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## What Does 'Global' Mean and Why Does That Matter?

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*This article is a response to Jennifer Mellizo's invitation (TOPICS, 7 January 2019) to write on global music education.*

*Keywords:* globalism, citizenship, community, nationalism, patriotism, multicultural, intercultural, music education, global education

### Introduction

The term 'global' is too often misused or misunderstood. If we are to claim that a reorientation toward globalism is needed, we must be clear about the defects in the worldviews that currently constrain us. And we must envision a global alternative.

In 1998 I asked Chi Cheung Leung, a music education policy expert and organizational leader in Hong Kong, "How is the content of the Chinese music education curriculum organized?" His reply: "Music because we are from around here. Music because we are Chinese. Music because we are in the world."<sup>1</sup> I shall use these three tranches of content to organize a discussion of worldviews music teachers seem to have as they bring their students toward advanced musical skills, a wider personal knowledge base, transformative dispositions, and valid means of evaluating musical events—doing, knowing, valuing.

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<sup>1</sup> Chi Cheung Leung, private correspondence, June 5, 1998.

### **"Music because we are from around here"**

Schools are situated institutions, most of them defined geographically and, thus, geopolitically. Most music teachers work in a geographical location, in school buildings or similar physical spaces. Their students are from the vicinity of the school building. It is easy and politic for a teacher to orient the music curriculum to the locality of the school. This practice is grounded in the political assumption that the community supports the school and (therefore) the school music program should support community values.

Schools, however, are more accurately thought of as psychological "places" rather than brick-and-mortar structures. The orientation of the well-grounded school is not to the material conditions of the educational enterprise but to its human, experienced conditions. The condition that dominates behavior in such spaces is the matrix of rules, customs, and habits enforced and reinforced by the political leaders of the enterprise, the teachers and the administrators. Loyalty is a hoped-for benefit. This applies to both virtual schools and those within actual buildings.

There is no doubt that school leaders deliberately promote loyalty to a school's programs and purposes—interscholastic contests of athletic and other teams, school mascots and slogans, feel-good paraphernalia such as tee-shirts and pennants, school newspapers and web sites. They create a "school culture" that promotes loyalty, hidden-curricular learning, and, overall, social control.

Some educational programs operate in virtual space—online courses, correspondence schools, do-it-yourself programs, self-help books and electronic products. Schools of practice are created by publications—Mel Bay guitarists, Jamey Aebersold improvisers, John Thompson pianists. In addition to course materials and content-related interactions, online course designers attempt to replicate brick-and-mortar schools by creating "places" for off-task discussions between students in the course.

Place-based music education<sup>2</sup> is an orientation to the psychic "neighborhoods" of people connected to a school. Stauffer (2009, 182) cautions against limiting school

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<sup>2</sup> See also <http://www.promiseofplace.org/>, retrieved 3 June 2018.

programs geographically: "Philosophy of place may be an appropriate starting point for engaging practitioners for two reasons: Philosophy of place begins with consideration of the particular, and philosophy of place foregrounds lived experience." In her writing, Stauffer emphasizes a student-oriented conception of place, the notion that 'home' means more than 'house' or 'apartment' to people. Music educators, she asserts, must adopt "... a place-based perspective that curriculum and practice are dynamic and fluid, changing in response to shifts that occur over time, in spaces, and in the lived experiences of the learners and the nested communities (local, regional, national, and global) in which schools are embedded." (2009, 184; see also 2012)

Location, then, is a starting point, a valid gateway to national and global musical information, experiences, and material goods. Place-based education grounds a learner and validates their lived experience. It takes cognizance of the material surroundings in which they can find refuge, where students can find safety and nourishment. Their place is the foundation for their growth into the broader world.

All of this is important but is too often distorted. If a parochial worldview dominates the local curriculum, the program seeks to imprison students and over-celebrate local musical norms. People benefit from knowing the physical, social, and cultural location of their birth and upbringing. It is key to a healthy life perspective. Rather than imprison students, music teachers can promote a cosmopolitan place-based worldview, one that will strengthen learners for life in an increasingly global society.

### **"Music because we are . . . "**

Fill in the blank: "Music because we are Japanese, Chinese, French, South African, Mexican, Malaysian, Australian, Kenyan, Bolivian, Russian, Libyan, Canadian, American," and on and on. Our globe is currently divided geographically and politically among nation-states, an important truism. Nationalities exist. Their unique narratives and rules affect the every-day lives of people within national borders. National leaders attempt to ensure (if not brutally force) allegiance to the national government of their constituents. From traffic signs to national holidays, peoples' daily lives are organized around the laws and

regulations that define a geographical region—an urban ward, an *arrondissement*, a prefecture, a city, a village, a county, a *canton*, an *oblast*, a state or province. And, over all these, a nation.

Patriotism is a quasi-cultural process that seeks to bind a person to the policies and purposes—and more important, the 'official' narrative—of the nation-state in which the accident of their birth, or their migration from another country, have placed them. Propagandists know that music can be marshalled to further the process. National anthems (and school songs), mascots, flags, and slogans, are taught to children for patriotic purposes.

Do these political factors put an obligation on music teachers? Of course they do. The school is a creature of some level of government, or, at least, it is permitted to operate by the prevailing government. It is run by a board of overseers licensed in some way by the government. The teacher is one of its agents. How the teacher negotiates this obligation tells much about the orientation of the student's school experience.

An American example: At professional athletic events and many other types of rituals, the US national anthem customarily begins the event. At one time, the people in attendance sang along. Such events today typically begin with a *performance* of the US national anthem: it is customary these days to avoid singing it when that occurs. Within their spheres of influence, music teachers can change this by encouraging promoters and organizers *not* to hire someone to perform the US national anthem.

As Carl Wilson (2014), a Canadian music critic, points out, "'The Star-Spangled Banner' is militaristic, syntactically garbled, and impossible to sing. It's perfect." There must be other reasons. It is not impossible for willing people to sing simply because the song's range is an octave and a fifth—I have been in Christian church congregations where the practice of the people is to sing "The Lord's Prayer" using Albert Hay Malotte's setting, a song of equal range, with even more difficult intervallic and harmonic relationships. Congregants of all classes, all ages, perform the song well and with a sense of the music's 'emotional shape' promoted by the spirit of the moment and the word-painting of the

composer's melody. There are many singing churches in the US, of all denominations and all racial mixes of members.

The Venezuelan *El Sistema* was hailed as exemplary. It started as a national program of teaching symphonic music performance repertoire and techniques to children and youth everywhere in the country. Founded in the 1970s, its original purpose was patriotic, to bind children, especially those in lower economic class homes, to the Venezuelan state through community building in low-income neighborhoods, a typical source of populist revolts in Latin American (and many other) states. Since its inception, *El Sistema* evolved to become a broader musical program to build community. It spread to many other countries "To support and grow a nationwide movement of programs inspired by *El Sistema* to effect social change through music for children with the fewest resources and the greatest need." (El Sistema USA) Its political foundations are not without controversy: Vol. 15.1 of *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education (ACT)* was devoted to the issues surrounding *El Sistema*.<sup>3</sup>

The potential for conflict between the school and the state, sublimated in most curriculums, is foregrounded in the school music program. In Canada, First Nation peoples are guaranteed a place in the public school system through the inclusion of their tribal heritages and the organization of tribal schools. In India, religious and ethnic groups are constitutionally empowered to set up public schools for their own members with state support, although the Modi government's crackdown on Kashmiri Muslims might presage a tightening of that liberal safeguard.<sup>4</sup>

In the US, school performing groups are expected to provide music at community events of all kinds, especially patriotic events such as parades and visits by political leaders. In New York State, for example, voters must approve the school budget every year; school music groups are marshalled to the polls on voting day to perform, so that parents and other relatives of performers will be more motivated to come to the polling site. Life-long

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<sup>3</sup> [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Baker15\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Baker15_1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> I have seen videos of people in China who today gather in impromptu choruses in city parks, a laudable practice. Their repertoire consists of political and patriotic songs.

music education outcomes include the memorization of a national anthem or other nation-centered music.

### **"Music because we are in the world"**

Really? Are we? What does it mean to be 'in the world'? That question lies at the root of a global orientation in music education. If schools are to prepare young people for a global disposition, what are they empowered (or, at least, expected) to do? Jennifer Mellizo's lead paper (2019, *passim*) provides well-considered answers to such questions.

What is the character or, more broadly, the worldview of a non-national, non-tribal person? Does that question have meaning in today's world? If a psychological pre-eminence of place and a push toward loyalty to a nation-state are so powerful, where can a global worldview find purchase?

Garry Davis, a one-time entertainer turned activist, claims he is the first official world citizen (1961, 2). His initial insight was he needed to renounce his United States citizenship and cut his documentary ties to any other country. His 1961 memoir chronicles the path he took to achieve this aim. It was not easy, psychologically or politically, to conduct his life in that way. But achieve it he did, bringing hundreds of thousands into his program as well. His "place" was the world, and for many years, he lacked a society of like-minded world citizens he could call his home.

Davis claimed world citizenship in 1948 and wrote in his memoir, "Man's deadliest, self-imposed, restrictive device is nationalism." (1961, 10). He fashioned a world passport, with accompanying papers. Since then he built an organization which to date claims to have issued over one million such passports and sets of documents. With no more restrictions than are provided by the current visa system, he was able to travel at will. He was a world citizen merely because he said he was and created the documents to support that view.

But being a member of a world culture means more than passports and documents. It is not the same as 'world citizenship'. One does not need an official-looking 'world

passport' to adopt a global worldview. Article 26:2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, endorsed by the UN in 1948 (UN 1983)<sup>5</sup> states:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

This, of course, places a new "nation-state"—the United Nations organization—over the 200 nation-states currently on world maps, a principal goal of Garry Davis.

Gottfried Scholz addressed this issue in 1990: In his keynote address to The International Society for Music Education (ISME), he ". . . used the four basic ideas of the UNESCO guidelines as they applied to music education: acknowledging the cultural dimension of development; affirming and enhancing cultural identities; broadening participation in cultural life; and promoting international cultural co-operation" (McCarthy 2003, 106).

Thus, Scholz's charge obligates the world's schools to promote a new patriotism among its purposes, in effect, a purpose of globalism. One can argue that the purposes as reflected in Scholz's charge to educators differ in kind with the typical purposes of nations, principal among which are the defense of a homeland and the maintenance of a legal system (or an alternative system of repressive social control often found in autocracies). National governments accept the task of keeping the people within its borders committed to a daily life that is orderly and relatively safe from predatory human behavior. The people have a right to expect a public safety officer to come when called and do something effective to quell social conflicts that endanger life and property. But it will take many more songs like the 1971 Coke commercial ("I'd like to buy the world a Coke") to draw people everywhere into a global community that has society's powers.

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<sup>5</sup> Articles 26 and 27 of this document is quoted in their entirety at the end of this paper.

## Nationalism, tribalism and globalism

Both tribalism and nationalism (nationalism is actually a political form of tribalism) are equally deleterious to musical globalism as currently practiced. Both nationalist and tribalist worldviews restrict musical communication and freedom, often using shaming techniques and a narrative that promotes a fear of 'other' to enhance social control—"othering" in today's parlance. Such schemes promote belonging to a dictator's 'tribe' or a political 'team' as social motivation<sup>6</sup>. As such, they function to stifle musical thought and action when a tribal member takes an interest in musical materials from people designated as 'other' by the tribe, or when a member attempts to express musical thoughts outside of the tribe's customs, values, and psycho-political boundaries. Religious and cultural organizations, and peer reference groups constitute principal sources of such restrictions.

As Amy Chua (2018) puts it:

In seeking to explain global politics, U.S. analysts and policymakers usually focus on the role of ideology and economics and tend to see nation states as the most important units of organization. In doing so, they underestimate the role that group identification plays in shaping human behavior. They also overlook the fact that, in many places, the identities that matter most—the ones people will lay down their lives for—are not national but ethnic, regional, religious, sectarian, or clan-based.

(25)

Nationalist leaders' cultural problem, in my view, is to tribalize the people within the political boundaries of their rule. Whole libraries have been written on strategies and tactics related to this issue. From Hammurabi to the writers of the Torah and the rest of the Christian Old Testament, through Plato, Lao Tzu, Sun Tzu, Titus Livius, Macchiavelli, Mussolini, and Lenin, to the modern age, political theorists and governmental leaders have contributed to this library. 'Mirrors for Princes' became a well-accepted literary genre in the middle east and Europe during the era roughly from 500-1300 CE. This literature

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<sup>6</sup> See the September/October 2019 issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine for detailed profiles of five current dictators and their strategies. The issue is titled "Autocracy Now."



gradually morphed since then into what we now recognize as political science. The purpose of this essay need not include a critique of this literature, nor does it take a stand on the various theories on the formation and maintenance of nation-states.

The position forwarded here is that nationalism has too many of the characteristics of restrictive tribalism, so much so that a nationalist worldview tends to censor musical growth when it strays across its political boundaries toward a global perspective. Nationalists demean people and their cultures that thrive outside their national tribes. To the current point, people everywhere must negotiate a political leader's need to have their people join their nationalistic 'tribe'. It is a condition of political life. Submission to the 'official' music and other arts of the state—clothing standards included—further the national leader's political power. The push toward nationalism, not tribalism *per se*, stands in the way of a global music education worldview.

### **A way forward**

Not tribalism *per se*? The question for music teachers everywhere seems to be this: Is a world musical "tribe" possible? Can people of widely varied cultural and political backgrounds coalesce around a global view that musical life anywhere is to be cherished, explored, and learned about by outsiders? That seems to be the key question. And if we take seriously the values that ground the UN statement above—develop human personality; respect rights and freedoms; promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship; maintain peace—then a global worldview for music education could emerge that would be at once humane and universal.

If such a worldview is conceivable and can gain traction, then a global musical tribalism can follow. We can promote a humane approach to musicking that is grounded in such global capacities as an understanding of and practice in the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that encourage cross-cultural flows of musical ideas. These include a knowledge of music-making's place in human societies, and an awareness and an appreciation of differences in taste—claims of people that there are hierarchies of worth in

the results of musical behavior. We need students to move toward "getting inside" the musical lives of people whom they don't normally encounter.

At the grassroots, a global communication of musical information and value-sharing is already happening. Social networking sites (SNSs) are non-national at their roots, although nations are attempting to regulate the Internet. Discussions of music trends between people through Facebook, Instagram, and MySpace are now common across national, societal, and economic boundaries. Racial boundaries still exist, however. S. Craig Watkins (priyanka30) found that "... 84% of white students said they use Facebook *most often* among all social networking sites . . . . In comparison, Latino students were more likely to use MySpace. 80% of African American students use Facebook as do 84% of Asian students." These are huge percentages, and some of the traffic is musical. These racial 'silos' are likely to crumble as interracial social contacts continue to increase in the society.

Streaming of music and the posting of musical material of all kinds provide ready sources of musical information for anyone, worldwide, who is connected to the Internet. As Sisario and Russell (2016) point out,

Streaming—whether through paid subscriptions to Spotify or Rhapsody; Internet radio from Pandora; or even videos on YouTube—now makes up 34.3 percent of sales, edging out digital downloads as the industry's biggest source of revenue. In 2015, the year that Apple Music arrived and Tidal was reintroduced by Jay Z, paid subscription services generated \$1.2 billion in sales in the United States. After adding in free streaming platforms and Internet radio, the total for streaming is \$2.4 billion.

Large businesses such as Spotify and Apple are led by people who must maintain a global perspective. To grow their markets abroad, and to reach new ones, the business leaders ask themselves, "How can we get our product or service into the homes or businesses of the people in [country X]?" In service of the goals related to that question, the business leaders learn not only how (or if) those people will purchase and use their products, but also the governmental processes that will permit them to provide the

products to the people. There is a global, people-centered focus; the people's governments merely provide both the permission and the impediments for reaching them.

The International Society for Music Education (ISME) was founded in 1953 to bring musical representatives from across the globe together in large meetings. This is certainly helpful if we learn to ask fruitful questions in dialog with the representatives. Its defect extends out of the methods used to select national representatives. In most places, this selection is a function of the nation-state through its professional politics more than it is representative of dominant musical cultures within its borders. As such, it is political rather than cultural. Such presentations should be received with appreciation for the performers' efforts, certainly, but with reservation about the extent to which the presentation reflects the musical life beyond the presenters'. A "non-national" event would be better. Internationalism, narrowly conceived, is a start. But it cannot substitute for globalism.

### **Some metacurricular questions**

In the late 1990s, I was a member of ISME's "Music Policy" Commission (Commission on Music in Cultural, Educational, and Mass Media Policy) and subsequently became its chairman. Commission members were from North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. In July 1998 the Commission met in Nairobi, Kenya for a week of discussions leading up to the general ISME meeting July 19-25 in Pretoria, South Africa (McCarthy 2003, 166-168). At that time, in Kenya, over 40 distinct tribal groups were recognized by the central government, and large festivals of cultural sharing among these groups were supported.

We met in a Nairobi hotel. The organizers brought some of Kenya's tribal groups to the meeting for what we took to be performances. In one presentation, a group of about 15 people in their traditional dress sang, danced, and played instruments. The presentation was striking and engaging in all its aspects. We applauded our appreciation after it was over. The performers, however, looked saddened and seemed not to receive our applause as confirmation. We asked about that and the organizer relayed our question. After hearing the presenters' responses, the organizer turned to us and said, "These people were insulted

because you did not get up and dance with them. I asked them to begin again. This time, join them and dance." We did in our clumsy way but the event was much more satisfying to all.<sup>7</sup>

Questions, then, can begin the cross-musical dialog even before a musical event begins. "*What do you expect of us as observers?*" would be such a question. If we had asked that question in Nairobi, the event would have been much more productive. Beginning there, subsequent questions that track general schemes such as David Shrader's (see the appendix) will then achieve much more positive and fruitful results in understanding.

Another example: The lowest-pitched orchestral stringed instrument, of course, is the doublebass viol. This term is the correct one for that instrument, given its history, its tuning system, and the traditional shape of its body—the sloping shoulders of the viol family of instruments. However, other names are used in other musical traditions: bull fiddle, string bass, acoustic bass, bass viol, upright bass and more. "*What do you call that instrument and how was it made?*" would be another valid question across musical traditions.

Students do not need more shallow contact—"exposure"—with music than that to which they already have access. They need a strategy and some tactics for discovery and dialog. And they need safe ways to practice such strategies in extensive and frequent dialog with adepts in a variety of musical traditions. This is what music teachers can provide and what Mellizo's article (2019) begins to articulate.

### **"Music because we are human"**

We must add this to Dr. Leung's list. Being fully human, at an adult level, is what a global education is all about. There are other rationales for elementary and secondary education—political, social, intellectual, economic—but basic educational programs are designed to help a person to attain the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to join the adult

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<sup>7</sup> Any "wedding band" DJ or live band leader can identify with this. As such, it provides a point of contact between the presenters in Nairobi and any musician in the world whose job it is to get people off their feet and help them have a good time.

members of the society in which one is a child and adolescent. If such societies do not promote rich, free cross-cultural communication, teaching music globally is indeed a subversive activity.

Basic to this hope of openness, in music, is the formation of a musical identity—finding a place in the musical life of a human community. The globalist accepts that "human community" means all the world's people. As Reimer (2000) points out:

A person with a healthy musical identity understands music to be a common possession of humans, honors and delights in the distinctiveness of the musical communities of which he or she is a member as well as the music of other communities that widen and enhance meaningful musical enjoyments, and treasures the personal responsibility to seek musical fulfillments as relevant to and internalized, self-determined value system. (p. 37)

This view challenges tribalism, nationalism, and any other limits placed on musical preference as a marker of identity. So, the globalist music educator would build a program for students that would bring them in contact with music from all over the world. However, teachers would be careful not to put country labels on them: not "This is Irish music" but "This music is very familiar to people in Ireland and beyond, wherever they go." Both musical sources and musical diasporas are emphasized. Because people travel and emigrate, their musical lives go with them, and technology opens doors to myriad musical experiences. Music is no longer confined by political boundaries.

All that said, people develop musical identities simply by their association with others important to them. We can't help it. Rather than denying the musical identities of children and youth, teachers should challenge students to develop adult levels of skill, knowledge, and dispositions in the musical traditions that harbor and promote those identities. Music teachers must inject the strategies and tactics of cross-cultural musical understanding into this mix. It can be adventurous now for students and teachers as it builds important life-skills.

Is there a world standard of music learning? Yes, if the expected outcome is an adult level of musical expertise with a global disposition. David Shrader proposed such a scheme (Gates 2000, p. 74, see Appendix) in which he posited that growth toward musical expertise in any tradition expands through five stages, each one dependent on the one before:

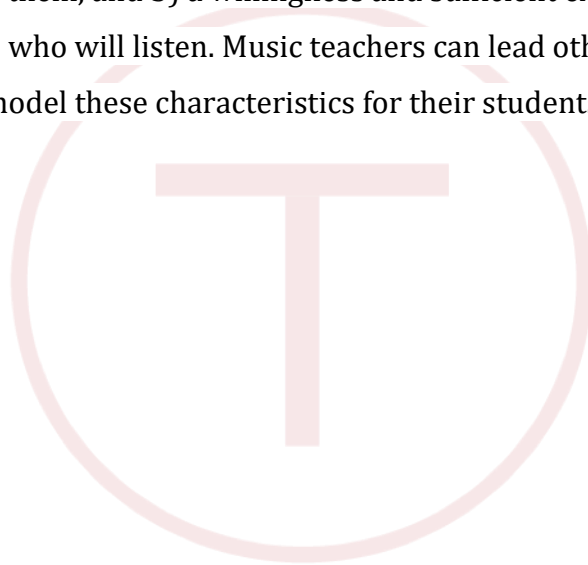
1. Basic (essential) musical skills—the capacity to actively participate in musicking in the tradition
2. Approach/study skills—methods of and strategies for advanced learning in the tradition
3. Interactive/communal component—active contribution to the musical life in the tradition
4. Intellectual/reflective component—articulate and grounded knowledge of the standards and exemplars of the tradition
5. Technical component—creation and production of musical events in the tradition, including new compositions

What is emphasized in global music education is musical discourse—communication of musical materials, skills, instrumentaria, and events in disregard of national (governmental) and tribal boundaries. Musical sharing is grounded in but not limited to a musical tradition, and it requires that one maintains a conscious self-awareness of one's music learning processes and an assumption that others traveled essentially the same path. As Patrick Schmidt (2006) pointed out in another MayDay Group colloquium, "Meaning arises out of dialog, not of power."

So, what emerges is that a global musical person who:

- Takes strength from their place and has adult-level expertise with the skills, knowledge, values, and social networks of at least one situated musical tradition.
- Is encouraged and becomes equipped to ignore national or tribal taboos and to resist arbitrary restrictions on their musical actions and decisions.
- Engages successfully and actively in musical dialog with people from other places or who have different musical tastes than one's own.

If such a worldview can be adopted, the two great impediments to global music education, nationalism and *restrictive* tribalism, begin to disappear as limits to a rich musical life and impediments to communication among people. What is needed to change our current world-view at this point is a globalization of the music education enterprise. Dialog, especially musical dialog, is the key path to that goal, engaged strategically across and in deliberate ignorance of national boundaries. This is the grounding premise of The MayDay Group and, in many places, will be considered a subversive activity. We must join those on the frontiers of this new worldview. A global musical worldview has three main branches: 1) an insatiable curiosity about the musical traditions of other peoples, 2) an eagerness to learn from them, and 3) a willingness and sufficient expertise to share one's own music with anyone who will listen. Music teachers can lead others to a global worldview if they will model these characteristics for their students.



### **Excerpt from The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1983)**

#### **Article 26.**

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

#### **Article 27.**

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.



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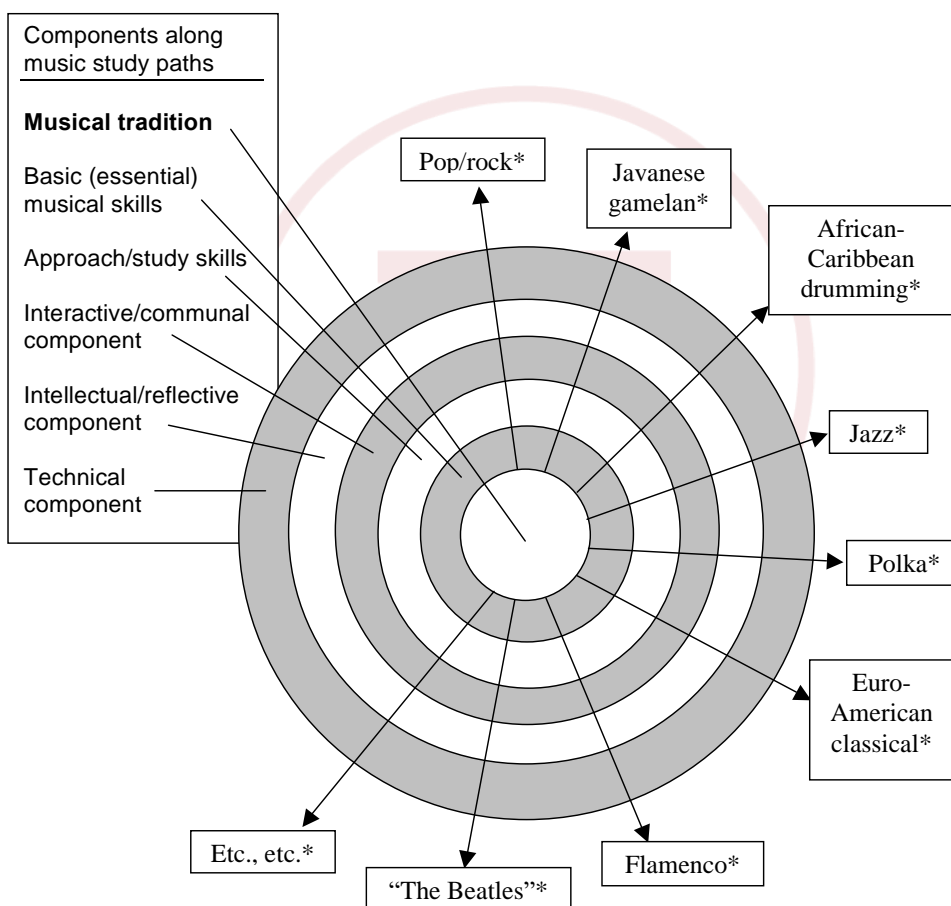
## Appendix

### Components of Music Study

David Shrader

(adapted from Gates, J. T. "Why Study Music?",  
in Madsen, C. K., ed. (2000). Vision 2020. Reston, VA: MENC, p. 74.)

Study toward expertise in diverse musical traditions moves outward from the middle on this chart. Music study paths have some common components, represented by rings in the chart below, regardless of the musical tradition being studied. Every component is present along each path, but the percentage of its contribution to expertise may vary.



\*These traditions are illustrative of musical diversity only and no importance should be placed on the presence or absence of any musical tradition in this chart. In a program designed this way, all musical traditions have equal merit. Progression along and 'spoke' is toward expertise (connoisseurship) in that tradition, but components (rings) apply to all musics, especially in the Basic Skills component. Furthermore, the Basic Skills component should include something of all the other components, so that the novice has a start on what is ahead.