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Ethnomusicology as the Study of People Making Music

Etnomuzikologija kot preučevanje ljudi, ki ustvarjajo glasbo

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IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

V dotičnem eseju je etnomuzikologija definirana kot preučevanje ljudi, ki ustvarjajo glasbo. Ljudje ustvarjajo glasove, ki jih prepoznamo kot glasbo, in ljudje prav tako iz »glasbe« ustvarijo področje kulture. Esej so-postavlja idejo glasbe kot kontingentne kulturne kategorije s preteklimi znanstvenimi definicijami, ki so glasbo esencialno razlagale kot objekt.

This essay defines ethnomusicology as the study of people making music. People make sounds that are recognized as music, and people also make "music" into a cultural domain. The essay contrasts this idea of music as a contingent cultural category with earlier scientific definitions that essentialized music as an object.

Author's note: Written in 1988, this paper was read on April 22, 1989 before the annual conference of the Northeast Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology, which took place in Hartford, Connecticut, USA. Never before published, it was my first public iteration of this definition of the field which subsequently gained assent among my colleagues and may be found, among other places, in Worlds of Music and in the Wikipedia entry for ethnomusicology. The paper may therefore be of some historical interest. Teaching a doctoral seminar in the history of ethnomusicological thought, I was troubled by the inadequacy of the reading assignments that were available. The definitions of ethnomusicology, and descriptions of its history, then prevalent in the literature in

the field, did not describe the work that was being done by a younger generation of ethnomusicologists, those of us who had come of age in the 1960s and had become professionals in the field in the 1970s. I decided that the “humanizing ethnomusicology” that Gourlay had called for (Gourlay 1982) had in fact occurred, at least in the U.S., and that the work of that younger generation could be better understood by situating the field within the contemporary currents of post-structuralism and critical theory. But no one in my generation was as yet addressing those issues directly. And so I attempted to theorize a constructivist reorientation of ethnomusicology, from studying music as an essentialized scientific object to studying music instead as a culturally contingent category, in which the acts that make music (as meaningful sounds, and as a cultural domain) are primary. I had not yet articulated the connections between it and what in the doctoral seminar I taught on field research I was calling “the new fieldwork” (see Barz and Cooley 2008 [1997]), nor had I yet come to the conclusion that ethnomusicology proper began in the 1950s, as an anthropological venture intended by its founders to be significantly different from the comparative musicology that had preceded it.

The few within the discipline of ethnomusicology who have written its history date its beginnings to the 1880s and mark it not by any expansion of interest beyond the borders of Western art music but by the rise of scientific methodology in the study of music. Indeed, the question that until the 1970s almost single-handedly constructed the field of ethnomusicology was the following: how can the music of the world’s peoples be studied scientifically? For all their differences, Hornbostel, Bartók, Brăiloiu, Sachs, Herzog, Hood, Seeger, Lomax, and Merriam—I have purposely left out McAllester—did not stray from the idea that ethnomusicology was the scientific study of world music. In the 1970s a revolution that occurred in sociocultural anthropology—itself centered in ethnography and influenced by literary and philosophical theory, particularly from France and Germany, and bristling with ominous-sounding words like phenomenology and hermeneutics—began to be felt in ethnomusicology and threw up a great challenge. This challenge was not the call to study music in its cultural context; that gauntlet had been thrown down by McAllester and Merriam years earlier. Music in its cultural context could be studied scientifically; this was Merriam’s great task, and it remains one of Lomax’s. Instead, the challenge was directed to the very conception of music itself. Henceforth music was no longer to be construed as like an object to be analyzed, as science would dictate; instead, music was to be understood as like a text to be interpreted, as the humanities would do. Beyond that, music was also to be understood as praxis, that is, as a productive activity in the social world with an economic basis and political implications. When I devised some themes for the 1989 Society for Ethnomusicology Conference I summarized this challenge as “Analysis vs. Interpretation and Beyond.” Because I am forbidden to read a paper at this conference for which I am program chair, for obvious reasons of conflict of interest, I have decided to try to present my thoughts at this regional chapter meeting. I must say that they remain at a preliminary stage, and I that expect to be writing about them for some time. For that reason I am grateful in advance for the response and suggestions you will surely give, and humbled by all this attention

to what is still somewhat inchoate. I must also acknowledge help from the students in my Brown seminar in the History of Ethnomusicological Thought, particularly Franziska von Rosen, and from my colleagues Carol Babiracki and David Josephson, although they are not, of course, to be held accountable for any of the formulations expressed here. I would also like to thank Alan Bern, whose thinking along these lines has always proved inspirational to me.

In this presentation I want to lead up to the proposition that it would be worthwhile to conceive of the field of ethnomusicology as “the study of people making music,” and to define “making” in two ways: (1) making the sounds that peoples call music, and (2) making or constructing the cultural domain that leads peoples to call those sounds music and to experience them both subjectively and objectively in the world. This notion of “making” has, of course, a great deal in common with the idea of “praxis”, and it also rests on the premise that the world we experience is socially constructed. Although it may appear that this formulation privileges anthropology over musicology, it is not meant to do so. One student suggested that my phrase “people making music” privileges people over music because the word people comes first. Not so; I could just as easily, although less elegantly, phrase it as “the study of music as made by people.” What I *do* mean to privilege is interpretation over analysis, meaning over explanation, understanding over law, and the humanities over science, and ultimately to show how music—indeed, music sound—may be studied from the point of view of the humanities. I will not get that far in this paper, of course.

It may be helpful at this point to say that I am not intending to privilege subjectivity over objectivity either. I want, perhaps foolishly, to have it both ways. After all, I experience music both ways, and I suppose you do, too. This is another way of saying that I want to deal with a music-specific version of a problem brilliantly formulated by the philosopher Thomas Nagel: “how to combine the perspective of a particular person inside the world with an objective view of that same world, the person and his viewpoint included. It is a problem that faces every creature with the impulse and capacity to transcend its particular point of view and to conceive of the world as a whole”.¹ I make and am moved by music inside the world, and at the same time as an ethnomusicologist I transcend that standpoint to reflect on myself and others as participants in our worlds of music.

The solution, I am persuaded, is not to be found in a conventional scientific methodology, for it falsely objectifies the world and shuts off the move to reflexivity as it removes “the human element” of the observer from the world analyzed. In other words, it abandons the perspective of, as Nagel puts it, “a particular person in the world.” Nor is a solution to be found in a conventional artistic paradigm, for it falsely subjectifies the world as an extension of one’s particular experience and is hostile to transcending one’s particular point of view. When I try to think of where a solution lies, I often feel as Nagel, who writes that “There is a persistent temptation to turn philosophy into something less difficult and more shallow than it is. It is an extremely difficult subject, and no exception to the general rule that creative efforts are rarely successful. I do not

1 Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3.

feel equal to the problems treated in this book. They seem to require an order of intelligence wholly different from mine".²

Let me begin, then, by reviewing the scientific paradigm, the construction of ethnomusicology as the scientific study of world music. By a paradigm I mean an overarching explanatory theory in which people frame their specific questions and answers, their hypotheses and conclusions. The term is usually applied to mathematics science; examples include Euclidean geometry, Newtonian physics, and so forth. In the field of ethnomusicology the scientific study of world music followed from the conceptions of science that underlay the great achievements of the nineteenth century, particularly the comparative taxonomic classification of living objects, and Darwin's theory of evolution, particularly as applied to human societies in the form of cultural evolution or, as it is sometimes known, social darwinism. The field was known at first, of course, not as ethnomusicology, but as musical folklore or comparative musicology. Its methods are familiar to us all: observation, recording, transcription, analysis, classification, comparison, and the hazarding of explanatory theory, perhaps the grandest formulations being those of Sachs and Lomax. Most of its ideas were in place as early as 1905 and can be found in Hornbostel's definitive article, "The Problems of Comparative Musicology" (Hornbostel 1975 [1905]).

It is instructive to go through the early work and see how optimistic everyone sounds. Science was able to be applied to the study of world music in part because of the invention of the recording phonograph. Consider Hornbostel: "With the invention of the phonograph, musicology was presented with a device that can record the musical utterances of all the world's peoples in an irrefutably accurate manner, thereby allowing for a rigidly scientific approach. . . . Thus, all the conditions are now met for the collecting of musical and linguistic specimens on a large scale and for their preservation in phonographic museums or archives" (Ibid.: 252). Music was not so well constructed as an object until the phonograph made it possible to do so. Reading Hornbostel, Bartók, Sachs, Brăiloiu, and other pioneers in the field of comparative musicology or musical folklore, one is struck by their reliance upon the phonograph as a means toward objectivity, something necessary if science was to operate on the object. Brăiloiu: "Concern for objectivity imposes on us in the first place the mechanical recording of the melodies. Only the machine is objective beyond question, and only its reproduction is indubitable and complete. . . . Finally, it provides us with that means of control which no exact science can do without" (Brăiloiu 1984a [1931]: 63).³ And Bartók: "[The phonograph] is one of the very best means for achieving the ideal aim in our collecting and investigative work on folk songs: elimination of the subjective element" (Bartók 1976: 14).

It is interesting, also, to compare the statements of these early pioneers concerning the goals of the discipline. Each is convinced that the future is in collecting, classifying,

2 Ibid., 12.

3 It should be noted that later in his career he was not so sanguine: "A real idolatry of the machine soon seized some minds and still dominates many of them. . . . The danger of excessive confidence in the automatic slave [lies in] the naive and all too stubborn conviction of certain scholars that once the detail of a music is presumed to be perfectly reproduced and irreproachably transcribed, we have nothing more to learn about it, when in reality it has revealed to us nothing of its true nature". ("Musicology and Ethnomusicology Today," in *Brailoiu* 1984a [1931], p. 95).

comparing, and generating explanatory theory. For Hornbostel, the model was comparative anatomy. We may note in passing that Haeckel's famous "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" came from studies in comparative anatomy. Applied to music, the insight yields the theory of music-culture evolutionism, and this theory informed—we would now say misinformed—one direction of comparative musicology from Hornbostel through Sachs to Lomax. The kinds of questions that constructed the field for Hornbostel and those who came after him were these: what was the origin of music, how did it develop over time and space, and what is the nature of the musically beautiful (Hornbostel 1975 [1905]: 249). The first two questions were the same ones philologists were asking about language, and that folklorists were asking about myths and folktales. And the methods of these two other disciplines were similar to those envisioned by Hornbostel; that is, largely historic and geographic, to trace the origin and growth of music.

Everyone agreed that the first step was collecting, and it is interesting to compare Hornbostel, Bartók, and Sachs on these matters. Hornbostel: "Now all the conditions are met for the collecting of musical and linguistic specimens on a large scale and for their preservation in phonographic museums and archives" (Ibid.: 252). Bartók: "Up to this point we have discussed the collection of melodies as if they were isolated items. This, however, is not an adequate approach; indeed, it would be like the entomologist or lepidopterist who would be satisfied with the assembly and preparation of the different species of insects or butterflies. If his satisfaction rests there, then his collection is an inanimate material. The genuine, scientific naturalist, therefore, not only collects and prepares but also studies and describes, as far as possible, the most hidden moments of animal life. Although we admit that the most minute description cannot restore to life that which is dead, it nevertheless recaptures some of the taste and fragrance of life and imparts it to the dead collection. Similar reasons direct the folk music collector to investigate in detail the conditions surrounding the real life of the melodies" (Bartók 1976: 19–20). And yet with collections we must remind ourselves of their psychic impulse. As James Clifford reveals, collections are efforts "to make the world one's own, to gather things around oneself tastefully, appropriately. . . . The self that must possess but cannot have it all learns to select, order, classify in hierarchies—to make 'good' collections" (Clifford 1988: 215). As museums appropriated objects for preservation and display, these objects came to be authentic and authenticating cultural representations, to "stand for" a "school" of painting, say, or an extinct species, or a human group's former way of life. We need only look at the "good" collections of recordings by Hornbostel or Brăiloiu to see this procedure at work (Bartók 1963; Brăiloiu 1984b). Then, too, most of us are record collectors and we need look no farther than to our own shelves. Collecting tends to reify music as a "thing." But there are good grounds for rejecting the concept of music as a "thing," as I shall shortly suggest.

In my view the science of comparative musicology reaches its apotheosis in the work of Sachs and Lomax. Sachs proposes—with varying degrees of strictness over the course of his career—to reduce the music of the world's peoples to melodic types that correlate with stages of sociocultural evolution, and proposes that general theory at some length in his last book, *The Wellsprings of Music* (Sachs 1965). Alan Lomax's canometrics theory correlates musical structure and behavior on the one hand with the

sociocultural features of human groups noted by Murdock in his *Ethnographic Atlas* (Lomax 1968; Lomax 1972; Lomax 1976; Murdock 1969). His findings rely greatly on the computer. But of course it is not the computer that makes Lomax's work scientific; it is his methodology.

Science offers explanations "which tell us why things are as they are, that is, how they came to be as they are now," according to Daniel M. Taylor, a philosopher of science (Taylor 1970: 32). And certainly the comparative musicologists were trying to tell us how world music came to be as it is now. The fact that they did not attempt to formulate theories of cause and effect only shows that they understood that science does not rely upon discovering causes that precede and bring about effects. Rather, "a scientific explanation consists in a deduction from premises which comprise universal generalizations and statements of circumstances" (Ibid.: 33). Note, of course, that an explanation may pass the test of being scientific without being true or even probably true.

The comparative musicologists were following conventional procedure in the natural sciences. What, after all, were the elements of music, the smallest properties of music comparable to atoms and molecules in matter, or to phonemes in language, or to motifs in folktales? The answer was clear: as Hornbostel put it, following Stumpf, "the fundamental material of all music" is "the tones" (Hornbostel 1975 [1905]: 254). From this arises one of comparative musicology's thorniest problems, how to represent "the tones" accurately in transcription. And within the scientific paradigm we move to increasingly accurate measurement of the physical properties of tones, from the invention of the cents system through the monochord and eventually to the melograph and other automatic transcribers.

Collecting, transcribing, analyzing, and comparing represent the application of powerful scientific tools and theories to the stuff of music. The challenges to this scientific paradigm came not because of logical difficulties in the model but because certain people interested in world music were not convinced that the fundamental basis of music was to be found in the tones themselves. In other words they begin to ask additional questions. Two new important questions began to be asked that could not be answered by the prevailing model and methods. These questions began to reconstruct the field. The first question was asked by anthropologists and, predictably, was What is the place of music in the science of man (sic), or what is the relation between music and culture? Although Bartók, even Hornbostel, and especially Brăiloiu had raised those questions and attempted to gather social data that would help place music in a cultural context, the thrust of their activity was on musical structures. McAllester indicates that he began to ask this question in the late 1940s in response to prodding from Margaret Mead (personal communication, 1989) and certainly his *Enemy Way Music* reflects this perspective. Moreover, it and its predecessor, *Peyote Music*, was based on participant observation (McAllester 1971 [1949]; McAllester 1973 [1954]). Most previous song collecting, on the contrary, had been done by asking the singer to sing for the collector, out of the natural sociomusical context. The most persistent attempts to answer this question came in the 1960s from Lomax and Merriam (Lomax 1968; Merriam 1964; Merriam 1967). I have already referred to Lomax's work. Merriam devised a model which, as he himself oversimplified it in several articles, claims that the relation

between music and culture may be studied scientifically if we understand that music sound is produced by human behavior, and human behavior is in turn produced by concepts or ideas. All of this was linked in a feedback system, so that music produced in turn is understood to influence ideas about music. The implication was that it was a mistake for a science of music to view “the tones” as fundamental; rather, ideas, behavior, and music were all bound up with one another, and should all be studied not only in themselves but in relation to one another. Lomax found that it was not necessary to separate ideas from behavior; his cantometrics theory assumes the unity of the two.

Lomax and Merriam did not oppose the people who wanted primarily to study “the tones” because they felt opposed to science. Quite the contrary: Merriam and Lomax held the banner of science high and often referred to what they were doing as a social science that was more appropriate to the study of world music than the outmoded and outdated methods of the comparative musicologists, many of whom, like Kolin-ski, continued their pursuits despite the field’s name-change in North America and parts of Europe to “ethnomusicology”. And so did Seeger hold that music should be studied scientifically, repeatedly claiming that opposition between musicologists and anthropologists was silly because it was obvious that music should be studied both as a thing-in-itself and as a thing-in-context (Seeger 1963). To this formulation Merriam would have agreed, and in his major monograph, *Ethnomusicology of the Flathead*, he attempted just that; unfortunately, he segregated his book into two parts, concepts and behavior as one, and the most conventional and reductionist musical analysis as the other, never really integrating the two, going through the analysis almost as an exercise in futility (Merriam 1967). It was almost as if Merriam had divided his book into social science and natural science.

I said there was a second question that challenged the dominant paradigm, and this was to prove ultimately more difficult to those who regarded ethnomusicology as primarily a study of “the tones”. The question was deceptively simple: What is it like for a person to experience music? This was not a question that the comparative musicologists were interested in answering. It would later be subjected to scientific research under the category of music cognition, but for the moment the question was posed in the more practical terms of musicality and musicianship. In this regard it would be difficult to overestimate the influence of David McAllester and Mantle Hood. Hood, of course, is well known as a champion of the melograph, but it is his other side, the aesthetic side, that is under consideration here. Both Hood and McAllester advocated what Hood later termed “bi-musicality”—that is, they wanted to experience, and wanted others to experience, directly, competence in a music of a culture outside their own (Hood 1960; Hood 1963). Although Hood meant this as an educational tool and a research strategy, the results as we all know were the incorporation of performance into the ethnomusicology curriculum and the incalculable humanizing effect that this has had on the discipline through the many whose study with master artists has changed their lives as well as their understanding of music.

At the same time, the question of what it is like to experience music was turned from the self to the other in the study of world music, and this partly constructed the “new musical ethnography” of researchers like Keil and Feld, as well as a new interest

in biography and autobiography (Keil 1979; Feld 1982; Mitchell 1978; Vander 1988). Not long before his tragic death, Merriam moved from a view of ethnomusicology as the study of music in culture, to a view of the field as the study of music as culture, and the same title had appeared in an ethnomusicology textbook written by Norma McLeod and Marcia Herndon. This, it seems to me, reflected the new trends in sociocultural anthropology I summarized at the outset of this paper: music as text, and music as praxis.

We may recall that Seeger urged that music be studied both as a thing-in-itself and also and a thing-in-context. Music, I believe, is not a thing-in-itself, and considering it so is the result of confusing science's objectified model of music with the real thing. There is nothing intrinsic to sound, not even human organization, that makes it music. In other words, just as there is no such "thing" as literature, nothing self-evident in language that marks it indisputably as literature, so there is nothing self-evident in sounds that mark them indisputably as music.⁴ The great variety of scores, performances, and recordings that people call music do not share some common musical essence. This was the conclusion of Alexander Ellis after his comparative studies of "The Musical Scales of Various Nations": "The musical scale is not one, not 'natural,' nor even founded necessarily on the laws of the constitution of musical sound so beautifully worked out by Helmholtz, but very diverse, very artificial, and very capricious" (Ellis 1885). What is music to one music-culture is judged noise by another. Even within music-cultures one person's music may be another person's noise, organized or not. Certain music-cultures have no word for music. As Henry Kingsbury points out, music is a cultural system, not an *a priori* phenomenon of the natural world (Kingsbury 1987). In other words, music is not an independent entity with its being in the world. Its true nature is not as something "out there" as a separate object. Rather, music, like all other aspects of culture, is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966). We are born into a world of sound and we learn from other people what sound is music is and what sound is not. Response to many of John Cage's compositions, for example, and to much of contemporary music in the West, points out that "music" is not naturally occurring but rather is a human cultural invention.

Of course, the idea that music is not a phenomenon of the natural world does not preclude us from studying it scientifically. But it indicates that we should reject the notion that music has *a priori* fundamental units like tones in the same way that matter has molecules, with the implication that we should study tone structure like molecular structure and thereby get at the objective essence of music. Of course music has tones, but they are not to be understood as fundamental units of an objective musical matter. Music does not have fundamental units in this sense, and perhaps not in any sense.

It is equally problematic to conceive of music as a thing-in-context. This formulation suggests that music is a "thing" (which it is not) surrounded by something else, or everything else, but fails to indicate the relationship between the thing and the context. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it is the context that constructs and experiences

⁴ For the analogy with language and literature I am indebted to Barry O'Connell who pointed out the following from Williams 1976: "There is no such 'thing' as *literature*, no body of written texts that self-evidently bear on their surface some immediately perceivable and indisputable literary essence." To be more precise, the analogy is with noise and music, rather than sound and music.

the thing, music, as a thing; and this suggests that the term context is too weak to describe what it is that brings music about and gives it meaning and significance.

In the past twenty years, much important work in ethnomusicology has been seemingly devoted, in one way or another, to solving the problem or bridging the gap between the music/culture dichotomy. I suggest that a more useful way of looking at it is to consider it a way of overcoming the limitations of applying a scientific model to the study of world music. What I am questioning here is Merriam's notion that ethnomusicology should be a reconciliation of social science with the humanities and that what ethnomusicologists ought therefore to do is "science about music" (Merriam 1964: 25). Interest in linguistics and transformational grammars posits an analytical model meant to represent the human mind of the composer or performer; interest in film drives toward holistic representation of music in cultural context; new modes of performance of non-Western musics in Western settings explore the construction of music as cultural ritual; Marxist models, reflexive musical ethnographies, interest in the relation between myth and the conceptual soundscape, studies of the negotiated meaning of music in Western contexts, and the constant dialogue within the discipline about boundaries and definitions have taken the field in a new direction, which may best be summarized in the phrase, "the study of people making music." Here I would mention the work of Hugo Zemp, Steve Feld, Marina Roseman, Henry Kingsbury, Charles Keil, David McAllester, David Locke, Mark Slobin, David Reck, Charlotte Heth, Charlotte Frisbie, and others. It is important, I believe, to view this not so much as a gap between music and culture—they are one—but as a gap between modes of scientific and humanistic constructions of music.

In this paper I am proposing that it would be helpful if ethnomusicologists conceived of their field as "the study of people making music". This, of course, seems unexceptionable; of course people make music. But, to repeat myself, the definition turns on the meaning of the word "making". People make music in two senses: (1) by physical acts they construct music sound; (2) by mental and communicative acts they socially construct a cultural domain called "music" to which they give meaning. Ethnomusicologists, therefore, study the acts that "make" music, including ethnomusicology itself (a second-order mental act that gives meaning to music). In this formulation, "music sound" conceived as pure object becomes a phantom of the positivistic imagination, and the dichotomy between "music" and "culture" collapses. I do not see how a scientific formulation such as comparative musicology can collapse the same dichotomy.

Such a "constructivist" formulation has the advantage, I think, of a better understanding of music and music-making. I have already suggested that there are no grounds for believing that music is a 'thing,' evidence of recordings and scores to the contrary. I wish to suggest further that continued belief that music is a "thing" will permit an ongoing distortion: that music, reified into a 'thing,' invites the kinds of questions that ethnomusicologists ask of it. It has been assumed that the study of music in the world presents a set of questions in relation to which the procedures of ethnomusicology are found more or less adequate. But with some notable exceptions, ethnomusicologists have been unaware that the category music is contingent. For example, there is the problem of transcription, and our critical procedures address such questions as the

purpose and reliability of transcription, alternative methods of transcription, and so forth. In other words, we assume that music stands ready to be questioned by procedures we have developed in response to our contemplation of its nature both as a thing in itself and as a thing in a sociocultural context. But to put it another way, I suggest that the field music is constituted by the questions we are able to ask because these questions presuppose the field. Thus it becomes terribly important to construct those questions so that the field we get is the field we want, and in this case it means bearing a relationship to music not as something that consists fundamentally as tones, but as a human activity.

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POVZETEK

Predlagam, da bi se etnomuzikologija definirala kot preučevanje ljudi, ki ustvarjajo glasbo. Ljudje ustvarjajo glasbo na dva načina: (1) s fizičnim dejanjem konstruirajo zvoke; (2) z mentalnim in komunikativnim dejanjem konstruirajo kulturno področje, ki se imenuje »kultura«, ki mu nato pripišejo pomene. Etnomuzikologi zatorej preučujejo dejanja, s katerimi se »ustvarja« glasba, vključno s samo etnomuzikologijo (mentalno dejanje drugega reda, ki glasbi pripisuje pomen). Smisel takšne definicije etnomuzikologije je, da zamenja dualistične glasbeno-kulturne definicije etnomuzikologije kot bodisi preučevanje glasbe in kulture bodisi preu-

čevanje glasbe v kulturi ali celo kot preučevanje glasbe kot kulture. V definiciji etnomuzikologije kot preučevanju ljudi, ki ustvarjajo glasbo, je »glasbeni zvok« razumljen kot čisti objekt, ki postane fantom pozitivistične imaginacije, pri tem pa se dihotomija med »glasbo« in »kulturo« poruši. Esej je bil napisan leta 1988 in predstavljen leta 1989 na konferenci Northeast Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology. Pred tem esej še ni bil nikjer izdan, predstavlja pa mojo prvo javno ponovitev te definicije (pozneje je izšel v knjigi *Svet glasbe* »*Worlds of Music*« in tudi drugje), ki bolje ponazarja delo moje generacije etnomuzikologov in ki so jo pozneje prevzeli mnogi kolegi v ZDA, saj se jim je zdela bolj uporabna kot starejše formulacije.