global folk music’ community” (224). In an interview with Hill, Laitinen himself describes the Folk Music Program as “a protest” against those who would like academic folk music programs to be in the business of “making national culture” or of promoting a nationalist discourse (which he associates with the wearing of national costume) that glorifies the old (Hill 2009, 224–225). He finds this form of nationalism both superficial and distasteful and argues that folk music carries something deeper: what he describes as a “return/revival of rural culture and a therapeutic process” (224).<sup>8</sup> Laitinen even goes so far as to argue that nationalist associations have no influence on the students’ decision to study folk music: “They play folk music because in their opinion it is enjoyable,

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<sup>7</sup> Hill notes that the Sibelius Academy offers a historical justification for this particular vision of authenticity in traditional music via a “reconstructed model of the folk creative processes of preliterate, oral music cultures of the past” in which musicians “learned the tradition and then expressed it in their own personal way with extensive variation” (2009, 210).

<sup>8</sup> How exactly this therapeutic process functions, and for whom (individuals, nations, institutions), is not clear. Given that Laitinen also states that “rescuing creativity” is a guiding principle for the folk music program (Hill 2009, 222), it may be that this therapeutic process involves, at least partially, individual musicians discovering their creative voices through folk music.

exquisite, and deep, and it gives them something that no other type of music gives them, not because it's Finnish or because it bolsters some kind of Finnish identity or anything like that" (Hill 2009, 225). Remarkably, some participants at Ethno camps describe their motivations in similar terms—one Ethno France participant described the appeal of traditional music as its “free” aesthetic that allowed for highly creative arrangements—in spite of the fact that participants are introduced by national identity and occasionally wear national costume to perform, and setlists typically list repertoire to be performed by nation rather than by title.

## Musical Nationalism

At both the Sibelius Academy and Ethno camps, folk music is framed through the lens of nation, though in very different ways. At Sibelius, national identity is downplayed in favor of individual creativity and the department rejects “the romantic nationalist and public enlightenment ideology in folk music” (Hill 2009, 225). At Ethno, national identity is foregrounded in support of individual creativity. In a sort of ritualesque play-acting, everyone enters more deeply into their own national identity in order to foreground their crossing of national boundaries over the course of the camp.

The specific musical practices engendered by these differing anti-nationalist approaches are remarkably similar. At Sibelius, “students frequently incorporate repertoire from around the world” and “changes in the resulting music are readily visible and audible as Finnish contemporary folk musicians incorporate djembes and [didgeridoos], collaborate with Norwegian or South Indian musicians, sing Irish ballads, and so on” (Hill 2009, 225).<sup>9</sup> The words of Folk Music Department chair Kristiina Ilmonen (interviewed in 2004 by Hill) could refer equally to Ethno:

**It is important [to teach non-Finnish music] so that [students] get an idea that traditional music is about the same thing everywhere in the world ... It's important to make the students realise that this is a community with no national borders at all. They should be able to relate as persons, as musicians to traditional musicians all around the world... This concept of world music as I see it is not as a commercial phenomenon, but world music as the world of traditions, which are different, but which are all the same thing somehow. (Hill 2009, 225)**

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<sup>9</sup> Hill points to one musician (<http://www.pauliinalerche.com>) who mixes Finnish folk music with jazz and North Indian music, a combination that seems remarkably Ethno-like.

How traditional music and national identity intersect may be quite location-specific, however, and threaded through with the legacies of war or colonialism. The Ethno Research team has heard, anecdotally, that German attendees at Ethno camps often struggle with the obligation to represent their country through folk music—understandably, given that country’s morally indefensible uses of folk music in the past. By contrast, Vinicius Silvestre Motta, a Brazilian guitarist and a professional performer and teacher of his country’s varied musical traditions (who, notably, asked the Ethno Research team to quote him by name), described his work as follows: “When you come from an emerging country, an emerging economy—usually people look to the developed countries [as if] everything there is better. . . . You lose your identity. So it’s important to rebuild that. To see [that] people appreciate your songs. People appreciate what you do. People will listen to you.”

## LIMINAL SPACES

Many participants reference the sense of suspended reality they experience while at an Ethno camp. Sometimes described as the “Ethno bubble,” this experience resonates with the stages of *rituals* described by van Gennep (1960/1909): a “separation” from day-to-day life is followed by a “transition” phase, and then, in the “incorporation” phase, a return to a well-defined social position (Turner 1974). Victor Turner built upon van Gennep’s transition phase in developing the concept of *liminality*—the experience of being separated from society in space and time, in which the normal rules of society don’t necessarily hold (Turner 1974). Liminality is a time for participants to experiment with new ways of being and thinking, and a space within which “new symbols, models, and paradigms arise.” Turner describes such spaces as “the seedbeds of cultural creativity” (60).

Ritual theory provides a useful analytical framework for connecting Ethno participants’ lived experiences with the program’s stated goals of individual and social transformation, given that the “ritualesque” can be defined, in part, as “the performative use of symbols—images, music, movement—to effect social change” (Santino 2011, 62). These symbolic events may act at a variety of levels, from “provid[ing] engagement and entertainment” within the spatial and temporal boundaries of the event itself to “address[ing] certain issues and [effecting] change outside the actual locus of the event” (Santino 2011, 67). The impact of Ethno may be linked to the nature of the liminal spaces created at the camps. Notes Santino, “Very often, festivity, celebration, and the carnivalesque are the modality of the ritualesque: they are the way norms are questioned and alternatives suggested” (Santino 2011, 67). If Ethno-World has succeeded in provoking social change, it is likely not in spite of the wild and freeform atmosphere of the camps, but rather because of it.

Ethno participants describe the liminal space of the camps as fully immersive, emotionally intense, and engendering a state of total flow. “Malin,” for example, described Ethno as “on the borders between dream and reality, where we as participants can show each other what we love in the music, and share it with others” (Ellström 2016, 40).

Similarly, “Arnan” stated that at Ethno, “everybody is just in the flow, twenty-four hours of doing what they can. If you are doing something really from the heart you don’t have to sleep so much and you don’t have to care so much about tiny details like ‘I don’t have enough memory now,’ you just do it. Just make it happen. And somehow it happens. I don’t know why” (2016, 52). One artistic leader noted the intensity of emotion engendered by even the thought of leaving the—necessarily temporary—liminal space of Ethno: “The first thing you are thinking about when you see all these fantastic young people gathering the first day, and when seeing them play is that you *know* that everyone will cry when it’s time to go home” (2016, 57).

Ethno camps engender transformative experiences for participants on both a musical and personal (cultural) level. The underlying narrative of cultural diversity at the camps involves surmounting great difficulty: strangers from different backgrounds come together, overcome their differences, learn to work together, and ultimately grow to care deeply for each other. For some, participating in this larger narrative offers a rush of energy. Stated one participant:

**If you were to remove all the countries, then it would just be a normal camp. And much of the magical stuff wouldn’t [happen]... Each minute I think, ‘This is truly amazing because we are people from all these different countries that might’ve been at each other’s throats, wanting to kill each other!’ But now we are here without it being strange at all. (Ellström 2016, 61)**

Participants come to Ethno camps ready to participate in this narrative. One might argue that this means arriving at Ethno with a strong sense of national identity—perhaps stronger than usual. Participants put up their own walls of national and cultural identity and search out the walls of others, in full knowledge that these walls will be broken down over the course of the camp. The higher the walls, the greater the thrill of transgression, even in the safe and curated space of a music camp. Thus, in a seeming paradox, Ethno breaks down cultural differences and promotes cross-cultural harmony by reinforcing individual cultural identity. As one participant described it, “You have all these people from different cultures coming together... to celebrate their cultural differences. And as a result, your own cultural identity is strengthened, as opposed to muddled. As opposed to washed out and influenced by others in that kind of way” (Ellström 2016, 63).

## **Festivals as Sites of Transformation**

Scholarship on festivals, and particularly the subset known as “transformational festivals,” offers a framework for understanding the means by which Ethno camps succeed in generating the intense social and emotional outcomes reported by participants. While Ethno camps are not themselves music festivals, a number of parallels exist between the two.<sup>10</sup> Like festivals, today’s Ethno camps are recurring events that follow a relatively stable format, with many participants returning annually. Both music festivals and Ethno camps are immersive experiences in which participants

voluntarily remove themselves from everyday life for an extended period of time, and both have the potential to function as liminal spaces; that is, to generate transformative experiences by which participants return to their previous lives with the sense that they have been altered in some fundamental way.

Taken as a whole, the many camps under the Ethno-World umbrella might even be characterized as multiple iterations of a single moveable festival. From Ethno to Ethno, the format of nationally-identified repertoire transmitted through peer-to-peer learning remains relatively constant. Participants and artistic leaders travel from one Ethno to another, meeting and re-meeting in different countries but under similar circumstances. This consistency across geographical and temporal distance also likely contributes to the suspended sense of reality that characterizes the “Ethno bubble.”

Ballantyne, Ballantyne and Packer (2014) describe how four key elements of “the music festival experience”—social interactions, a festival atmosphere, separation from the everyday, and the music itself (Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer 2014, 67, see also Packer and Ballantyne 2011)—increase “psychological, social, and subjective well-being” among festival participants (67). That all of these elements are, to some degree, present in the Ethno format may help explain the sense of positive well-being reported by many Ethno participants. For instance, Ballantyne, Ballantyne and Packer note that “social interactions” are the strongest predictor of increased social and psychological well-being at music festivals and recommend that music festival organizers provide “opportunities for participants to connect with their friends on a deeper level” (Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer 2014, 80); the Ethno format provides multiple opportunities for participants to connect with friends new and old—something today sustained through social media. They also recommend granting participants agency over certain aspects of a festival in order to “promote a feeling of personal engagement and shared responsibility. . . and develop “a sense of shared identification and purpose with others” (Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer 2014, 80). At Ethno camps, participants select repertoire, teach that repertoire to others, and often have input on creating musical arrangements.

In addition, festival activities that “enable attendees to make a personal connection with the music” engender greater well-being among participants (Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer 2014, 80). At Ethno camps, participants not only teach musical styles with which they identify personally, but also learn to play music with which their newfound Ethno friends identify, thereby making multiple new personal connections with a variety of musical styles. Finally, Ballantyne, Ballantyne and Packer note that each additional day spent at a festival increases overall well-being (2014, 77). Given that the immersive experience of Ethno camps typically extends over multiple days or even weeks, it is to be expected that participants feel increased well-being and develop stronger interpersonal relations.

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<sup>10</sup> Many Ethno camps are linked to festivals and festival culture. The first Ethno, for example, was associated with the Falun Folk Music Festival and culminated in a performance at that festival. Other Ethnos (and other folk/traditional music camps) have similar associations with local festivals.

Underlying all of these wellness-generating elements of the festival experience is the music itself. At a festival, the music provides the “common ground on which both the social experience and the festival experience are built” and facilitates a “sense of connection among participants” (Ballantyne, Ballantyne, and Packer 2014, 67). Similarly, music is reported as being the “connective tissue” at Ethno camps, as Higgins (2020) notes with regard to Ethno Portugal: “As so many participants told me, this was the language they used, the principal thing that brought people together” (20).

Ethno camps seek to create an ideal, if temporary, alternative society by bringing together creative people within a structure that facilitates their contributions to the group while still allowing for individual initiative. In this respect, one may draw certain parallels between the camps and the relatively recent genre of “transformational” festivals.<sup>11</sup> These festivals—typically inspired by and modelled on, or in response to, the annual Burning Man festival in the Nevada desert—emphasize “connection as opposed to separation, and participation as opposed to spectatorship” (Mohr 2017, 2), and are structured in such a way as to “allow opportunities for participants to encounter, connect, play, celebrate, experiment, learn, and ultimately ‘transform’ together” (Mohr 2017, 7). Participants come to transformational festivals expecting not only to respond to what is on offer (i.e., musical performances), but to co-create the festival experience itself. While it may be argued that all festivals are co-created by participants, transformational festivals differ in that attendees choose to participate knowing they are expected—by the organizers and by the other participants—to contribute to the co-creation of the festival in a tangible manner. This is similar to the presumption at Ethno camps that every participant will contribute to group music-making by bringing repertoire, teaching that repertoire, and helping create musical arrangements. Transformational festivals function in part on a gift economy, both for art and day-to-day practicalities; Ethno functions analogously as a musical gift economy.

The transformative nature of transformational festivals extends as far as participants’ individual sense of identity. As Schmidt (2015) notes, following Wendy Clupper Meier (2007), “self-performing, role-playing and collective collaboration” are “operative modes of being” which “open up space for the remaking of identity” at transformational festivals (Schmidt 2015, 40). Within the liminal space of a festival or music camp, day-to-day life is an aesthetic, creative experience where participants choose who and how they want to be, and support each other in these transformations. One participant at Ethno France 2020 described to the Ethno Research team how the emotional openness of the other participants at his first Ethno camp had allowed him to “really be me...I’ve always been the weirdo, been bullied in school, didn’t really know who I’m supposed to be,” he recalled. Ethno was the first place where he felt people “[would] accept me.”

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<sup>11</sup> However, it is essential to recognize the limitations of this analysis. Ethno differs in significant ways from transformational festivals. Ethno participants do not build sacred spaces, hold faux-tribal ceremonies (see Schmidt 2015, 49–50), or promote spirituality, of any kind, in any other way. Transformational festival-goers seek a trance-like state through dance and, often, illegal drugs; Ethno attendees seek a different sort of flow state, through collective music-making. Our goal is to use the literature on transformational festivals to highlight concepts and analytical approaches that may prove useful to Ethno research, rather than to establish a clear-cut comparison between the two.

## Camps and Workshops

Claims of uniqueness notwithstanding, Ethno camps occur within a transnational ecosystem of folk/traditional music camps and workshops—primarily North American and European—that variously target young musicians, adult amateurs, pre-professional and young professional musicians, or combinations thereof. Like Ethno, and in keeping with the above discussion of festivals as liminal spaces, these camps are transformative for many attendees. Participants typically leave the realities of day-to-day living and spend anywhere from several days to several weeks (most commonly one week) learning music in group settings. As at Ethno camps, participants at other folk/traditional music camps often learn aurally, play in late-night jam sessions, and prepare for final public performances. Inclusive opportunities for music-making are prioritized and many camps offer a variety of levels and modes of musical participation. Camp participants are usually housed together and share meals, and contribute in a variety of ways to the “co-creation” of the camp, from informally sharing music with peers, to organizing dances, concerts, talent shows or other evening events, to stacking chairs and assisting in the kitchen. In short, these camps offer participants a suspension from the everyday and near-immediate entry into a community that, for many, feels life-changing.

The musical landscape of folk music camps has exploded from a handful of events in the 1970s—including the Willie Clancy Summer School (founded 1972) in Ireland, and the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes (1977) and Ashokan Music and Dance Camp (1980) in the United States—to the over one hundred “fiddle camps” (primarily North American and Western European) listed in Hargreaves (2017, 125–131). These camps are themselves just one part of a larger trend towards the formalization of community-based structures for the transmission of traditional musics in many locales (Risk 2013, 437–438). In Scotland, for instance, Miller notes “a proliferation of educational events and classes run by local and national organizations” since the 1960s, with the number and popularity of such events and classes greatly increasing with the Scottish cultural renaissance of the late 1980s and 1990s (Miller 2007, 289). Although community-based sites for the learning of traditional musics offer numerous social benefits, including as training grounds for music teachers, as repositories “of experience and potential for music learners of all ages and abilities,” as “sites of social and musical participation and performance,” and as “cultural resource[s] for building and maintaining communities,” they are notably understudied in the scholarly literature (Miller 2018, 30–31).

Similarities between Ethno camps and other folk/traditional music camps abound with regards to everything from daily schedules to teaching methodologies to the intense sense of community engendered over the course of the event. However, most folk/traditional music camps are all-ages and target primarily adult amateurs. As a result, camps tend not only to respond to demand for music learning in community settings, but also to strengthen that demand by providing a pathway for adult beginners of all ages to join a musical community. Whether Ethno camps serve the same function is unclear, as they do not offer initiation-level classes and have a strict age range cut-off.



It should be noted, however, that these restrictions do not necessarily correlate with a higher level of technical ability among participants, as Ethno attendees must apply to camps and are not judged by their technical skill level alone. Anecdotal evidence suggests that engagement with the community, engagement with Ethno-World events in the past, and potential for societal impact (for instance, participants who work with children or refugees) are also highly valued. By contrast, folk/traditional music camps usually work on a first-come-first-served basis or occasionally by lottery.

As with Ethno-World events, many folk/traditional music camps are structured so as to almost guarantee a transformative experience for attendees. Jay Unger, director of the popular Ashokan Music and Dance camp, described the participant experience as akin to stepping into an altered reality: “When they come to Ashokan, the outside world—definitions, professions—is obliterated... For some, it’s a little shocking to leave. Even for those who stay [for another week-long session], it’s shocking to see the people just coming into the next session; [the newcomers] are usually kind of tense, still very much concerned with the outside world” (quoted in Dabczynski 1994, 51). Researcher Andrew Dabczynski concurred, noting that at the end of the “Northern Week” session at Ashokan, he and his wife felt

**a sense of disorientation as we reentered the world we had left seven days earlier. It was a genuine feeling of “culture shock,” not unlike that which is experienced after an extended stay abroad... We knew intellectually that, even as we spoke, the community had physically disbanded, each individual returning to his or her permanent home. But the odd feeling was that it continued, that it was still there. (Dabczynski 1994, 223)**

This experience of liminality may be particularly intense for young musicians who attend camps in the same years that they are forming identities as individuals. As fiddler Tatiana Hargreaves writes in an autoethnographic section of her senior undergraduate thesis (one of very few scholarly sources on North American fiddle camps),

**To me, Fiddle camps serve a sort of alternative lifestyle model. A utopia. A place away from the weight of every-day life: the loneliness, social awkwardness and stress. At fiddle camp you can lose yourself to the sounds of old time music, making meaningful connections with people in a way you’ve always struggled to outside of camp. (Hargreaves 2017, 96)**

What sets Ethno camps apart from other folk/traditional music camps is the emphasis on intercultural exchange and the potential for a more ethnically and socially diverse group of participants. Hargreaves notes that the participants at North American and European fiddle camps are overwhelmingly white, middle class, heterosexual, and cisgendered (Hargreaves 2017). The low cost of Ethno camps and the recent addition of JMI Mobility Grants have the potential to open the demographic reach of these camps.

Whether Ethno camps have succeeded in attracting a highly diverse group of attendees remains an open question, however. As Higgins (2020) observes, the existing research base suggests that advanced training in instrumental music reflects the presence of sufficient social and cultural capital. Ergo, Ethno camps are more than likely to be “populated by the privileged few.” It is possible that “Ethno isn’t much more than an opportunity for like-minded people, already invested in issues of cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, to hang-out for two weeks and indulge in their passion” (Higgins 2020, 21–22). It is one thing to promote a discourse of inclusivity and diversity. It is quite another to attract and retain a truly diverse group of participants.

## **ETHNO PEDAGOGY**

Ethnographic studies of Ethno-World camps conducted by the Ethno Research team in 2019 found that many participants described the learning environment as a central feature of the Ethno experience. Attendees have described Ethno as a “place for exchange” (Higgins 2020, 5) and a “shared musical gift” (Birch 2020, 16). One attendee described the experience of being surrounded by “lots of different backgrounds and influences and [being able] to, in a short space of time, pick up things I don’t normally have a chance to” (Higgins 2020, 4). In contrast to many formal (“institutional”) music teaching and learning settings where an authority figure often operates in a “teacher-as-master” approach, attendees at Ethno camps are expected to teach each other.

Although specifics vary, the basic format of most camps is that during the first few days, each person (or a group if there is more than one attendee from a country) takes turns teaching everyone a tune or song through an oral/aural transmission process (i.e., typically without staff notation). Once all the tunes have been shared, the camp shifts into the arranging phase, whereby the artistic leaders, sometimes in consultation with the individual country attendee (or attendees), develop an arrangement of the “raw material” (i.e., the tunes/songs from each country) with the intent of public performance. Attendees, rather than teachers leading instruction, create the special “place for exchange” environment so highly valued by the participants. Although the idea of peer learning and teaching is hardly novel in education, the experience at Ethno camps is heightened and made unique by the intercultural nature. Indeed, JMI and Ethno-World emphasize the importance of peer learning (or “peer-to-peer”) and “non-formal” learning at Ethno camps.

The Ethno-World website identifies “democratic peer-to-peer learning”—“a non-formal pedagogy” wherein “young people teach each other the music from their countries and cultures”—as the “core” of Ethno (<https://www.ethno-world.org/>). One participant from Ethno Denmark described this process of peer-to-peer musical exchange as engendering comradery for participants: “It’s like through music I know you better. . . [We] come from different parts of the world and we share something with each other.” This shared musical experience can enhance participant relationships, and in turn, create bonding experiences (Birch 2020, 16).

## Formal, Informal, and Non-Formal Contexts for Learning

According to Mak (2006), the three teaching and learning contexts of *formal*, *non-formal* and *informal* “all deal with the question of who controls the learning process—the teacher, the student or both—and to a lesser extent, with the question of what kind of environment the learning takes place [in]—outside or within the conservatoire” (2). Formal learning contexts can be identified as those where learning is systematic and structured with clear learning goals and procedures (Marsick and Watkins 1990). It is commonly associated with educational institutions, where learning is bound to a curriculum (Mak 2006). The process of gaining knowledge in formal learning contexts is intentional and often leads to some form of credentialing (such as a certification or receipt of a formal grading) through the demonstration of understanding (Mak 2006). In formal music education settings, learning is typically led by a qualified music educator and the instruction emphasizes written music notation over aural/oral approaches.

In contrast to formal learning contexts, which are intentional, Marsick and Watkins (1990) describe informal (or incidental) learning contexts as those in which learning occurs but is unplanned. Green (2002) describes the process of informal learning in music as “both conscious and unconscious,” as it includes “learning through interaction with others such as peers, family, or other musicians who are not acting as teachers in formal capacities” (16). Green (2008) identifies typical characteristics of informal music learning contexts, including: peer instruction, aural/oral music transmission, and a mixture of music composition, improvisation, listening, and performing.

Often used interchangeably with informal learning is non-formal learning. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) are believed to be the first to have used the term “non-formal” in relation to learning contexts. They argue that conceptualizations of learning should not be restricted to a particular location, environment or occasion. Non-formal learning is defined as that which occurs outside of formal contexts and is often associated with social and community settings (Mak 2006). Non-formal learning is generally defined as voluntary in participation (Reddy 2003) and by a lack of demand for, or expectation of, an expert or qualified music teacher (Mak 2006). In place of this “teacher-as-master” approach, learning is student-directed and occurs through peer exchanges or mentorship.

There is considerable cross-over between the contexts of informal, non-formal, and formal learning. Folkstead (2006) identifies four aspects of formal and informal learning settings: the *situation* (where the learning takes place), *learning style* (how music is learned, e.g., notational/aural), *ownership* (who makes the decisions), and *intentionality* (the goal of learning) (141–142). Rather than defining formal and informal music learning as separate pedagogical approaches, Folkestad (2006) suggests that they are “two poles of a continuum; in most learning situations, both these aspects of learning are in various degrees present and interacting” (135).

The characteristics of informal, formal and non-formal learning contexts can be adapted and experienced in a variety of settings. Higgins (2020) suggests that Ethno-World’s

pedagogical approach also falls on the spectrum of formal, informal, and non-formal. While much informal learning occurs, there is an awareness of the importance of strong music facilitation in order to ensure that all Ethno participants have a positive music learning experience. As one attendee observed, “This is important because sometimes the technical skills are not amazing” (Higgins 2020, 10). Higgins notes that “through skillful facilitative processes, [attendees] can have great musical experiences” (2020, 10). Ethno pedagogy can thus be classified as a hybrid between informal and formal music instruction, with the majority of learning occurring through a non-formal process (Higgins 2020).

## Aural/Oral Transmission

Aural/oral transmission is common within many traditional musics. The process of passing on music by ear among fellow learners, or across generations, can be a way to build and foster community (Gilbert 2018). Ethno camps primarily use oral/aural approaches in order to involve everyone in the music-making process, thus creating a community of music learners (Ellström 2016). The lack of staff notation also opens doors to opportunities for improvisation. At Ethno camps, attendees can perform improvised solos, participate in improvised jams sessions, and contribute “on the fly” within the arrangements. As Ellström notes, “there is this philosophy of breaking free from the original traditions of the music, but at the same time celebrating them and being respectful in the most positive way imaginable” (2016, 52).

In the case of Ethno camps, the overall use of aural/oral transmission as a primary learning process received a variety of viewpoints from attendees. One participant stated that “the nuances of the transmitted music would be lost if the music wasn’t learned by ear... thus losing important aspects like ornamentation, groove or soul” (Ellström 2016, 50). Another participant described the process of aural/oral transmission as “extraordinary,” pointing to “the way that the final form of a song is arranged only by ear and simple notes on a board” (Roosioja 2018, 49). Others found it difficult to adapt to what was, for them, an unfamiliar method of music transmission. One participant from Ethno Catalonia stated, “At the beginning it was very difficult, daunting and overwhelming, but I am getting better, and it complements my classical training” (Gayraud 2020, 14).

Ethno Research team observations have noted how Ethno participants use *self-directed learning* methods (Garrison 1997) to supplement their aural/oral music learning. Strategies have included incorporating recording technologies (e.g., phones) to capture and listen to tunes and writing down lyrics, chords, and/or tablature. Ellström (2016) described one such instance: “[W]hen learning a morning Raga from India, after rehearsing the scale and tune, a paper was put up on a board explaining the names of the notes in the raga (Ni, Sa, Pa etc.)” (49). Self-directed learning methods observed at Ethno, then, are consistent with the scholarly literature, which has found that music learners often incorporate a similar variation of self-directed learning strategies, including the use of recording technology, chords, guitar tablature, and/or closely watching finger positionings of fellow musicians (Green 2002, Lebler 2008, Waldron 2009).

## Peer-to-Peer Learning

It is unclear to what extent JMI and Ethno-World have been deliberate in their choice of the phrase “peer-to-peer learning,” a term that is primarily associated with technology fields (e.g., industry, ICT, “peer-to-peer networks”). One presumes the term is intended to capture the practice at Ethno-World camps where attendees teach “their” music to their peers. In the teaching and learning literature one typically finds the term *peer learning*. Associated concepts include *collaborative learning*, *vicarious learning*, and *peer mentoring*.

Often compared with peer mentoring (discussed below), *peer learning* strives to remove the power dynamics between learners. Peer learning has been defined as “the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of a teacher” (Boud, Cohen, and Sampson 1999, 413). Peer learning can include student-to-student learning, peer feedback sessions, student-led workshops, and group study sessions. In peer learning contexts, students are both teachers and learners, in contrast to peer teaching which “commonly involves advanced students in the same class, or those in later years, taking on limited aspects of a teacher’s instructional or pedagogic role” (Boud, Cohen, and Sampson 1999, 414).

Some aspects of peer learning are better described as *vicarious learning*. A term coined by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, vicarious learning is knowledge which is gained by hearing and observing others—especially others with whom one may identify—complete tasks or behaviours (Bandura 1997). At Ethno camps, there is a strong focus on teaching through the use of aural/oral music transmission. Attendees, especially those less familiar with this mode of transmission, adapt to learn the music through self-directed approaches. To the extent their learning involves hearing and observing their peers, this can be considered vicarious learning. Ethno-World also provides opportunities for direct peer learning: music instruction is led by country representatives and artistic leaders, who also identify as peers. In addition, there are typically opportunities for peer learning during large group rehearsals and less formal practice times. One participant described the peer learning experience as follows: “It’s you helping me with chords, it’s going over stuff in smaller groups” (Ellström 2016, 43). Stated another participant, “We had no problems with learning. They helped me if I didn’t know; we help each other” (Ellström 2016, 43).

*Collaborative learning* (Bruffee 1999) has been described as an “umbrella term that includes a variety of approaches of cooperation and collaboration, or as a broad approach that emerges from the interactions between a teacher and his and her students” (Luce 2001, 20–21). Bruffee identifies three principles of collaborative learning: (1) knowledge is established through “a consensus among the members of a community of knowledgeable peers”; (2) the community members share equal ownership of the knowledge; and (3) relationships between peers shape the knowledge community (xii). The interpersonal nature of collaborative learning has the ability to disrupt the “master-apprentice” transmission model of traditional education.

Renshaw (2013) argues that collaborative learning can unlock creative potential through community collaboration and bridge societal and cultural divides, and Nielsen et al. (2018) demonstrate that overall inclusion of collaborative learning can instill a shared understanding of knowledge and learning goals within a group setting. However, in order to sustain a successful collaborative learning model, a non-judgemental learning environment and a community-wide sense of trust are essential (Renshaw 2013). Learning institutions must therefore maintain a welcoming, communal learning environment if collaborative learning is to occur successfully.

*Peer mentoring* involves collaboration between peers. Traditional models of peer mentoring involve an older, more knowledgeable student helping a younger or less knowledgeable student. However, this “Top Down” approach (Sorcinelli and Yun 2007) may lead to ethical concerns due to hierarchical power dynamics. The scholarly literature on peer-based learning between musicians has indicated that hierarchical dynamics based on superior musical capabilities commonly arise and may be harmful to some learners. Darrow et al. (2005) explain, for example, that some learners adopt a steadily compliant role during the student mentorship process due to their lack of certainty within their musical abilities. Advocates of peer mentoring stress the importance for all learners to take on the role of mentor and for further awareness of the peer mentorship process to be taken into consideration (Goodrich 2018).

The peer learning atmosphere at Ethno camps has been noted by the Ethno Research team. At the same time, claims to a power relations-free environment would appear disingenuous, as there is a clear hierarchy between attendees and artistic leaders (something clearly conveyed in the title of “artistic leader”). The leaders are responsible for facilitation of sessions and for overseeing the general mood and success of the camp. Notably, they control the musical arrangements and musical performances (Roosioja 2018). This does not mean that the hierarchy is unwelcome, however. One attendee drew a parallel between artistic leaders and social hierarchies by stating: “It’s like a society.... For a society you also need elder people who can show you the way even if you are growing. As a little child you need someone who can show you how to cut your food and such things. You just learn from seeing it. And it’s not because he is better or something but because he has done it before” (Ellström 2016, 45).

Research on peer learning has suggested that the implementation of peer approaches in pedagogy can benefit learners by instilling a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Scruggs 2008, Lebler 2008). Through sharing of experiences, reflections, and understanding, learners may have increased motivation and may enhance their skills (Nielsen, Johansen, and Jørgensen 2018). Music-making is a collaborative art form and the process of sharing through peer learning can further instill creative collaboration. It should be noted, however, that most research on peer learning is undertaken in the context of formal settings such as schools, where peer learning is ultimately overseen by a pedagogical “expert” (i.e., teacher). In the context of Ethno camps, artistic leaders are the de facto experts responsible for ensuring that peer learning does not result in the abrogation of responsibility.

# An Agenda for Ethno Research

With the intent of advancing the agenda of Ethno-World Research, the authors of this white paper propose three fundamental distinctions to help clarify future research: intentionality, impact, and evaluation. By *intentionality* is meant both espoused intent and enacted practices, as undertaken by JMI/Ethno-World, Ethno camp organizers, Ethno camp artistic leaders, and Ethno camp attendees. By *impact* is meant the discernible differences that result from Ethno camp activity. These differences are describable on three levels: camp participants (including organizers and artistic leaders), localized and diasporic subcultural and intercultural activity, and cultural production generally. By *evaluation* is meant assessing the relationship between stated goals and observed effects (i.e., the relationship between action and impact), assessing the merits of the goals and intentions of JMI and Ethno camp organizers, and problematizing the impact Ethno-World has had on camp participants, on subcultural and intercultural activity, and cultural production. Evaluation for the purpose of this report does not mean “program evaluation,” a form of assessment generally understood as initiated and undertaken by or in service of an organization with the intent of determining operational efficacy. Put differently, evaluation in the context of this white paper has been undertaken in the service of general scholarship, not in the service of a particular organization (even though the findings and discussion may have implications of interest to various organizations, most notably JMI and Ethno-World).

## INTENTIONALITY

At their most basic level, Ethno-World camps are music camps for younger adults. Similar to many other music camps, they are short-term events whereby young adults with an interest in music gather, typically for 7–14 days, for the expressed purpose of making music together, concluding with a public performance of some kind. Sometimes, as was the case with the first Ethno Sweden camp and as continues with some Ethno camps today, there is a connection with a local music festival or event. Although enforcement is looser at some camps than others, another important feature of Ethno is the emphasis on youth, with most camps setting an age range of approximately 13–30. What is claimed by JMI/Ethno-World (and by extension, many Ethno organizers) as making Ethno-World camps distinctive is the focus on “non-formal” peer-to-peer learning, intercultural exchange, and “traditional music.”

Much is made of non-formal peer-to-peer learning in the official discourse of Ethno-World. It is true that a central feature of Ethno camps is the practice of attendees sharing the “traditional music” of their home country or region with their peers during the introductory phase (usually the first days) of the camp. Camps also typically include informal music and culture sharing amongst attendees while not in formal rehearsal periods. It should be noted, however, that much of the learning during an Ethno camp also takes place during rehearsals led by the artistic leaders, whose title and status during a camp resemble typical music teaching and learning settings led by qualified or credentialed experts. Given the implementation of Ethnofonik, a de facto training institute for artistic leaders, the claims to being “non-formal” are open to question.

Much is also made of the intercultural aspects of Ethno camps in the official discourse of Ethno-World. Here too, it is undeniable that, due to the composition of camp attendees, Ethno camps are, by their nature, “intercultural.” Although camps are conducted in English, which functions as the lingua franca, language diversity is a prominent feature of Ethno camps. Ethnographies conducted by the Ethno Research team in 2019 corroborate the claim that the intercultural aspects of Ethno are highly valued by many participants. It should be noted, however, that, while participant profiles vary from camp to camp, the majority of camps are held in Europe and the majority of attendees are European. The recent support for “Mobility Grants” would appear to recognize the underrepresentation of participants from certain parts of the globe, especially those from the Global South.

Despite the term “traditional music” being undefined, Ethno-World continues to emphasize it in their public-facing discourse. Traditional (or folk) music is generally understood by organizers, artistic leaders, and attendees as music that has cultural significance to a country or a group of people within a given country, thus setting it apart from (1) classical or art musics, which are (problematically) predicated on an aesthetics of timelessness and universality, and from (2) popular musics, which are (equally problematically) predicated on the market rationality of mass culture. “Folk music” at Ethno-World camps is also characterized by its “aural,” non-notation-based nature. Folk music is thus music that can be (and is) learned by ear within a relatively short period of time. The range of music qualifying as “traditional” today appears to be much broader than at the original 1990 Ethno camp associated with the Falun Folk Music Festival, which, judging from the YouTube feature on the camp, was decidedly narrower in its repertoire and more “traditional” in its concert presentation. By contrast, today’s camps emphasize highly arranged versions of the basic folk tune material, the end result of which resembles, in final concert presentations, the kind of transglobal roots fusion aesthetic common to many “world music” groups.



## IMPACT

The extant research on and about Ethno-World camps suggests a strong sense of affinity within an Ethno *subculture*. Attendees are typically effusive in their praise for the Ethno experience, something backed up by the number of participants who attend more than once. It is not uncommon for some people to attend multiple Ethno camps. A few “die hard” fans appear to plan their year around Ethno camps, “hopping” from one Ethno to another. The passion expressed by the Ethno community is sustained on social media, the most notable example being the Facebook Ethnopia group, which currently has over 600 members. Given that many organizers are volunteers or paid minimally (an assumption made based on the low cost for attendance), it is likely that organizers are motivated more by altruism and personal satisfaction than monetary incentives, something that speaks highly of the positive nature of Ethno camps generally. Artistic leaders are the one constituency potentially motivated transactionally, insofar as they function as paid staff, and, depending on personal circumstances and ambitions, may stand to benefit professionally from working at Ethno camps. That there is apparently high demand to work as an Ethno artistic leader, however, reflects positively on the nature of the employment and working conditions.

Surprisingly little is known about localized and diasporic subcultural activity (what Slobin [1993] calls *interculture*) in relation to Ethno-World camps. While there are apparently efforts by some Ethno camps to interface with local communities, as the white paper authors witnessed at Ethno France 2020, existing knowledge operates only at the anecdotal level. Similarly, while there are anecdotal reports of how Ethno attendees have leveraged their Ethno experiences in service of cultural activities in their own localities, little evidence—scholarly or trade—was discovered in the writing of this report. It would be interesting to investigate, for example, the wider impact of the purported pedagogy (non-formal education) enacted at Ethno camps.

Despite the apparent popularity of Ethno-World camps, they are not, from what can be discerned, well-known in the wider world of ethnomusicology or much of the folk, traditional or world music scenes (i.e., Slobin’s *superculture*). Ethno camps have been studied or included as part of a broader study in a handful of theses and dissertations, but the writers of this report could find no peer-reviewed scholarship explicitly about Ethno-World camps, and Ethno-World does not appear to factor significantly amongst the curriculum and instructional practices at institutions specializing in folk, traditional and/or world musics. This may reflect the contrarian stance of Ethno camps themselves, which pride themselves on “non-formal” education and their embrace of “Ethno pedagogy,” an approach that claims to exist in opposition to formalized pedagogical practices. In terms of the folk, traditional and world music scenes, it is possible that the impact of Ethno-World is just beginning to be noticed, thanks to efforts such as

“Ethno on the Road” and the Världens Band, an ensemble made up primarily of Ethno-World alumni. It is notable, however, that very few “experts” in these music scenes are seemingly aware of Ethno-World.

## EVALUATION

To the extent that Ethno-World has continued to expand the number of Ethno camps around the globe (up until the COVID-19 pandemic), available evidence to date suggests Ethno camps are built on a successful formula that leaves most attendees satisfied and seeking additional Ethno experiences. Although ethnographies conducted by the Ethno Research team in 2019 did identify a few attendees who expressed frustrations and negative experiences, these pale in comparison with the effusive praise expressed by the overwhelming majority, many of whom describe their Ethno experience as life-changing. Research observations at Ethno France 2020 corroborate a general sentiment that Ethno camps embody a shared utopian commitment on the part of organizers, attendees, and artistic leaders to a more compassionate, empathetic, humane world.

### Intercultural Exchange

Part of the allure of Ethno camps would appear to be their sense of suspended reality, something catalyzed by the common age range of participants. Videos and images of Ethno camps give the impression of “emerging adults” who are mostly single, physically healthy, and full of energy, vitality, and optimism. Research observations and anecdotal reports suggest that many camps feature a party atmosphere where attendees are keen to test their mental and physical stamina through their socializing.

When viewed as a “liminal” period or as a “limit experience,” the risk-taking aspects of Ethno attendance can be seen as part of personal and, in some cases, professional development. At the same time, there is some evidence to suggest a few attendees may be drawn into the suspension of reality as a way of avoiding it. The Ethno Research team heard reports of attendees who “Ethno hop” as a way of rent avoidance, for example (as the cost of camp attendance provides relatively inexpensive food and board compared to that of many countries). There are also anecdotal reports of some attendees largely oblivious to the realities of adult life (e.g., participants who have no idea how much rent costs or how much income one would need for basic subsistence).

Ethno-World certainly cannot be held responsible for ensuring people are not attending Ethnos as a way of avoiding the realities of adult life. At the same time, organizational claims to intercultural dialogue and understanding seem exaggerated. While there are reports that a small minority of Ethno camps attempt explicit dialogue on issues beyond music, it would appear that in most cases the purported intercultural aspects

are simply presumed on the basis of camp attendance. That songs are sung in Portuguese or Arabic, for example, would seem to be taken as sufficient for claiming intercultural experiences. While it might be unrealistic to expect Ethno-World camps to tackle the challenge of epistemological difference, it is highly problematic to proclaim intercultural understanding on the basis of music-making alone. Difficult topics, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, or disability inequalities, issues of consent, or even relatively simple topics, such as the comparative realities of living in countries outside the European Union, if they are discussed at all, occur informally between small groups of people, not as part of a common camp experience.

The European tradition of “intercultural competence” as a basic problem of knowledge in relation to the norm of European experience (“Global Westerners, local others”) would appear to provide the basis for Ethno-World’s conception of intercultural dialogue and understanding. The Ethno Research team observed and heard reports of clear differences between the experiences of those from the Global North, where, generally speaking, attendees were seeking “intercultural experiences,” and those from the Global South, where, generally speaking, attendees were seeking networking opportunities that might open doors to professional advancement. Although some camps (e.g., Ethno New Zealand) are apparently confronting difficult questions of colonialism, this appears to be the exception rather than the rule. As a result, it could be argued that, despite altruistic aims and the undeniably positive sentiments expressed by the majority of attendees, Ethno-World camps in fact participate in a form of European cultural colonialism.

### Non-formal Learning

Peer-to-peer learning is touted by Ethno-World as central to the Ethno camp experience. To the extent attendees share musical selections with their peers during the first days of a camp, typically in a phrase-by-phrase, repeat-after-me fashion, peer-to-peer learning in a non-formal setting (i.e., outside traditional music teaching institutions) can be said to occur. Given that the majority of time at an Ethno camp is spent in rehearsals led by artistic leaders, however, claims to peer-to-peer learning appear exaggerated. While there is, in principle, much to be lauded about peer learning (and peer learning in music), it is in no way unique to Ethno camps. Moreover, no evidence has been uncovered that Ethno-World (and Ethnofonik) operate on the basis of any theoretical commitments or research evidence base. Although it undoubtedly reflects a sincere anti-institutional stance toward the hierarchical teacher-student relationship endemic to conservatory-based instruction, “peer-to-peer” appears to be more of a convenient slogan or catch-phrase than an informed approach to the problems of teaching and learning.

Claims to being “non-formal” are presumably based on Ethno camps operating outside the “formal” paradigm of music teaching and learning. While there is no doubt some flexibility and adaptation within a given Ethno camp, there are anecdotal reports and consistent indicators that, as part of its branding and institutional efforts, Ethno-World has codified and standardized many aspects of Ethno camps. Similar to other music camps, there is a clear plan and structure to Ethno camps; they are not spontaneous and emergent. Moreover, despite the short period of initial peer sharing of musical material, the lion’s share of a camp resembles the familiar structure of rehearsals (and performance) led by a “leader.” That Ethno hires people known as “artistic leaders” underscores the bald fact of traditional teacher-student hierarchies, even if these hierarchies are more muted and framed by an environment of mutual respect and support.

By many measures, Ethno camps provide a wonderful music learning experience for attendees. What is problematic is not necessarily what is enacted, but the claims and assumptions made in the name of Ethno camp learning. Artistic leaders appear to be highly competent musicians, hired on the basis of their reputation for successful music facilitation. At the same time, there is little evidence that Ethno-World, Ethnofonik, or artistic leaders operate on the basis of much beyond their own experience. By most definitions, this would qualify efforts as “non-professional” (where professions are defined as operating according to evidence and theory). That there are sentiments expressed amongst the Ethno subculture that they have invented or discovered some new way of teaching and learning (“Ethno pedagogy”) points to a potentially disturbing naiveté about all that is currently known about music teaching, learning, and facilitation. As much as one might admire the positive experiences of attendees and the anti-establishment values motivating the subculture, a more informed stance might help Ethno-World better frame and restrict its claims about music learning and teaching.

## Traditional Music

Arguably, one of the most ambiguous aspects of Ethno-World camps relates to the expectation for attendees to bring to camp a “traditional music” selection that represents their home country or region. On the surface of this expectation lie a host of potentially problematic issues of cultural identity as national identity. For example, the Ethno-World model is striking in that the participants themselves are taken as informants or even de facto culture-bearers for musical traditions whose boundaries align with national borders—their inalienable authority guaranteed simply by fact of their national or regional origin.

The approach Ethno-World takes to traditional music would seem, on the surface, to align with an older, pre-globalization conception of the musical landscape as composed of discrete, bounded, “authentic” traditions. Ethno-World takes this model not as an underlying premise for ethnographic study, but rather as a launching point for intercultural musical exchange where musicians represent their own national heritage through “traditional music.” Through mutual musical sharing, participants join their voices to the musical heritage of other locales. Heritage in this sense is equal parts *raison d’être*, conversation starter, and existential challenge as attendees— typically in their early to mid-twenties with comparably little life experience—wrestle with the problem of national representation through music. As one artistic leader at Ethno France 2020 put it, “It gets people asking the questions.”

The claim that Ethno-World functions to “revive and keep alive global cultural heritage” is seemingly predicated upon a revivalist perspective that assumes cultural authority and stylistic authenticity. This, however, does not appear to be a primary motivator for attendance. Some participants have, in fact, reported disassociating Ethno camps outright from other musical scenes specializing in the folk or traditional music of a country or region. Indeed, Ethno-World does not necessarily target—or attract— young musicians who specialize in the folk/traditional music of their country or region. Many Ethno participants appear to come from classical, jazz, or popular music backgrounds. They may be interested in learning music from other countries, but they are seemingly unconcerned with issues of authenticity. Citing the example of a polska, one artistic leader at Ethno France admitted that you won’t learn about actual musical traditions at Ethno, “but you will get an insight or a window.”

Although the first Ethno camp (Sweden, 1990) may have reflected a genuine desire to revive and keep alive “global cultural heritage” (consistent with claims on the JMI website), today’s artistic leaders appear to be generalists rather than a cadre of specialists in individual musical genres or traditions. As a result, rehearsals (as observed by researchers to date) are focused on creating exciting musical arrangements—resulting in what is affectionately known as “the Ethno sound”—rather than teaching attendees specific stylistic nuances or performance practices. Ethno camps are less about heritage, stylistic fidelity, or even cultural identity than they are about a contemporary engagement with others seeking interesting performing and collaboration opportunities. To the extent Ethno-World has inspired alumni now working in the commodified folk, traditional, and world music scenes, it can be viewed as participating in transformationalist cultural globalization and professionalization processes (Sweers 2014).

## **AREAS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

In light of the conceptual framework and discussion presented in this report, the following stakeholder areas are forwarded as considerations for further research.

## Camp Attendees

- What are the discrete participant profiles of Ethno attendees in terms of self-reported motivations, sociodemographics, and musical backgrounds based on large-scale surveys?
- What are the motivations, backgrounds, and lived experiences of attendees from the Global South?
- What additional insights can be gleaned about Ethno attendees through large-scale data mining and fine-grained discourse analyses of Ethnopia and other social media related to Ethno?

Although some initial survey research has been conducted, “big data” is required to generate a more complete profile of Ethno attendees. A larger data set would help to shed additional light on the subpopulations that attend Ethno camps, allowing for greater elaboration on the potentially multifaceted nature of participant motives and their demographic statistics. This could provide data needed for strategic action.

Research to date suggests that attendees from the Global South may differ in important ways from those from the Global North. Claims to intercultural dialogue can be further problematized through sensitization to overshadowed voices.

Internet research is accessible and a potentially rich source of data and access to participants. Ethnopia, for example, with its 600+ members, is but one example of a social media site that could be mined and explored in order to generate participant perceptions and opinions, and further insights into participant profiles.

## Artistic Leaders

- What are the discrete participant profiles of Ethno artistic leaders in terms of self-reported motivations, sociodemographics, and musical backgrounds based on large-scale surveys?
- What self-reported principles or beliefs guide or inform pedagogic action undertaken by artistic leaders? To what extent do they have familiarity with theory or practice outside Ethno contexts? (How do espoused values compare to enacted practices?)
- To what extent are artistic leaders aware of the degree to which they may be participating in the shaping of culture through music at local, regional, and global levels?
- To what extent do artistic leaders feel obligated to or responsible for introducing and/or facilitating discussions of cultural issues, and to what extent do they report doing so (and how)?

Although Ethno organizers arguably exert the greatest influence over the direction and impact of individual Ethno camps, artistic leaders influence the moment-to-moment Ethno experience of attendees through their *in situ* decision-making and artistic judgements. Not enough is understood about the profiles of artistic leaders (social and musical backgrounds, formal and informal training, etc.). Neither is there a developed understanding of the implicit and explicit operating principles that guide pedagogical action over the course of an Ethno camp. Given JMI/Ethno-World's stated aims and objectives in relation to reviving and preserving folk and traditional musics, it seems imperative to better understand how artistic leaders view such issues (e.g., how much fidelity to "authenticity" is deemed important and how tensions over authenticity are dealt with), and how they regard their role in the negotiation of cultural difference and interculturality, especially with respect to nationalism and colonialism.

## Organizers

- What are the self-reported motives of Ethno camp organizers?
- In what ways do organizers conceptualize and enact their relationships and obligations to their local communities? To what extent do organizers make ethical and pragmatic decisions in response to local conditions and expectations?
- In what ways do organizers conceptualize and enact their obligations to attendees and artistic leaders? To what extent do considerations of race, gender, class, and geopolitical representation factor into decision-making?
- In what ways are local decision-making processes constrained or influenced by JMI and Ethno-World?

Despite the fact that they arguably have the greatest impact on all aspects of an Ethno camp experience, very little is known about the organizers of Ethno-World camps or the economic models of individual camps. Little is also known about the relationships (which one Ethno organizer described in terms of a symbiotic system) between the organizers and the administrative apparatus of JMI and Ethno-World. While it appears there are efforts, through "organizer trainings," to create (or even impose) a degree of standardization upon camps in terms of such things as branding, structure, and the hiring of qualified artistic leaders, it would be interesting to better understand the degree of congruence between the espoused values of JMI/Ethno-World and the enacted values of the organizers.

## JMI/Ethno-World

- In what ways do JMI and Ethno-World conceptualize and enact their obligations to organizers, artistic leaders, and attendees? To what extent do considerations of race, gender, class, and geopolitical representation factor into decision-making?
- To what extent do JMI and Ethno-World make ethical and pragmatic decisions in response to localized conditions and expectations? To what extent do JMI and Ethno-World expect local Ethnos to adhere to top-down guidelines and protocols?
- What are the guiding ethical, philosophical, and pragmatic principles that inform organizer trainings?
- What are the guiding ethical, philosophical, and pragmatic principles that inform Ethnofonik? To what extent does it attempt to be a research-informed or evidence-informed practice? To what extent do race, gender, class, and geopolitical representation factor into an awareness of the importance of access and inclusion in artistic leader training?
- To what extent do “unofficial” Ethnos challenge the identity and viability of Ethno-World?

It is possible that some administrative decision-making may need to be kept behind closed doors. Nevertheless, there is still much to be learned about the perspectives of the official organizations (the INGOs) on the history, current operation, and future plans for Ethno-World, especially in light of the development of artistic leader and organizer trainings. The views of JMI/Ethno-World toward what are known as “unofficial Ethnos,” for example, could shed additional light on the complexities of INGOs operating in the cultural sphere.

## Beyond Ethno-World

- In what ways and to what extent do Ethno-World events impact surrounding communities? How do camp organizers and Ethno-World document and describe these impacts? How do other stakeholders in the local community (organizations, individuals) describe these impacts?
- What indicators (metrics, measures) can be developed, beyond self-report, to assess the impact of Ethno on longer-term career and life choices of attendees, both musical and non-musical?



- In what ways and to what extent are participants actively engaged in traditional music?
- In what ways and to what extent do participants continue to embody the ideals of intercultural harmony espoused by Ethno-World even after “aging out” of the camps?
- In what ways and to what extent has Ethno-World impacted the European and worldwide folk/traditional musical ecosystem? What musical collaborations have grown out of Ethno experiences and how present are they on world and folk/traditional music stages?
- In what ways and to what extent are Ethno-World’s approaches to pedagogy recognized, understood, or regarded by those beyond the Ethno ecosystem?

To date, most Ethno Research has focussed on camp attendees, generating a good deal of knowledge on their perceptions and opinions. Research on the stakeholders in the communities in which individual Ethno camps take place, however, could help shed additional light on local, regional, and global impact. Similarly, the extent to which Ethno has any impact on the wider folk or traditional music scene or the pedagogical world of folk and traditional musics is currently unknown.

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