

# Robert Garfias

## Music as Expressive Culture

### Anthro 138M

## Readings

### Chapter One

#### Part I

### Music in its Cultural Context

#### The Cultural Context of Music

We can understand that music must grow out of its own cultural context. People in each culture create music from what they have learned and from what they have heard. Even when they create something entirely new, it is still based on what existed in previous experience. Music adds to the culture and is an important form and avenue for personal and group expression in it. It is also very much a product of that culture and of all the influences, historical, political, economic as well as aesthetic which have played upon it.

At the same time music has a place in each culture. That is to say that in addition to being an outgrowth of the culture as well as a reflection of it, music has a status and function in each culture. There is a way that people use it, practice it, continue it and think about it which is unique to each culture. If in some society music begins as the formalizing of sounds used during the corralling and hunting of game and it continues to be performed in a symbolic or religious association with hunting, this is one kind of

cultural context for music. If in another society every individual in the community is expected to perform in some way, by singing or dancing whenever the group holds a musical event, then this is another context. In another society, the religious leaders may tell the community that music is not good for them and even so the people go to places where music can be enjoyed and devote themselves deeply and passionately to it. In other societies, most of the people may not engage in the performance of music themselves and will instead pay others to serve this function for them. All of these examples are from real cultures that exist today. The differences between them are differences in the cultures and are differences which have, in turn, had an effect on the music itself.

In some societies music serves as an important accompaniment to ritual and may have little other function. In such cultures, music is performed only when certain ceremonies are performed. In our own culture we have few rituals anymore. There are a few, however. There are still times when it is expected that we will all sing the national anthem. In the United States, at official government functions, whenever the president appears, the old Revolutionary War march, "Hail to the Chief" is still played. In Great Britain "God Save the Queen", is played at the end of every theatrical performance, even for the showing of motion pictures. The military still use, in addition to marches, specific bugle calls which are both symbolic as well as clear messages to the troops. On ships the boatswain's whistle is used to make similar announcements and commands to all on board. We do not often think of these ritualized and symbolic ways that music is still used in our society because, in truth, this kind of ritual and symbolism is not characteristic of our culture anymore.

Music is often associated with ceremony and ritual. In the ancient courts of Asia, music was part of the emblem of the king, emperor or sultan. Certain music when played announced the presence of the ruler and some musics when played indicated that even when the ruler was not present, the

performance had royal authority. Music is often used in religious ceremonies. In Japan one of the important annual religious festivals is the kagura, which means “music of the gods”. In this ceremony, the performance of the music itself is the ceremony, the songs and dances being intended as entertainment for the gods. In Islam music cannot be associated with religion in any way. Even the reciting of the sacred Koran, which we would regard as singing, is never referred to as singing but as a special form of recitation because music of any kind is strictly forbidden in connection with any religious observation.

The tradition of religious music in the West until the Middle Ages was essentially the intoning of the sacred scriptures . Gradually increasingly complex settings of the scriptures were introduced which were intended to serve as expressions of supplication and of thanks but also inspire the congregation towards deeper religious feelings and to make them feel uplifted . Gradually, the music of the church came to be music which pleased the congregation and made them feel welcome. Thus in our own ritual music we have changed from using music to enhance the power of the sacred texts, to using music as a means of enticing people to come to church.

From the usage of music in connection with religious ceremonies , as with any of use of music in the culture, we can draw definitions about music in that culture. In Zimbabwe among the Shona people, music creates an atmosphere which induces the individual to become one with the spirit and thus serves as a connection to the spirit. In Western Europe for hundreds of years, the most skilled composers were employed to compose music for the ritual. This was also true in the Ottoman empire where many of the great composers of the classical music of Turkey were also composers for the sacred dervish ceremonies, the Mevlevi ayin . So we have seen music used in connection with religion as an offering and entertainment to the gods, as in Ancient Japan, as an inducement to union with the spirit as with the Shone of Zimbabwe and as an expression of

devotion and inspiration to the devotees as in the West and in Ottoman Turkey.

Early humans may have made music as a re-creation of the activities of a hunt, or as appeasement to the powerful spirits, or as healing for the sick. But at some point humans began to enjoy the sound of music for its own sake. In doing this and in performing music for the pleasure it gave and for the expression of feelings which it allowed, they had redefined music and its role in their culture.

### The Status of Music in Our Culture

Think about the status of music in our culture. Although many popular musicians make substantial incomes, many parents prefer their children to seek other channels of livelihood. Music is often relegated to a secondary role in our society. It is something which enriches or entertains us but is regarded by many as a frill, something extra, nice, but not necessary. Yet music is all pervasive. In every society known to us and in every period in history it has been there. Its very persistence and ever present existence suggests that it is more than an enrichment and a refinement to our lives. It, like language is a vital element of our very humanness. If humans everywhere appear unable to get along without music, then music is doing something much more than providing entertainment and even meaningful enrichment to this life.

But there is something else about the way music functions in our culture that is noteworthy. The British psychologist of music, John A. Sloboda has noted: .

Through a long social and historical process contemporary Western art culture has become characterized by functional specialism. In the case of music, as with most other art forms, a gulf has emerged between producer and consumer. Adult producers are typically large in number, usually untrained, and often unskilled in most forms of musical production. With the advent of sound recording it has become possible for the various functions to be completely separated in time and space. Consider, for

instance, a Beethoven symphony. A group of performers construct their interpretation in necessary isolation from the composer, and also from the audience for whom the performance is intended (for example, in a recording studio). A member of the audience may then 'receive' the interpretation in social isolation from both composer and performer as a disembodied aural experience. This is particularly true of the domestic listener who may, through use of headphones and darkened room create the impression of being totally and exclusively enfolded by sound. Even at the concert there are usually strong social and geographical factors which separate listeners from performers. Performers and listeners go in and out by separate doors; they do not interact with one another. Any form of audience interruption is usually violently resisted. Such constraints tend to reinforce an 'illusion' which projects the sound of the music away from the realities of its origins in human work, both physical and mental. As in the puppet theatre, the modes of production become veiled in mystery, and we may have no particular wish to venture behind the proscenium arch.

John Sloboda. *Generative Processes in Music. The Psychology of Performance, Improvisation and Composition*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988. p v.

The words and thoughts which we use to describe the concept and ideal of music as "art" are strong in our society. We enjoy music but we remain removed from it. We hear much talk about just how important we believe the art of music to be. Although we generally agree that it is important, in our own culture we tend to think of music as an enrichment - something which makes our lives fuller but something we could manage without if we had to. We enjoy music, but only a few of us actually make it ourselves. This is often the way the subject of music goes whenever there is talk about the need to improve the quality and amount of teaching of music in our society or about the potential expense of better and more fully integrating it into our basic education system. It becomes something desirable but not necessary.

The manner in which music and, in fact, all the arts, are treated in our own society gives little indication of the more important role which it actually plays. In

trying to look at some of the ways in which music is considered by humans, we must look beyond our own cultural definitions, beyond our own preconceptions and assumptions.

## Music in Human Society

Music is the most complete, complex and fully articulated means by which humans communicate with their fellows. It expresses the inner states of one individual to another, or that of a group to another group. While it is being performed, performer and listener share in this expression of feelings. We usually attempt to define what we call music in terms of the way it is manifested in our own particular culture. Much of what we say about music is based on our own knowledge and familiarity with the music of the Western tradition. It is reasonable to be influenced strongly by what we know. However, we need to be mindful that we do not assume universal value systems for music where they do not exist.

In many societies, including our own, those who provide music are regarded as special people. Sometimes by certain segments of the society, they may be regarded with disdain and yet by others, they may be respected, sometimes even held in awe. Regardless many are often well-paid. In our culture, as in some others as well, musicians are paid by us to sound off and express feelings and thoughts which we believe are like ours. We pay them because we like the way they express how we feel. In our society they are often mad visionaries who help us articulate our subtlest feelings and dreams. Our songs may be the most effective means we have of defining ourselves as a group, of refining our emotions and perhaps of helping us to clarify even our thoughts. Certainly music articulates shades of mood and feeling which are impossible for us to describe in words and even the words to the songs have greater meaning for us because of the music in which they are engulfed..



## Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lightnin' Hopkins

In all cultures, music provides an index of minute differences in form and in feelings. To those who are familiar with a tradition, songs which to an outsider may sound all exactly alike, display differences which are meaningful and important to them. Consider the vast genre known as country blues. The differences between the singing and playing style of Mance Lipscomb, Lightning Hopkins and Bill Broonzy are immense if you know their music and yet perhaps indistinguishable if you do not. In the same way, each of the particular Blues of these musicians is also meaningfully different from the others. Even for those people who say they have no knowledge of music, distinguishing differences between one song and another are important enough that they are able to select preferences based on their response to them. Even for those who are not specialists in music, there is a vast index of sensitive responses to differences in music with which we are already familiar. It is quite possible that these differences of form, rhythm and mood may, by enriching our emotional vocabulary, influence the way we talk and even think. In this way, music may play an important role in “civilizing” us

## Communication as a Basic Human Activity

When you think about it, we are virtually always in communication with each other. Even when we drop out, most of us need to stay in touch with the sounds of other humans, in some way, by radio, TV or listening to music. Music is one manifestation of the human's incessant need to communicate with his fellows. Much of his energy is spent in chattering, gesticulating and signaling to other humans, a process with which he has been passionately preoccupied since his first appearance on this planet. We find great comfort in this almost ceaseless and noisy communication with our fellows. Most of us are unwilling to ever stray very far away from it. Once in a while we may hear ourselves declare that we have a deep need to get away "from it all". Yet many usually find some means of taking it with us or seeking out more of it where ever we choose to go.

Music is one of those links with our fellow beings which most of us prefer not to be without. As a system of communication we know it works although we cannot yet be certain of just what it communicates to us. Given the natural tendency for humans to want to keep in contact with each other, of all the forms of contact available to us, there are many who, when given a choice, would prefer to hear another's human's music.

## Music as a Delimiter of Cultural Boundaries

Even in societies in which there is no conscious verbalization supporting the notion that music is art, it may still be very important. There are cultures, for example, which have no word for music, or in which there is a word, but it is used to refer to only some forms and types in the culture but not to others, but for which we, even as outsiders, would have no difficulty calling music. The lack of verbalized system of terms for music, and its aesthetics does not preclude a recognition of its importance to the group. The stratification of values, whether is it articulated or not, forms a pattern which is unique in each society and never precisely reflected in the

same way in any two. Although each may describe it differently it is impossible to find a society anywhere in which music does not play a role which is substantively parallel in importance to the manner in which we describe music as art.

In addition to being a system of communication in and of itself, music in most societies functions as an effective means of defining and delimiting the group and of helping it to maintain a sense of cohesiveness. We may find that in some societies music is treated with the same sense of awe which is usually reserved for powerful and incomprehensible displays of magic. We do not usually think of ourselves as a society which places great trust in the power of magic. Magicians and sorcerers might not seem an appropriate parallel, yet, when we try to fathom the reasons by which the income of any of the top fifty current Rock groups goes well up into the highest 5% income bracket of the country, it does seem that if not the awe of something like magic, something akin to it seems to be at work. Our notions of what we imagine to be primitive man's superstitious awe of his art may not, in fact, be so different from our own. The high ticket prices paid for performances and substantial income from the sale of recordings of the most popular artists is a true indication of the role music actually plays for in our society, in spite of what we may think. The amount of money used in support of popular music groups is parallel in level to the support which many in our society give to religious organizations.

The music we listen to identifies us and explains something about us to others. When you meet someone as you get to know them, the kind of music they listen to may tell you something about them. At times it is through meeting others and learning about the kind of music that they like that we learn about new kinds of music and expand our own collection of favorites. In our fluid and open society, we define our subcultures most clearly with music. Although in more cohesive and less highly stratified societies the same diversity of tastes may not occur, in most industrialized societies there are many options and choices available in the kind of music

one can listen to and in this way these subcultures can develop. Although the music may be sometimes different, this same diversity of options occurs for example, in Japan and in most of the countries of Europe and in some countries in Latin America.

### The Status of Musicians

In our own culture, many young children are given the opportunity to study music. Only a few continue to pursue this as a career or even as an avocation. Instead like many other stratified societies most of the population prefers to pay professionals to provide their music instead of playing it themselves. Thus the purchase of tickets for concerts or the purchase of CDs of music satisfies our need for music without having to learn to play it ourselves. Increasingly in many parts of the world the separation into music consumer and music producer is becoming more common. It may be a factor in increasingly diversified societies to rely on specialists even for music. In Europe during the last three hundred years a well educated person was expected to perform music himself. Music perform at home among even middle class families was something which continued for many years in Europe and even in America until recently this was not an uncommon practice. Nevertheless, even among the nobles of Europe, many of whom were very adept musicians, they also had a great appreciation for the talent of others and employed the best musicians they could obtain in order to enjoy their performance, sometimes to play together with them and even to learn from them.

For about perhaps three or perhaps four hundred years in Eastern Europe a similar practice existed. Throughout much of Eastern Europe, Gypsies had been entering and traveling about. Their reception was mixed at best. In some places they were welcome at other times and in other places they were feared and despised, in part because many thought they were connected to the Turks who were invading Europe at the time. Many times they were singled out merely because they were darker than the Europeans and had black eyes and black hair. The

one area in which the Gypsies were allowed to establish themselves was as musicians. The Eastern Europeans quickly noted that the Gypsies were excellent musicians, learning the local music and performing to the pleasure and satisfaction of all very quickly. This is a case in which an exogamous group entered the society and one branch of it became valued because they fulfilled a function that was valued and important.

In some cultures, professional musicians are less highly regarded than amateurs. This is the case in traditional Iran and in Turkey. In these cultures special individuals who have devoted their time to the pursuit of classical music are regarded as the greatest interpreters and carriers of the Turkish and Persian music traditions. These musicians are people who have other means of employment, generally they are well educated people who have the leisure time to study music for many years. But what is important is that it is these amateur musicians who know more about the old traditions in these countries than do the paid professional musicians and it is they who have preserved it in its present form.

In some cultures musicians are born into families of musicians and outsiders are not permitted to join their ranks. The musicians of the Imperial Household of Japan can trace their lineage back to the musicians who were in service to the court back to the 9th Century and sometimes even earlier. Until the 1950s no one who was not already a member of one of these families would be allowed to join the ranks of the palace musicians, although today this has changed. There are cultures in Africa in which it is believed that only those from families of musicians can ever master music.

## Music and Gender

In most traditional cultures of the world, music was exclusively a profession for men. Often reflecting a system of segregation which was in place in other areas of the society, in some cases, there could be women musicians but then, as in the case of the women's orchestra's of ancient China, there would

be women alone and men would not be permitted to join them. Since the segregation into men's and women's quarters was the practice in much of the ancient old world, the segregation of female musicians from male musicians was an outgrowth of the general practice. Women wanted to have music in their own quarters just as the men did and pressure to allow that gave way to the establishment of women's ensembles and orchestras. In 16 and 17th century Europe, women were encouraged to take up the study of music because it was thought to add refinement to young women. Men did also take up music and it was not uncommon to have them do so and to do so was considered a refinement. In the case of women, however, it was thought to make a young woman of good family more desirable for marriage since the study of music showed a refinement, something which did not hold true in the same manner for men.

In England, France and in Spain on until even the early 20th century the study of music among women was encouraged by polite society. In the Northern Philippines where the playing of the old Spanish harp continues, many women in their youth were encouraged to learn to sing and play the harp, although most did not play again very often after marriage. In Japan the study of the 13th string koto and the 3 string shamisen in a repertoire in which they were both used, were thought appropriate for women whereas other forms of music, even other kinds of shamisen music, were not considered appropriate. It is curious that in this same genre, only blind men could play, whereas in other forms of Japanese music, only men were allowed to learn and to perform. Many of these ideas have slowly and steadily changed, particularly under the purview of changes in government policy. In China, Korea and Japan, many forms of music in which formerly only men were allowed to perform, now have women musicians in their ranks.

One of the areas in which the strictures against women performing music was not enforced was in singing. Throughout history and in many cultures women were noted as singers in situations in which

otherwise music was not considered seemly for them. Nonetheless, in many traditional societies the same restrictions still apply. In some countries of the Muslim Middle East, for example, even recordings of male and female voices together cannot be played on the radio.

### Music in Human Life

Music plays a much more important role in each of our daily lives than we might ordinarily think. We are accustomed to thinking of music, and the arts in general, as valuable to us because of the refinement and depth which they add to our lives. Yet, it is very likely that music has much more to do with our balance and sense of well being than we may have believed possible, affecting and enhancing even the pattern and nuances of meaning in our speech and thoughts.

To the best of our knowledge there has never been a society in which music did not play a vital and integral role. Claude Levi-Strauss in *The Raw and The Cooked* after describing music as a metaphor for myth and then drawing several parallels between them says 'music has its being in me, and I listen to myself through it.'<sup>2</sup> (Claude Levi Strauss. *The Raw and the Cooked*. pg 17.) The use and function of music in all societies known to us suggests that such a contention or something parallel to may exist for all of us. But such a statement logically draws us to consider some of the distinct roles of music and speech.

### Performers and Listeners

In music, communication between composer or performer and listener may come with difficulty as the result of a conscious attempt by the composer or performer to modify the context with each new performance or composition by expecting increased familiarity with the style and requiring deeper concentration for fuller perception of what the creator has attempted. For communication to take place under such conditions there must have been a supporting cultural context in which pre-existing

aesthetic parameters have been defined in order that they either now be followed or redefined. The cultural context will define not only the basic aesthetic system to which changes and redefinitions can be superimposed but must also define the degree of expected deviance which can be tolerated.

While we can always be certain that music has been heard - that is that sound waves have actually reached the ear drums - we cannot ever be certain that the sounds thus heard are having any immediate or postponed affect on the listener. We cannot be certain about how much of the sound has been perceived or how much of the signal might have reached the level of consciousness. The signal can be clearly heard and perceived but the "message" may remain opaque. The nature and degree of distinction between signal and message in music is one of the most perplexing questions and one which remains virtually impossible to satisfactorily unravel.

Although we have no means of measuring is communicated when listening to music, we know that communication takes place. Some folks may go to concerts just to be seen there and because it is a cool thing to do. Most, however, go to hear the music and thus whatever drives this social activity is in the music itself. The external behavior verifies what we cannot yet measure.

If we can observe that individuals respond when exposed to selected kinds of music, one of the conditions we can predict is that no positive response to a music can occur without a preexistent cultural context which defines the experience for the listener. This does not mean that only music from one's own culture can be appreciated. For the experience to be a positive one, the listener must be predisposed to regard what he is hearing as something which falls within the realm of what he defines as music or at the least something he defines a pleasant sound before what he hears can interest him. A listener who comes with a cultural context radically different from the one in which the music was first created would predictably respond negatively. However, much will depend on the

degree of distinctiveness and remoteness of each culture from the other. How far must the listener stretch to make “sense” out of the music he hears. How much does his cultural predisposition to what he has heard even allow him to wish to stretch toward acceptance of it. For any music for which someone declares that he finds in it great significance, some other could be found to declare that it was all just so much noise.

The old 19th century saw about music being a universal language was based narrowly upon the presupposition that the Fine Art Music of Western Europe was, or perhaps could when presented in its ideal form, be indeed, universally accepted as superior to all others. Such aesthetic “imperialism”, sad to say, has many proponents even today and although not limited exclusively to the West, there are, however, many there. To believe that that which what one loves and believes to be beautiful must truly be so is a predictable human predilection and is something which can be found noted in almost any culture group world which has come in contact with another one. Such an attitude is understandable as an example of the manner in which one culture defines out of consideration all that which lies beyond its own parameters. The idea that (Western European) music can be a universal language may be in itself a definition of music as expressed in one culture but it does nothing at all to define the relationship of music to culture in the larger sense.

### Musical Values as Culturally Defined

Rationally, it seems clear that value and meaning, whatever we decide that that may mean, must be defined within the parameters of the culture about which we are speaking. Whatever inherent meaning may be attributed to a particular music composition or performance is defined by and thus can only be examined within the context of that culture. Is there anything inherently meaningful or great about Mozart’s Symphony No. 40, K. 550 which makes it great in and of itself? Western musicians would argue that this must be so. But that greatness, must

be defined as great by the tenets of the tradition of the period in which it was composed. Mozart was a product of his time and created music within the context of his own unique experiences and understanding. We accept the greatness of the symphony because we are a part of that tradition subscribe to the cultural tenets of the 18th century, as we now understand them and through all of the additional layers of value and experience which have been superimposed on it since then.

Can there be a reasonable basis by which this particular symphony of Mozart can be in some absolute way a “better” example of music, say, than the composition Senshuraku of the Japanese Court repertoire, or than the Irak Ayin composed by Dede Efendi of the classical Turkish Mevlevi repertory. Each of these works is considered great in the context of the aesthetics of the particular time and place in which it was created and by those who adhere to those traditions, even today. Each continues to be considered great by many because the cultural context supporting those aesthetics has been transmitted and has survived. Each of these particular compositions is also considered, within the context of the culture, to be better, more successful, more beautiful, whatever value definition might be applied, than many others in the same tradition. But what happens when we try to compare then across cultures. A hard adherence to cultural relativism would mean that these works that are considered to be masterpieces in their own cultural context can have no meaning outside that cultural context and in another in which the aesthetic tradition is different . Do we believe that what is beautiful is the result of a culture which defines it so or do we believe that some things are naturally and innately more beautiful than others.

At this point it is important to clarify that this belaboring of the concept of a basic cultural relativism is justified and indeed necessary because it is possible to think of this in both ways. A masterpiece by a composer like Mozart, for example, is both something which is a great musical expression in and of itself and also is defined only by

the principles of that culture. The difference hinges on whether one focuses on the idea that what is beautiful is the result of a culture which defines it so or whether we focus on the observation that some things are naturally and innately more beautiful than others. But can we really have it both ways?

There are factors, such as a high level of congruence and cohesiveness in the form and structure of certain compositions, or even in the works of certain musicians and composers over others which help to explain why they are more highly regarded in their own musical culture than others. In many musical traditions there are some efforts which because of care, skill and sometimes chance seem to work better and are more lasting than others. Since we find this to be the case in many isolated cultures of the world then it might follow that at some level it should be possible to appreciate values across the barriers of different cultures. Culture as a determinant of perception and thus a definer of the parameters of values is, however, so strong a factor that it is only with great effort and a willingness to be retrained that this sort of traversal can ever take place. Excellence where it is a value to be sought after in the culture is something which, in these cultures is recognized and acclaimed. Hitting it on mark when we enter from outside the culture can possibly occur when we have had the opportunity and desire to absorb some of the elements of that culture, or when valued elements in two cultures are found to overlap. Although this seems to be a definite possibility from time to time, there is always the greater danger that we are forcing our own value system on a culture where it is not appropriate to the culture. Ideally, we should not simply accept that Mozart or Shakespeare are great examples of our culture. We should strive to understand for ourselves what this greatness that so many have accepted might be.

It may be difficult for some to think of those works of music which they consider great to have been the result of collective cultural processes rather than as simply great in and of themselves. Yet the ability to appreciate the greatness of these works comes

about through gradual inculcation and training and that usually considerable training was also required for the composer to be able reach a level of skill as well as experience and judgment which enabled him to create the work. Both of these processes are part of the manner in which cultural traditions are transmitted and neither the composer nor the listener could have existed without them. However, to recognize that Mozart was a product as well as a reaction to an age is not to say that it was inevitable that the 18th century should have produced him or a genius like him. He was a unique individual, a result of a combination of unique individual abilities and experiences borne out of the context of the times in which he lived. The cultural tradition and the period set the context through which each individual must then find his own way.

Just as the aggregate of experiences in our own culture tends to define what we tolerate as predictable and acceptable, it also defines the limits of surprise and deviance we can assimilate. The delicate balance between the comfortable acceptance of the familiar and periodic incursion into new territory is differently defined by each individual. How long each of us will remain with the familiar before moving away or dropping off to sleep is a very personal matter and the need to vary one's fare may in itself vary considerably between one person and another and even from one point in time to another for any one individual.

One can imagine, for example, immersing himself deeply into the world of the Beethoven Op. 59 middle period String Quartets so thoroughly and for such a long period of time that listening to Op. 131 could come as great but perhaps startlingly refreshing change. The degree to which then listening to the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, or perhaps even Hausa gurumi music from Nigeria, would affect the same listener, and whether that response would be one of rejection or welcome change, might depend on a great number of factors but would certainly be affected both by the length of time spent with the Op. 59, then exclusivity with which those works were heard, as well as the degree

of previous familiarity with either Stockhausen or Hausa music.

The degree of previous exposure has everything to do with how that particular composition, form or type of music is received. The significant variable is the intensity and duration of any previous familiarity. It is most likely the nature and degree of this prior exposure which defines for each of us the boundaries of stylistic familiarity beyond which that which is new and different will be perceived as related or new and thus, by extension, more readily accepted or rejected.

### Balancing the Familiar with the New

The potential for acceptance or rejection of music heard is bound to a host of other factors, physical and psychological and will affect concentration, receptivity and attitude. These, in turn, have a controlling effect on the listener and as such do much toward predisposing him in one direction or another. That a newly heard music might be defined as falling within the parameters of what should be acceptable does not guarantee that it will be accepted. It is also possible to have a situation in which all conditions of receptivity, concentration and attitude are at the optimum levels, but in which cultural conditioning will mitigate against the listener's acceptance of what he is hearing. A group of people looking forward to an evening performance of Heavy Metal would not likely be receptive if in its place there were to be an evening of string quartet music, or vice-versa.

Considerable economic pressure is exerted on us during the routine of our daily lives in order to make us aware that the ideal of modern, and especially, urban humans should be constant consumption of whatever is new. The focus is on seeking variety and regarding this variety as a necessary and almost vital element in our lives. We are continually besieged with advice to seek change and to replace the old and familiar with the new and one hopes, the improved. Variety has become an important element in many of the world's societies but it may not be, in fact, as necessary as it has been presented to us.

There is an old Turkish saying which goes, “the bear knows two hundred songs, all of them about honey”, a jibe at both the natural tendency to pursue the familiar and the foolishness of the dogged pursuit of the familiar. Yet on the other hand, the Shona people of Zimbabwe have a saying which goes, “If a man eats the same food every day, he knows what it was that killed him.” What is too rich and varied a diet for one may be monotonous to another, yet sanity would suggest a balance between stability and a moderate degree of variation. But there can be no agreement on what constitutes stability or variety.

If one enters deeply into the formal and structural world of the Beethoven Op. 59 Quartets, one finds almost endless variety and depth. The more one listens, the more subtle treasures one can discover. There are numerous such repertoires and have been across time and around the world which have these same qualities to offer increasing fascination the deeper one delves. The Repertoire of the Imperial Court Musicians of Japan, for example, consists of over one hundred different compositions. These compositions are all set in a very similar formal texture and performance style, so similar, in fact, that to most inexperienced listeners it is almost impossible to detect the difference between one composition and another. Yet if one has the patience to listen closely and carefully and to become thoroughly familiar with the basic style of the music so much that he can begin to distinguish the subtleties of form and melodic style of each piece, then gradually each composition begins to reveal its own clear character and unique subtleties.

This was neatly expressed by Colin McPhee in his book, *A House in Bali*, when he said that the individual compositions of the Gamelan music of Bali were like leaves on a tree. All are alike and yet no two are identical. 4 ( Colin McPhee, *A House In Bali*. New York: John Day, 1946. p.117.) Clearly, to appreciate the intended purpose of either Balinese Gamelan music, the Imperial Court Music of Japan, or the middle period Beethoven quartets, a more highly powered perceptual microscope will increase the level of awareness which the listener can bring

to the task. Without it or the willingness to try to see more closely the entire body will seem gray and uniform. Repeated listening to a music will heighten familiarity and thus better allow the perception of nuances and of multiple layers of structure. This familiarity also constitutes a framework against which new musical experiences can be measured.

We perceive the contours and characteristic elements of a musical style only as the result of concentrated and focused listening, but it is not always necessary that positive and conscious effort at gaining familiarity be an absolute requirement. Each of us carries about in his consciousness his own musical culture, those musical structures, experiences and associations which together constitute for each of us a unique and inimitable pattern of musical preferences. No two such individual patterns of music preference can be found identical any more than could two sets of fingerprints or voiceprint patterns. And yet, if we could each examine our own particular musical culture, we might be very surprised to learn what manner of layers and mazes of sound structures we are carrying about with us in our heads throughout the days and years of our lives which wait only for a certain stimulus to be again recalled into our consciousness. Our individual music culture is certainly more complex and is larger than we usually imagine it to be.

### Likes and Dislikes as a Part of Culture Pattern

Our own pattern of personal preferences constitutes a personal value system. It then follows that such a system must contain referents from which new experiences can be tested. We must carry referents around which let us know when something takes us too far from our familiar ground and referents which help us identify sound structures for which we have negative associations. We all have in our minds, the sound image of musics which we do not enjoy, which bore us, which may make us laugh, and perhaps even a few about which we can say with genuine relish that we hate!

A rather peculiar situation arises when we recall

associations with extra-musical experiences which distress us so much that we feel animosity or even violence towards that music. Although, in reality, the music is only an inanimate pattern of consciously controlled vibrating sound waves, we can react to some of these patterns very strongly, because they represent a set of feelings which we understand to be communicated and these we wish to reject. Worse yet, we may even begin to feel animosity towards those individuals responsible for the creation of this music.

In order to have an effective value system such a system must contain both negative as well as positive referents. Although the development of negative referents in our individual musical cultures may be a result of the regularly occurring changes in our patterns of preference - excessive familiarity may bring us to a point of disliking some musics which earlier had appealed to us - some negative referents in our personal value systems must have always been perceived negatively. Such negatively perceived musics were those which, even at first hearing, were perceived as falling outside our already well established value system.

Many such referent may have come about as the result of negative extra-musical associations remembered in connection with the particular context under which one last heard such music. For example, there are many who abhor the musical language and style employed by MUZAK, the producers of "canned music". This is a commercially packaged and transmitted form of background music used in different public places, such as supermarkets, or some larger stores and offices. MUZAK is produced in order to create a "pleasant" sound in the background. The melodies are distinguishable, but generally with few distinguishing performance qualities. The sound blends into the background in order that the listeners do not have to concentrate on listening to it so that they can do whatever it is they have entered those premises to do. Some may find MUZAK unacceptable because it falls beyond their own limits of a good musical performance. Yet for others, recalling the sound of

MUZAK playing softly in the background of their dentist's waiting room may be quite enough for them to decide that, given a choice, they would prefer never to listen to this music in any context. Since the pattern of development taken in each individual's own musical value system must be a reflection of, and a response to, all of his musical experiences, this pattern, to the degree that it can be made perceivable to any other, often appears illogical or unusual to anyone else.

Culture shock is something which is experienced when we find ourselves immersed in a new cultural environment and it is the sense of loss and confusion that the individual feels when finding himself or herself in a place where everything is different. We usually think of culture shock as occurring when one travels to a distant culture where a different language is spoken. However, some degree of culture shock occurs even for Americans who spend time in Great Britain or in Australia for example. Everything is familiar and the language is understandable, but even the language is different enough that after a time a feeling of discomfort or confusion and disorientation takes place. Something like this can occur when we find ourselves exposed to or immersed in musics with which we are unfamiliar. Sufficient exposure will get us past the shock and we may never be conscious of having experienced a sense of disorientation. However, gradually exposure to new and different kinds of music may in some way also change what we feel about musics that we had enjoyed previously, which is one of the classic ways in which culture shock often works. We sense it more keenly upon our return to that environment which we assumed was static and familiar.

Cultural differences are not always the obvious ones. There is a great cultural difference between having a musician up on the stage and separated from the audience from the performing musicians being mixed in and scattered within the group. There is a difference in the culture when musicians are not given a special name but are members of the group who perform when it is required. There is a

difference when musicians are paid professionals, when they come only from certain hereditary families and when musicians are amateurs who devote the free time to playing music and these are different from cultures in which everyone in the group is expected to participate in the performance.

Think about how different it is for a Western classical musician to practice for years on his instrument until he is good enough to join an orchestra and even then when there is a difficult composition to play, taking the music home and practicing his part alone. An African drummer would never imagine taking his part and practicing it alone without the other instruments. What has to be mastered is getting the one part together with all the others and the idea of doing it alone simply doesn't fit the culture. Think about the traditional audience for Indian classical music. Here, the audience understands that it has a responsibility to understand and follow the technical intricacies of the performance. Everyone in the audience may not be able to do this, but it is the ideal for which most Indian concertgoers strive, something very different from going and simply enjoying the music.

### Shared Culture and Agreement

Individuals who live in the same cultural context will share many more common or similar referents and thus find themselves in frequent agreement on a great many musical experiences. These shared values are what we consider to be our common cultural heritage. During the past 50 years an intensification of the educational patterns and cultural experiences similar to those of the West have made the number of shared personal cultural values of many people in Japan and Korea, and more recently China, similar to our own. Japanese and Koreans of today have developed a love for Mozart and Beethoven which is both sincere and profound in spite of the fact that it is only relatively recent in its development there. With the gradual Westernization which has exerted a growing influence in scientific and technological education in those countries for over one hundred years now,

that Western music should also have been introduced should come as no great surprise. Nonetheless there are vigorous segments in each of these societies which remain loyal to their older traditions and many individuals in those societies who do not regard the adoption of the new musical culture as an unquestionably superior choice.

While it seems that in every culture there is a recognition that certain musical performances or compositions seem to “work” better than others and that in many cultures there is some value placed on the degree of congruence which is manifested in certain works, these values and the judgments which result from them, are defined entirely within the context of each culture. Concentrated effort may allow us to gain insight into and appreciation of the values manifested in the musics from other cultures, even some which are culturally very removed from our own. Yet, there is nothing inherently better, more valuable, in the sound structures we refer to as Beethoven’s Op. 59 Quartets than there is in the music of Beethoven’s South Indian contemporary, Thyagaraja, or in the Navaho Yeibeichai “night” songs. Each has developed out of the particular cultural and historical context of the society in which it developed and was guided and molded by the common perceptions held by the members of that group. That set of shared personal value systems held by each individual in the group created in each culture a support system which patterned the development of the style, defined its role and thus also pointed out the path which even the most original of its innovators were by default required to follow.

### Cultural Differences and Cultural Change

We tend to think of traditions in terms of nations. The United States is a relatively young society with only a little more than two hundred years as a political entity. Great Britain is much older and China can trace its civilization back for several thousand years. However, if we think of it in another way, within the United States, although it is a relatively new country, the individuals that make it up have

traditions which go back to the British Isles, to other parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and what is now Latin America and thus, in fact, represent cultural traditions, learning traditions, which go back much further than those of the particular country in which they live. All human societies have had an equal period of development on this planet and each have their own antecedents. When societies develop over long periods of time in isolation from each other, the differences between them become so immense as to be perceived as unfathomable. All around we see unmistakable signs of rapid technological development. However, we need to remember that because our technology becomes more refined, our culture does not, of itself, get better.

Differences in the rate of technological development are not something which can be reflected in the quality of the arts of a society. Mozart was not a better composer than J. S. Bach because he lived later. Nor would Mozart have been a better composer had he had the opportunity to use modern computer technology for his music. Mozart was great in his own time and the appreciation of his work lived on after his death. In the same way composers like Tan Sen of Indian and Lotring of Bali have transcended their own time in their own culture and are valued even today. Each music is subject to and works within the parameters set by its own time and culture. Each composer/musician works to express himself from the starting point which has been provided by his past. Each sets out to do what he believes he decides to do, but which is already defined for him by what preceded him. On each other's turf, both Mozart and Tan Sen might have a difficult time reaching each other's audiences. It is perhaps possible that some few might have been able to bridge the gap, but for most, the cultural and historical distance would be too great.

Cultural relativism - Cultural development

Is cultural relativism, viewing each culture on the basis of its own value system, a good thing to do? Are there cultural practices which are simply not good by virtue of some absolute standard or do we

allow each to be judged on its own. In matters of the arts, it is important to note that these systems arising as they do out of historical traditions are basically arbitrary. Our very strong opinions about what is good and beautiful are based on what we are already accustomed to. Probably many people today are accustomed to accepting some concept of cultural relativism as logical and natural. We understand that different people have different ways of doing things and that these people also tend to prefer things other than what we may prefer for ourselves. We must remember that culture is the arbitrary result of all those historical, political, and economic factors which have played upon it. We need to remind ourselves that the use of advanced technology in the service of the arts in the West can serve as no indication that the arts themselves have advanced. Technological changes in the arts are a natural reflection of those options which are currently available within the society. Neither does this detract from the value of the music of the Western world. India also has a great music tradition, one that has developed in ways significantly different from those of the West. It has evolved without, until very recently, the technological developments of the West. In spite of this, Indian music incorporates certain musical practices which are so complex that they are virtually irreplicable in the Western world.

### Comparisons Across Cultures

The theory and practice of rhythm in India, as well as the scope of melodic variation made possible by the ability to conceptualize and work with much finer interval divisions than those used in Western music have made this music quite different from that of the West. It is pointless, however, to think that the Western practice of playing the drums has remained primitive because they are still beaten brutally with sticks because the West has not yet discovered the higher degree of rhythmic control and touch achieved by playing with the bare hands and fingers. Likewise, it would be foolish to say that Indian music remains primitive because it has not yet developed the Western usage of harmony. These both, the

playing of drums with the fingers, and the development of harmony are the result of nurtured paths in each of these cultures. The other cultures are unlikely to discover something they are not looking for.

There are many in Europe and America who enjoy the classical music of India, but how many can distinguish between the performance of an Ali Akbar Khan, a Ravi Shankar, or a Villayat Khan and other lesser known musicians, or even between what each of these musicians might regard as their good and outstanding performances? In India, on the other hand, there are many who exposed primarily to Indian music, express dismay and pained confusion at listening to Western art music. To many of them the music seems to wander up and down aimlessly and without meaning. This sentiment can be heard not only from India, but from many parts of the world in which exposure to Western traditions has been limited. Colin McPhee recounts that a Balinese musician once said, "Your music sounds like a child crying without knowing what it is crying about." <sup>1</sup>

The very rapid pace at which modern technology has aided in the development of communication systems is making it extremely difficult to find societies which are culturally isolated from each other any longer. Still and in spite of the proximity into which modern media has placed us, vast gaps in cultural communication exist even within any one society. The desire to learn and imitate is strong. Increased contact between societies now made possible with increased technology means that borrowing and learning become increasingly possible. The prestige associated with the technological growth of the West have added incentive to those who would emulate the culture of the West.

### Cultural Stratification and Cultural Diversity

There are cultures in which the entire community consists of one unified group. All of the members of the group do essentially the same work as the others and most of the work is shared by many members of the community working together. In such communal societies people are accustomed to

close cooperation and sharing. The Bushmen of Southwest Africa, the Pygmies of Central Africa and many of the Hill peoples of South East Asia and the Philippines live in communities like this. Among the Tinguian people of Northern Luzon in the Philippines their music reflects this social structure. There are basically two kinds of music, singing, either solo or in groups, and dance music, which is provided by an ensemble of gongs. There are some other instrumental musics, such as the bamboo tube zither, kolibit, which also plays the dance music in imitation of the gongs. The technique for playing the gongs requires that each player hold a single gong. Each gong has a different pitch or tone and each plays a special pattern. There are five or six such gong players and each has his own pattern that he or she plays and on which slight variations can be imposed. The sound of the music when heard blends all of the individual gong patterns into one single pattern. In this way the communal structure of the society is reflected in the way the music is organized.



Gong Players in Abra, Northern Luzon



### Kulintang player from Maguindanao, Southern Philippines

Further South in the Philippines, among the Muslims of the Sulu Islands, they also play the gongs, but here we have a more highly stratified society with special roles for Sultans, Immams, or holy men and soldiers. In these cultures the music is also more complex and stratified. Instead of a set of single gongs, here we have one set of gongs to play the melody, drums to play and ornament the rhythm, larger gongs to punctuate the phrase patterns and a smaller gong to keep the basic beat. The group is divided up into separate discrete but complimentary functions just as the society itself have different unique and interdependent strata. Most of the cultures with which we come into contact are stratified cultures and this social stratification is reflected in their music. Societies like those of Western Europe had music for the upper classes which was used at private functions like dances and concerts. They also had civic music, like the bands that announced the hours from the city towers. There was also the popular music of the city dwellers and the folk music of the countryside. In addition there was music especially dedicated to religious ceremonies and observations. Like those cultures of Europe, traditional Japan, Korea and China, for

example had ceremonial and court music, rarely if ever seen by the common people, classical chamber music for the upper classes, theater music which had its own semi cultured following and then urban and rural folk music as well as the special music for religious ceremonies and village festivals.

In addition to social stratification, it is also possible to have several different cultures within the borders or boundaries of a single large culture. In the United States today there exist several distinct and virtually unconnected musical cultures. The European Classical music tradition has within it several areas which can certainly be regarded as sub-cultures; orchestral music, opera, chamber music, the “avant-garde”, electronic and computer music, the “minimalists”. But these interest groups are all generally on speaking terms with each other. There are the larger divisions between popular music, for example and religious music and the very sharp divisions within each of those in terms of Black American and White American popular and religious music. Furthermore there are the many cultures of folk and ethnic musics in American and the separate popular music traditions, like for example, Country-Western and modern Hawaiian popular music, salsa and Norteño music. These are all related by virtue of the cultural contact which comes about from being within a single political boundary. Many also share the use of the same recording technology, for one. Still, the distinctions between these musical cultures are so often vast that their musics are uninteresting and sometimes unfathomable to each other.

This kind of cultural diversity is quite common and exists in many cultures. In Turkey, for example, even today there flourishes a strong Gypsy sub-culture as well as large numbers of Armenian, Greeks and Jews, all of whom maintain their own cultural traditions while being a part of the larger Turkish cultural ambience. There are large ethnic Chinese groups in Indonesia which maintain their culture and identity there. There is the clear and strong French cultural presence in Canada and like this there are numerous examples. Many national

boundaries have been drawn up only in relatively recent times. As a result many nations contain within their national border numerous diverse peoples. If we look closely at Europe we see vestiges of old cultural and linguistic ties, such as the Flemish and French in Belgium, the Dutch and Frisians in Holland, the French, Italian and German speakers in Switzerland, the German and French cultural influences in Alsace-Lorraine. In Eastern Europe there are pockets of cultural Hungarians, Saxons, Swabians and Slavs living in Romania just as there are cultural and linguistic Romanians in Bulgaria and in Yugoslavia. In the United States we cannot so clearly notice the Canadian culture which spills across the border, however in both the Eastern and Mid-Western US there are clear traces of old French Canadian, Arcadian and Metis culture that trace back to Canada. This serves to illustrate that national borders tend to disguise the historical cultural divisions that existed before they were drawn up and to hide the waves of migration that continue afterwards.

In large countries there is also the possibility of finding regional diversity. Such regional diversity is not so strong in the United States any longer because of the effective media system we have in place and the natural level off that occurs with regular and continued contact. Still, the existence of Hawaiian music in the US is one strong example of a regional form which survives. Country Western when it was associated as the popular music of the South Western states was another, but one which has now grown to popularity throughout the nation and now functions more as a reflection of social stratification rather than regional. Countries in which communication between regions continued to be difficult also reflect this kind of regional diversity. Mexico, for example, has strong music traditions from the Northern regions of the country, from the Coastal region of Veracruz, from the Inland region of Veracruz, from Michoacan and Jalisco from Oaxaca, Tabasco and Chiapas and from Yucatan, to name only the most prominent and well known regional styles. This does not include all of the traditions of the indigenous Mexicans, whose music, might like in

the US be better considered an example of cultural diversity, since they represent separate ethnic as well as cultural traditions.

Culture not only delimits the boundaries within which we define music as music, and thereby, relegate everything else to the category of non-music, or noise, but also affects and controls the manner in which we perceive music once we have accepted it as such, within what limits we can accept what is new, and where we begin to reject other musics as falling too far outside these boundaries. Our culture delineates how we think about music, how we think in music and even how we decide who also thinks in and about music in ways which are similar to our own. We are often drawn to find parallels between music and language and in the late 19th Century and on into this century, many thought of music as that one language which transcended the problems of comprehensibility posed by all spoken languages. With the new global popularity of Rock related musical forms, it may be possible that we are coming close to the old 19th century idea of music as a global system of communication.

So different are the contexts which each individual brings to the act of listening to music that it seems certain even when two people from the same culture hear a piece of music together that they cannot be receiving the same message from it. The idea that any music can communicate the same meaning across cultural lines becomes impossible to defend, even though it seems certain that some sort of message does manage to be communicated across certain, particularly close, cultural barriers. Even within the United States, itself, one does not find the same audiences enjoying Rap, Jazz, Country Western, Soul, Gospel and Classical music. The spheres of musical preference are sharply divided even within our own borders.

### Using Music to talk about and Describe Music

Until recently, it was most unusual for a music performance to quote another kind of music in the midst of the performance in another style. There are a few rare examples of this and gradually as

awareness of other cultures increases, so does this kind of cross cultural quotation. Nonetheless, the practice has remained something noteworthy when it appears and is not used very often.

Mozart in his time was anxious to make wind band versions of his operas in order to sell them quickly before some one else arranged them before him. These popular versions served as another means of reaching a broader audience. In 19th century Europe and America it was a common practice to transcribe operas or works for large concert orchestra, for the piano or for some other medium, in order that the music could be enjoyed by more people than only those who could attend concerts. With today's easy access to recordings of virtually every kind of music, the need for transcriptions as a means of making music more widely available disappears. Instead, we find that transcriptions are used when one musician wishes to borrow from another and to make something of his own of it and something different from the original. Even so, such adaptations rarely cross over great cultural distances.

Collective attitudes about such borrowings change as well. When Georg Philip Telemann, was musician to the Elector of Silesia, he decided to appropriate the fascinating music of the Polish bagpipers he heard at court. He added adagio movements before and after the pipers tunes and called them "Polish sonatas". But in his day it was not at all considered plagiarism.



### Georg Philip Telemann

In the late 19th century it became an increasingly frequent practice, first by the Russians beginning with Glinka and then by the French, to borrow exotic elements first from the music of Spain and to compose music in this foreign style. By the early 20th century this practice of borrowing exotic musical elements had begun reaching across great cultural distances. We can have no idea today how successful Telemann may have been in his Polish experiments because the originals have long disappeared, although what survives in Telemann's music does bear a fascinating resemblance to the precious little Polish bagpipe music which survives today. But then from the High Baroque to the roots of European folk music was not such a great cultural leap.

Although the music of Spain was an exotic element in the culture of Western Europe, nonetheless, the development of Spanish music managed to remain intelligibly close enough to the music of the rest of Europe to allow this borrowing to succeed. The incorporation of more culturally distant musics, beginning with Gustav Mahler's use of pentatonic

scales to suggest Chinese music in *Das Lied von der Erde* and on through the many adaptations of Asian music in particular in the 20th century suggests that the borrowings occurred with too little understanding of the principles which guided in the creation of the original musics. In fact, however, these were not intended to duplicate the musics of the rest of the world but rather to provide new colors by which to enrich the current tradition. Telemann could not improve on the Polish bagpipers short of playing the music on the bagpipe himself. In the process of attempting to incorporate new elements into the music for the enjoyment of his own audiences, what he and the others did was to create something new based on what must be regarded, from the cultural perspective of the originating culture, as an incomplete understanding of what they were borrowing.

Although this practice is something which occurs with more frequency in the West, it has also occurred in other places as well. The ancient orchestras of the Chinese courts regularly included stylized performances of regional folk music and of the music of the various nations which they regarded as under their sway. This practice continued in the courts of Korea and Japan. In 17th and 18th Century Japan although not with great frequency, in the koto music tradition, elements which imitated the style of other music current at the time, as well as of the court music were incorporated into some compositions. In the Japanese Kabuki theater, entire sections of the performance would be done in the music of other Japanese styles, even to having the musicians from those particular traditions right on the stage for the performance.

The rapidity of change depends on the intensity of overall cultural activity. Fifty years ago when Leopold Stokowski began to present his adaptations of the music of J. S. Bach, the concert going public in America was not yet very familiar with much of this music. To hear the music of Bach played by a large 20th Century orchestra was not considered unusual by many, and likewise Bach played on the

piano was a much more frequently encountered medium of performance than the harpsichord. In that context, the music of Bach was somewhat more remote from the population than it is today and therefore, re-orchestrated versions of this music for modern orchestra were greeted as quite logical and appropriate. Even a very few years later when some began to question the validity of such experiments, it was often replied that, "If Bach were alive today he would have written for the large orchestra, piano, etc.", an answer that was usually intended to settle the question then and there.

From today's vantage point the change in sophistication of concert goes in the past 50 years seems remarkable. Yet the pace of change in cultural attitudes is increasing ever more rapidly as the systems of communication improve in efficiency. During the mid 1970s it came as something of a shock to learn that a new generation was growing up in America and Europe that looked upon the Beatles as "old, dumb stuff". By the late 1970s the Beatles had become well established nostalgia and distinct changes in popular music trends were becoming clearly visible every three to four years, depending on how sharply one chooses to define it. Meanwhile there are many who, either because of deliberate choice or by simple virtue of having been born too long before the period of the Beatles and the intense changes which that development brought about in our popular culture, find it difficult to find their way about in that music. Their culture within the larger culture does not provide for the detailed imagery and verbal descriptive mechanisms to enable them to perceive the minute changes in style which are taking place in popular music even within any single year.

But culture, as a reflection of man's incessant need to communicate with his fellows, must, of necessity, be changing incessantly as well. When communication takes place, then some response must follow and from this response changes can then occur. We perceive cultures further away from us as more static to a degree that it is too simple just to say that cultures other than one's own are

static and unchanging. Certain societies emphasize the age of their music traditions, but these traditions are also constantly changing. They are like matrices by which changes are guided and molded, but so long as communication takes place between people with different experiences, that is, any two people, changes inevitably take place.

At the same time it is clear that the rate of change in a culture can vary greatly in proportion to the degree of communication which takes place. After a long period of time during which the classical music of Western Europe could only be heard by those fortunate enough to be able to attend concerts, or who themselves had studied the music, radio was introduced followed by the production and distribution of records. The pace and scope by which the music was disseminated then increased greatly. Today there is a mass distribution system for making available the same well financed records available all over the world as well as a system for providing broadcasts televised globally by satellite. Audiences at live concerts hear the music transmitted to them from the performers at the speed of sound. Our rapid system of dissemination is almost near to making it possible to cover the globe at the speed of sound.