

Ethnomusicological Encounters with Music and Musicians: Essays in Honor of Robert Garfias [book review]

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Abstract:

In 1962, only a dozen years after the term "ethnomusicology" first appeared in print in the writings of Jaap Kunst, Robert Garfias arrived at the University of Washington to found a program in ethnomusicology studies. Over the ensuing decades, the program at Washington influenced hundreds of students, musicians, and scholars, at the university and beyond. In this book, former students and colleagues of Garfias contribute essays on a variety of ethnomusicological topics in tribute to his influence on each of them and on the field as a whole.

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Article:

In 1962, only a dozen years after the term "ethnomusicology" first appeared in print in the writings of Jaap Kunst, Robert Garfias arrived at the University of Washington to found a program in ethnomusicology studies. Over the ensuing decades, the program at Washington influenced hundreds of students, musicians, and scholars, at the university and beyond. In this book, former students and colleagues of Garfias contribute essays on a variety of ethnomusicological topics in tribute to his influence on each of them and on the field as a whole.

Organized in two large sections, "Encountering Musicians" and "Encountering Music," Ethnomusicological Encounters encompasses a variety of scholarly approaches to differing musical cultures, styles, and issues. In his preface, editor Timothy Rice points out that the book's essays "cover music from seven of the nine major regions of the world," including the Middle East, Europe, the United States, Africa, and various areas in Asia (p. xiv). Further, the issues explored by each contributor and their methods of research and dissemination vary, from primarily theoretical explorations to autobiography. At times, this can make the book seem disjointed, as the reader shifts frequently from one topic and writing style to another. However, the scholarly diversity represented by the collection is also a testament to the program of study Garfias created at Washington.

There are a number of common threads that unify the essays in *Ethnomusicological Encounters*, the most important being the link to Garfias and the University of Washington shared by the contributors. The aspect of the curriculum at Washington most often mentioned throughout the book is perhaps the visiting artists program. This is especially the case in "Encountering Musicians," in which the authors recount their experiences meeting and studying with musicians at the university and in the field, and how these meetings, in the words of Rice, "changed and formed [the authors] as scholars and human beings" (p. xv). Sean Williams, in his study of Joe Heaney, an Irish sean-nós who visited Washington in the late 1970s and early 1980s, writes that the visiting artists were employed in part to give "graduate students the opportunity to practice fieldwork first-hand, prior to leaving for their chosen fieldwork destinations" (p. 49). Karl Signell and Andrew Killick both profile musicians who served as visiting artists at Washington and who had significant impacts upon the music of their home countries. However, Signell's chapter does not quite deliver on the promise of a memoir/biography and Killick's and Williams's essays seem disjointed and unclear in their objectives at times. This is perhaps because of the space constraints when contributing one of many chapters to a book.

Similarly, Daniel Neumann adopts a memoir/autobiography form, in his "meditation on the interconnectedness of lives" (p. 130), recounting highlights from his career as an ethnomusicologist in an interesting if sometimes rambling format. On the other hand, Usopay Cadar, a former visiting artist and Ph.D. recipient at Washington, contributes a clear and thorough autobiographical essay. He writes about his experiences learning music from his mother, High Queen Damoao, in the Philippines and then teaching that music in the United States.

Indeed, the theme of music education is another common thread throughout the book. Patricia Shehan Campbell studies how the visiting artists program, and specifically private and ensemble study with these artists, influenced music education majors at Washington, arguing that the benefits of the program reach beyond ethnomusicology scholars to numerous musicians and music lovers. Many of the essays address lessons learned by the authors during their studies or their fieldwork. This relates strongly to Garfias's own priorities, which become obvious in his opening essay. He writes of envisioning the visiting artists program at Washington as a set of "study groups" (p. 9) rather than performing ensembles, and of training graduate students not only to conduct effective fieldwork, but also to teach a variety of musics and cultures (p. 14).

A few of the authors featured in this collection focus on methodology or theory in their essays. For example, Philip Yampolsky summarizes his work recording Indonesian musics for Smithsonian Folkways, explaining the processes of choosing recording equipment, selecting musical styles and musicians to record, and recording in different locations. Irene Markoff analyzes *Haydar*, a piece by Turkish musician Ali Ekber Çicek, combining an almost music theory-like approach with ethnomusicology to explore how the piece changed (and reflected changes in) how folk music is viewed in Turkey. Fredric Lieberman investigates the construction of the Chinese qin, theorizing that "every musical instrument is a machine designed to convert energy of varied forms into acoustic energy" (p. 283). His essay investigates primarily the use of nylon and silk in qin string construction and thickness, but how this relates to production of acoustic energy is not immediately apparent.

Another theme is the idea that music is "embedded in cultural ideas and social circumstance" (p. xvi). This is a common premise in ethnomusicology, and the authors in this case explore the idea of music in/as culture by using the fieldwork and research techniques that many of them learned and honed while working with Garfias. Larry Shumway and Yoshitaka Terada both explore music in rituals (Shumway in religious and Terada in secular rituals), and Philip Schuyler describes an impromptu semi-musical performance in Morocco that provided a meeting-place for musicians and audience members from different ethnic groups. Hiromi Loraine Sakata provides an analysis of music's role in Afghani culture, while Richard Jones-Bamman explores the influence that a single musician, Sámi singer Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, can have on an entire culture. In a similar vein, Rice plays a set of recordings for two Bulgarian bagpipe virtuosos to try to quantify the aesthetic ideals of their music culture. Gavin Douglas also explores musical aesthetics, comparing the presentations of Burmese music to Burmese and to Westerners and exploring how these presentations have changed with time and technology.

The authors address the constantly changing natures of music and of culture throughout the book. Again and again, they return to the idea that a "traditional" or "authentic" music does not exist in a global society. Thus, the idea that ethnomusicologists study pure musics or cultures is a fallacy. Rice writes that "we are instead documenting . . . change, modernization, and globalization because this is where the vital creative work of contemporary musicians is being done and where music is most powerfully linked to modern social, cultural, political, and economic processes" (p. xviii). In a similar vein, Douglas points out that the way music changes in different societies reflects their cultural values, writing that "musical change is social change. Changes in sound directly reflect (and produce) changes in social norms, behaviors, and beliefs" (p. 182).

In the final chapter of the book, anthropologist Simon Ottenberg looks at how ethnomusicology relates to anthropology, musicology, and music theory. His unique perspective as an anthropologist (not as an ethnomusicologist) who does some ethno-musicological research sheds a fresh light on the discipline. He writes that "whatever boundaries exist between ethnomusicology and anthropology, these are continual[ly] shifting, fluid, and never rigid" (p. 301). This mirrors assertions made by Garfias and many of the book's other authors that ethnomusicology and the musics and cultures ethnomusicologists study are constantly changing. Ottenberg addresses the inevitability of change in ethnomusicological study and how it will relate to anthropology, musicology, and other fields of study in the future. Similarly, Bruno Nettl's essay on issues of musical ownership in Blackfoot culture is less an ethnography and more a theoretical exploration of issues of musical ownership and a challenge to other researchers to delve into ethnographic studies of control and ownership of music.

Garfias closes his essay at the beginning of the book with a look toward the future of ethnomusicology studies. He links the studies of others' musics to deeper understandings of their cultures. He also emphasizes the need for ethnomusicologists to work together, especially during a time when research and education funding are difficult to come by. *Ethnomusicological Encounters* is a fitting tribute to the diversity and passion of Garfias's research and educational activities in ethnomusicology over the last fifty years. I believe that the book would be especially helpful to those teaching or taking graduate-level ethnomusicology courses, as it provides a

broad view of ethnomusicological research. The essays can stand on their own as studies of individual musical cultures or musicians, while the book as a whole can serve as a survey of numerous research topics and techniques.