

WHO PAYS THE PIPER?

Community Music Education Funding

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Community Music Education Funding

The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects of partnership and collaboration between community music education institutions and funding providers. It is the result of my own discoveries in England Sweden and Norway just a few months ago.

To begin I offer a little New Zealand context which prompted the original journey.

New Zealand Context

New Zealand is obviously an isolated nation, but as all cultures we believe we have special strengths. As a general rule, there is much acclamation about innovation, the freedom of the environment and the "kiwi" nature of how we do things.

Over the past 10 years however, the ethic of how services are provided, and who provides them has changed markedly. At the risk of sounding like a talk back show host, until the mid 80's the nation liked to be thought of as egalitarian... that is, the amassing of a personal fortune was relatively uncommon and the obvious signs seldom revealed.

The now prevalent attitude of 'user pays' has had an enormous impact on our daily lives. The goal to make the export sector drive the economy, in order to create jobs and opportunity has been achieved in many ways. We live in a mostly deregulated economy.

However, the community now exhibits much greater disparity in terms of standard of living, and the gaps in the community fabric are more obvious.

For the arts, the intention was to allow people to make their own choices. By lowering the tax rates it was thought there would be more money in the community for sponsorship for example. What has been forgotten is that the arts do not, and never have, attracted the same level of interest as other recreations in New Zealand.

With the relative scarcity of trusts and grant providers, and the contraction of state spending the arts have been left in a partial vacuum.

In this paper I will explore ideas about what community musicians and educators could do about ensuring the best use of the funding available. Even if the conclusions are somewhat naïve, for the sake of children and community at large I hope there are useful threads to follow.

WHERE I AM COMING FROM?

The Music Place

This research project began with attempting to create a viable community music centre in Dunedin. Operating as a charitable trust, The Music Place offers foundation music education and instrumental programmes for around 200 students from child to adult out of nine school based centres. Its origins were in the commitment of Dunedin music education professionals, community musicians and business people.

In some ways The Music Place is an example of collaboration and partnership. Its success in influencing participation levels increased markedly when it moved from a central venue and began to work alongside regular schools.

Its ability to secure grant funding improved along with community understanding of The Music Place goals. These are not about preservation of music as an art form but access to opportunity for individuals for whom music is denied for physical or economic reasons. In addition The Music Place attempts to support and collaborate with existing community ensembles.

HOW I FOUND OUT ABOUT PROVISION IN OTHER CULTURES

I chose England as one culture to investigate partnership and collaboration because of its long standing cultural history. I knew about exciting community music projects through journals and, sadly, infrequent workshops here in New Zealand.

The second investigation base was Norway and Sweden. The history of government funded instrumental programmes was again at least familiar and it seemed logical that the social democratic system would provide contrast to the more free market approach of New Zealand and England. I was not to be disappointed.

The Community Producers

In this paper I have chosen to highlight two English community music education producers. Sadly, perhaps the selection is because of the growth of one and the contraction of the other.

Sound It Out (Birmingham)

The vigorous development of Sound It Out provides a sharp contrast to the development of any community music organisation I am aware of in New Zealand.

Here is an extract from the 1997 to 2000 strategic plan:

Sound It Out's Mission is:

To promote opportunities for music making for the people of Birmingham through a wide range of activities which recognise both cultural and stylistic diversity and many levels of ability and commitment.

Sound It Out's Policy is:

- *To help people to make music*
- *This policy is achieved through Sound It Out's role as an agency bringing together musicians and people who want to make music.*

History

Sound It Out was established during Birmingham's tenure as UK City of Music 1992 as part of the city's programme of musical activity. It became a voluntary programme of projects, training and developmental work across the city. Partnerships have been established with a range of arts and community.

Financial Background

From its formation as a voluntary organisation in 1993 Sound it Out has received funding from Birmingham City Council and a West Midlands Arts. Initially project funded, in 1995 it received an increased development grant from West Midlands Arts and was established as a programme client. The following year it became a revenue client of the City. Other funding is achieved from sponsorship, charitable trusts and fees.

Management and Staffing

Sound It Out is run by a part time Development Co-ordinator (0.8 FTE) and a part time Administrator (0.4 FTE). It draws on a pool of freelance music workers for project work. It encourages the use of both projects and administration for traineeships and shadowing.

The company is supported by a management committee which aims to represent the city's diverse cultural groups and relevant areas of work such as education, youth work and health services. The programme is also underpinned by an advisory group of musicians from all styles and musical cultures.

Significant Factors: Sound It Out Three Year Plan

There are some impressive aspects to the development of Sound It Out.

- After only five years 1.2 FTE staff are employed to complete overall direction and administration.
- The breadth of the management committee is wider than music circles. Therefore the institution is more likely to represent the needs of existing clients and assist in identifying new community clients.
- The programmes are as much about social well being as music. Music becomes a vehicle for personal growth and development.
- A priority is to provide opportunity and market that opportunity. Sound It Out supports a diverse range of music styles, levels of ability and individual commitment.
- Sound It Out has rapidly established partnerships with a range of arts and community funding providers.
- Sound It Out was recognised as an agreed programme or revenue client of arts boards and local authorities after only three years.

The second example is of enormous importance to us here in New Zealand as we are in the process of developing a new arts curriculum.

Barnet Music Education Service (London)

The Barnet Music Education Service (London) offers long term instrumental programmes, a Saturday programme, orchestra, brass band, wind orchestra, theory, big band, choir and holiday courses.

Concerns about funding were very apparent in this institution which now operates on a cost recovery basis. Prior to the local body changes in 1993 the Barnet service was fully funded.

In 1993 the Greater London Authority was broken up into smaller units. At that point centralised funding for itinerant music services was no longer available. Local councils and boroughs made their own decisions about tagging money for itinerant music services.

As at 1997 the Barnet Music Education Service ratio of involvement has reduced to approximately 5% of school students. Most of these pay significant fees. The teaching staff has been reduced from 24 to 10 FTE staff.

Without the level of affluence within the community, the Barnet Service would be unable to sustain even the present level of operations. By implication, many of the music education service institutions have ceased operations in poorer districts.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ABOUT COMMUNITY MUSIC MAKING AND EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

I identified the following common elements:

- Community music education goals I identified are about social intervention, access to music, self awareness, skill development, cultural and individual esteem.
- Programmes focus on meeting the needs of the individual. Evaluations of such programmes increasingly focus on the degree to which this has been achieved.
- Producers are intent on generating new work. New work can be new clients, new community, or new experiences for existing participants. Funding provider criteria emphasises new work as priority.
- The responsibility for clients who complete a programme and would seek further experience is taken seriously in the initial planning of a programme.
- Grant funding access means participant fees are low. Approximately 1 in 15 institutions receive significant funding support.
- Institutions providing long term instrumental services do not have ready access to grant funding. For the most part they are self funded through student fees.
- The industry encourages the employment of professional artists to deliver a powerful range of music performance and education programmes.
- A further industry is dedicated to the training of professional musicians to work in community music education.
- Workshops attempt to generate collaboration within communities including local councils, grant providers, community members, schools and community music producers.
- Collaboration amongst different forms of community music producers is not consistent. A national agency, Sound Sense has been formed by institutions and individuals committed to community music education. The collaborative role of that institution has been championed by funding providers.
- The need for collaborative programmes aimed at tutor training has been recognised by community music institutions and the longer established music colleges and universities.

Activity Description For Community Music Organisations with an Education Focus	Number of Institutions
Community Festivals	4
Popular Music Instrumental	6
Cultural Voice /Instrument	4
Voice	4
Orchestral Music Instrumental	6
People With Disability Programmes	6
Technology Programmes	4
Women in Music Programmes	4
Music Awareness Programmes (Orchestral/Opera)	3
Getting Involved in Music Programmes	7
Social Awareness/Intervention Programmes e.g Drugs	4
School Interaction Programmes	7

THE ENGLISH FUNDING PROVIDERS

Turning our attention to funding provider it quickly becomes apparent that England has history on its side. For instance cities such as Manchester made the first decisions to support arts development in the 19th Century.

Some of the bigger funding providers include the Arts Council of England, National Lottery, Regional Arts Boards, Metropolitan Area Grant Schemes, Local Authority Funding, Education and Youth Funding, Support from Companies and Charitable Trusts.

Such funding providers form only part of the picture. To a lesser degree a community music institutions gather revenue from fund raising and sponsorship.

The seeking of legacy revenue, is a fresh concept for community arts. A deliberate relationship is established with appropriate potential donors. All going well it eventuates in revenue to the arts institution through the donor's estate.

Comparing the state contribution of New Zealand and England is very interesting!

Comparison of Funding Potential for England (1996) and New Zealand (1997)

English National Heritage/Parliament Grant Distribution	National Lottery Grant Distribution	England Approx Amount Distributed Per Individual	New Zealand Government Provision	New Zealand Lottery Provision	Total New Zealand Distribution	N.Z. Approx. Amount Distributed Per Individual
\$314 500 000	\$587 270 000	\$13.87	\$3 400 000	\$18 950 000	\$19 400 000	\$5.24

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS ABOUT THE ENGLISH FUNDING PROVIDERS

One can now get a clearer picture of how community music education funding is generated:

- Arts funding policy derives from historical and cultural attitudes.
- Local authorities provide significant input nationally, despite there being no legislative requirement for them to do so.
- Usually, grant funding for a producer is established on a project basis. Using project audit as verification, institutions strive to graduate from "one off" status to that of an annual or agreed programme client.
- An institution will be expected to produce 10% of additional revenue for grants up to \$255 000. The additional revenue can be made up of in kind contributions, voluntary contributions, admission receipts as well as cash in hand.
- Administration of projects is a legitimate part of grant expenditure. For A4E projects it is tagged at up to 20% grant expenditure.
- Sponsorship is presently considered a low priority for community music institutions because of the apparent mismatch between community music producers and business houses.
- The lower proportion of funding for community arts as compared with professional ensembles is a subject of vigorous and ongoing debate.
- Community arts are acknowledged for the contribution they make to local economies. This is increasingly apparent in local body funding distributions.
- Producers of long term instrumental training do not receive funding support from grant providers.
- Funding support is evident for programmes which provide training for professional musicians intending to work in the community and education sectors.

NORWAY AND SWEDEN

So far the focus has been on producers and funding policy observed in England. Most here will know the extent of support for music education in Sweden and Norway...the question is why?

In Scandinavia, funding community and education music programmes is accepted as a government responsibility. Since the 1960's government input to music making and learning has been substantial. There are direct lines of funding support for education training and adult community activity. Legislation secures provision through local body and national administrations.

Trondheim Music School (Norway)

The Trondheim Music School for example was one of the first music schools established in Norway. Established in 1973, it is representative of the gradual accommodation of band and amateur orchestral movements as complementary to the music school programmes.

Over the 26 year history student numbers have grown from 300 to 3200 (1997). 17% of the student population is presently enrolled in music school programmes. By 2005 it is hoped that 4000 students will be enrolled. Adults are also catered for in the teaching programmes.

Funding (1997) for the Trondheim Music School was \$4 800 000. The population of Trondheim is ca 140 000.

Funding Provision for Music Schools

The typical Norwegian Music School revenue break down looks as follows:

- *School/Student 19% (Income from student fees and school income. Relates to the normal instrumental and vocal teaching)*
- *Local Government 51% (Annual grant approved by local government)*
- *Additional Services to Schools and Community Groups 11% (Negotiated by music school with general schools, community groups and school based ensembles. They include services such as conducting, workshops and the Positive Environment Programme)*
- *State 16% An entitlement with the proviso that local government sources provide 50% of the school's funding. The funding is generated by the actual number of lessons taught.*
- *Other 3% (Sponsorship, donations and top ups for special projects.)*

KEY POINTS TO PARTNERSHIP AND PROVISION IN SWEDEN AND NORWAY

There is a lot more to be said about the provision of education and community support in these two cultures. The fact is that the extent and continuity of the provision means the adult participation levels are enormous.

- Community music for Norway and Sweden is clearly rooted in institutions of significance in the eyes of the community and government administration forums.
- Issues about duration and extent of funding partnerships are of little consequence in these countries. There is an unwavering political unity behind the various funding programmes. While that could be explained in the 90's by the overall wealth and living standards of the two nations, the first policies and funding provisions were made when both economies were much weaker.
- Regional and national government politicians have guided the development of a national system of music schools. They have gone further by legislating the establishment of compulsory music and cultural school policy for every local authority. In Norway some authorities are populated by less than 5000 people.
- Evaluation of sponsorship or private trust funding occurred in few discussions. Revenue from such sources impacts only at national or professional levels.
- There is a complete infrastructure of music and cultural schools as at June 1998. The resources available to music schools provide teaching to around 20% of elementary school students. The shift to music and cultural schools may lift that to around 30% of students.
- The consistency of funding to national associations has been the catalyst for quality training provided to members/performers and respective music leaders within community and education settings.
- While the percentage of children starting is high, so is the drop off rate. This does not deter the financial commitment from government sources. It was reiterated several times that adult participation is considered legitimate as either a performer or listener.
- Collaboration is fostered at all levels of administration and music learning activity. The links are influential and reflect a social responsibility to learners and providers alike.

- Music is seen as an exemplary pursuit in terms of engaging the emotions, self knowledge and the confidence to be exploratory.

PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

Comparison of Funding Provision (England, Sweden, Norway and New Zealand)

Developing Successful Funding Partnerships for Community Music Education

Community music in New Zealand consists of a multitude of largely unconnected institutions including performance ensembles, training operations and a smattering of social intervention work.

Institutions should take initiative in promoting partnership and collaborative activity amongst their own membership. From there they should extend the interaction to like institutions, and most of all, to building strong relationships with funding providers.

From what I have observed from institution to institution the ingredients of partnerships have much in common.

Confident institutions typically have ongoing development strategies.

For example:

- Development of client driven projects.
- A network of programme goals.
- Administrative resource to mount new projects.
- Client responsive administration.
- Development of financial partnerships.
- Community representation in management and policy.

They are able to be socially responsible.

For example:

- Client need is a planning priority.
- Three year strategic planning processes.
- Clear social and music participation goals for clients.
- Involvement of professional musicians and teachers.
- Training and development of tutors is supported.
- Ability to develop a multi-source income structure.
- Programme evaluation procedures which are client driven.

They have the confidence to make wider connections.

For example:

- Involvement in and facilitation of local and regional collaborative projects.
- Sensitivity to the goals of other producers.
- Establishment of school based interaction programmes.

- Development policy based on identified community and education needs.
- Active participation in, and on behalf of national or regional associations.
- Frequent needs review of their own client group.

It is my contention that forging closer links between producers and funding providers enhances the effectiveness of the investment. A mutual appreciation of social responsibility to the clients of the institution is the first and last priority.

The Elements of Productive Partnership Between Community Producers and Funding Providers

- Transparent administrative, programme and financial audit processes. For whom, to what extent, and at what cost, are needs being met by the institution?
- Administrative and programme direction functions acknowledged as an essential cost category. Professionalism in these areas is the only way to sustain the response to long term client needs.
- If one accepts that the present social environment places greater emphasis on the individual, then the needs of individuals should be a priority. High priority in funding criteria placed on the number of clients an institution serves, may no longer be appropriate.
- Encouragement of a wide net of economic and social support for the producer is essential. A balance sheet showing a number of ongoing contributors should be regarded as an indication of integrity, and resilience for funding providers.
- For community music producers to be effective in achieving social goals, a low threshold percentage for project establishment is required.
- Funding providers need to take heed of the lack of resources and contacts available to those who typically perform management roles in community music institutions.
- The sharing of skills, work processes, programme evaluation procedures, research and events develops a collaborative network. It encourages efficient use of resources, management audit and potentially a more significant community voice. Revenue directed at connecting with like institutions would be a desirable element in a funding partnership.

Important Threads Identified in Community Music Education (England, Norway, Sweden and New Zealand)

I found community music education decked out in many costumes. In whatever form, the commitment of leaders and administrators have special and shared ingredients. Past the music, there is the love of involving people, of social sharing and celebrating the use of music for addressing a multitude of client needs.

There are few examples in New Zealand where the transparent goal for community music is to address specific social and adjustment problems in a community or education environment. Institutions that might generate intervention work operate within limited and short term funding structures. New initiatives are generated as a result of personal cost.

From my observation of overseas contexts, community music has the potential to address fundamental well being issues for individuals and communities. Powerful and positive results come from bringing people together to explore and express through an arts medium. The participants themselves have a vital role to play in generating the focus and outcomes of a particular project.

Funding for community music intervention work could change perceptions about the contribution of community music education in New Zealand.

Early in the 2000's there will be a new arts curriculum in New Zealand. The English example is a clear warning to decision makers in the education and community music groups about the effects of deregulating instrumental programmes. By contrast the possibility of the music and cultural school provision in Norway and Sweden is beyond the imagination here in New Zealand.

It is my view that increased local government funding is vital as an additional component to the national provision. Monetary commitment produces scrutiny and debate. The music community needs such commitment and interest in order to grow, and gain confidence, in supporting community vitality.

The low intensity of present community music functions; means we have little or no basis for quantifying the impact on people who find a path to participation and confidence through the arts.

Amateur Music Making Links With Education

In the New Zealand context one cannot over-emphasise the importance of the many amateur community ensembles. They make a huge contribution and sometimes the only contribution, to music making in their own and nearby communities.

Collaboration between amateur and education institutions is not consistent in New Zealand. Yet, there are often close parallels between the nature of ensembles in the community and those which are typical of education institutions. A much larger percentage of students could potentially participate in community ensembles if professional and performance links were sustained as typical practice.

There is a lot to be learned from the Norwegian and Swedish approach to collaboration between general schools, music schools and the community. Policy, encouraging adults and students to play in shared ensembles ensures better use of human resources.

Individual teachers of course need to work to their interests and strengths. However whatever a teacher's musical interests, community ensembles should be respected as belonging to, and of significance to the wider community. It is my view teachers need to appreciate the role of community music ensembles because their students are potentially the future of these ensembles.

Anthony Everitt in his report *Joining In* comments "*Co-operation between schools and local musicians is to be actively encouraged, enabling staff and pupils to gain access to a wide range of skills and talent*" applies as much to the New Zealand context as England".

Administration of Community Music

In New Zealand professional administration and professional employment opportunities are small in comparison to England, Sweden or Norway. The reality is that provision for arts administration in New Zealand is fragmented and inconsistent.

New Zealand community music institution administrators are voluntary or lowly paid. Where one can find them, they tend to be in short term positions which are barely attractive. Institutions are largely dependent on philanthropy.

Grant providing bodies seldom allow for administrative overheads in their criteria. It seems it is regarded as a big black hole. We need to wake up.

The provision made for administration of adult programmes in Sweden and Norway has the effect of providing stability and unified direction for regional, national and individual institutions.

Conclusion

It is too easy to say that New Zealanders are motivated outdoor people, who as a rule are reticent to participate in the arts. The response from our young people is phenomenal, if the provision of music training is physically accessible and cost sensitive and relevant to the needs and interests of individuals.

New Zealand's social political policies should be made accountable for the negative comparisons highlighted above. Only the highest profile recreations are successful in winning significant sponsorship.

The arts compete with difficulty. In effect, presently the arts are recognised for the benefits to those who can afford to participate, and, not for the impact that enhanced personal skills have on work and community.

The value of community music education needs to be considered in a wider context of individual growth. Artistic growth for its own sake is important, but no more so than as an effective motivational tool for many individuals.

In the longer term, community music can be significant in establishing participatory attitudes through creative approaches, risk taking opportunity and early community involvement. In my view, there needs to be greater equity of access across all New Zealand communities to support such development through music participation.

All music producers in mainstream education, community and professional institutions, need to connect and collaborate. If policy change is achievable it will most likely occur through a united and rather loud voice. Putting our differences aside I suspect would be the easier part. Forging meaningful collaboration for the benefit of clients would be the difficult challenge.

The potential was, and still is there, to influence decision makers through wide community and professional collaboration. Arts provision has to be woven more dramatically into the New Zealand education and community psyche. In so doing, the perception of the arts would shift from being an adjunct, to one of the "real" cornerstones of vigorous communities. Norway is a good example.

The long term participation of individuals impacts on the spirit and expression of a community. Community music producers in New Zealand need to be more aggressive in highlighting the potential economic and social benefits of their programmes. The facilitation of links between professional, amateur and education resources would increase such gains.

A realistic attitude to administrative and management stability would allow community music institutions to be more responsive to individual and community needs.

In Norway and Sweden such policy is a way of life. In England the missed sign posts have now been identified. In New Zealand, policy makers hold the arts easily at bay while we allow government representatives at all levels to describe our communities as having a strong cultural tradition without significant funding investment.

Many cities, communities and central agencies of New Zealand identify artistic expression as an integral part of the national and community culture. Community music and music education producers need to be direct and unified in strategies which influence current attitudes of government agencies. The label "cultural" implies significantly more commitment than verbal rhetoric.

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"Many Musics -- One Circle"

*The Eighth Biennial Meeting for the ISME Commission for Community Music Activity
Durban, South Africa, July 13-17, 1998*

This document is the concluding statement of the 1998 ISME Commission for Community Music Activity. It sets forth the ideals, characteristics, principles, and recommendations for the future development of community music programs.

The Nature of Community Music

multifaceted + Diverse

At the heart of excellent Community Music programs are the following characteristics:

- emphasis on a variety and diversity of musics that reflect and enrich the cultural life of the community
- active participation in music-making of all kinds (performing, improvising and creating)
- the development of active musical knowing (including verbal musical knowledge where appropriate)
- multiple student/tutor relationships and processes
- a commitment to life-long musical learning and access for all members of the community
- an awareness of the need to include disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups
- a recognition that participants' social and personal growth are as important as their musical growth
- a belief in the value and use of music to foster inter-cultural acceptance and understanding
- respect for the cultural property of a given community and acknowledgment of both individual and group ownership of musics
- an on-going commitment to accountability through frequent and diverse assessment and evaluation procedures

Smaller (+ which) stories to be heard.

Distinctive Means of Community Music Programs

Community Music programs accomplish their aims through the following means:

- flexible teaching, learning and facilitation modes (oral, notational, holistic, experiential, analytic)
- excellence/quality in both the processes and products of music-making
- the honoring of origins and intents of specific musical practices

Pursuit

Present and Future Ideals

Community Music is a vital and dynamic force that provides participants with access to and education in a wide range of musics and musical experiences. Community Music programs and activities are based on the premise that everyone has the right and ability to make and create musics. Accordingly, such programs can act as a counterbalance and complement to formal music institutions and commercial music concerns.

In addition to involving participants in the enjoyment of active music-making and creativity, Community Music programs provide opportunities to construct personal and communal expressions of artistic, social, political, and cultural concerns.

In the pursuit of musical excellence and innovation, Community Music programs also contribute to the development of economic regeneration, create job opportunities in the cultural sectors, and enhance the quality of life for communities.

In all these ways Community Music programs complement, interface with, and extend formal music education structures.

Handwritten signature

Confidence

Calls for Action

Cultural Diversity in Community Music

Musics of the world are relevant for musical practice and music education because of increased accessibility (through media and travel) and increased mobility (migration). This diversity creates the possibility for openness and innovation through many practical models for teaching and learning at all levels. Community Music programs should encompass an appropriate range of musical practices, processes, materials, and philosophies from different cultures.

As the people it work with why

We recommend the following initiatives:

- encourage collaboration and cross-over between music educators in school systems and community musicians
- fundamentally re-structure music education across the board
- establish music practice-oriented pilot projects both outside and within existing structures of music education
- develop resources and make them widely available
- approach music education and music in education from a 'world' perspective (including music history)

Cultural Context and Recontextualization:

- recognition that musics/arts removed from one setting and replanted in another will change their nature
- honor cultures and culture bearers but acknowledge that music and arts continue to grow and change
- empower students and families as sources of musical/artistic expressions and negotiate ways of infusing their cultures into community and educational settings
- utilize pedagogical materials that are developed in collaborations with culture bearers

Cultural Diversity

- honor intricacies of different interactive transmission processes
- encourage educators to participate in diverse cultural communities that surround them

(4)

Calls for Action

Collaborations and Alliances with Community Music Programs

The present and future of Community Music depends significantly on improving Community Music collaborations, alliances and exchanges across local, regional, institutional, national, cultural and stylistic boundaries

To facilitate and enhance collaborations we recommend the creation of a Community Music website and electronic journal for the international exchange of Community Music case studies and narratives, resources, strategies, and experiences. Such use of the WWW would:

- facilitate alliances and exchanges between Community Music theorists and practitioners
- articulate the roles of Community Music in the maintenance, development and renewal of school music programs (especially general classroom programs)
- inform curriculum writers worldwide about the nature of Community Music and the ways Community Music ideas and practitioners can serve the goals and practices of music education at all institutional levels

Has this happened?

(5)

Calls for Action

Travis C.M.

Teacher Training for Community Music Programs

The present and future of Community Music requires the development of excellent training programs (informal and formal) for Community Music professionals. As well as fostering the musical, educational and finance-related competencies of these professionals, training programs should provide leadership in creating partnerships among Community Music programs, professional and amateur music-makers, and formal educational institutions.

We recommend the following initiatives:

- develop international centers for Community Music training
- design varied models for Community Music teacher training
- generate a database of existing Community Music training programs
- formulate varied approaches to the recruitment of Community Music workers

indicate that there are specific states for new

My issues of Vital Dynamics in universities

(6)

Calls for Action

Strategies for Community Music Programs

The present and future of Community Music depends on the effectiveness of practitioners in this field. This requires that a number of strategies be developed and implemented.

This commission advises community workers to consider the following:

- capitalize on the growing goodwill of formal institutions (e.g., universities)
- work with existing (as well as with emerging) systems of training education, employment, health and so forth
- reflect within, with and outside your own community
- negotiate on the basis of mutual benefits
- advocate and market Community Music initiatives to the entire web of potential supporters
- develop visibility and public relationship programs
- document successful Community Music processes and program results for evaluation purposes
- solicit and collect evaluations of Community Music programs for short-term and long-term evaluation and grant-writing purposes

(7)

Calls for Action

Music Technology

Existing and evolving music technology (e.g. synthesizers, samplers, MIDI-controllers, software) has enormous potential in the field of Community Music in the 21st century. Technology permits and encourages access to all forms of music-making for new groups of creators -- with or without traditionally taught musical knowledge -- to become a reality, enabling the production of music of genuine quality. Communication technology allows musical interaction to happen on any level (local or global).

In addition, new technology allows Community Music programs to function as fulcrums for the development of new musical languages and styles, the expansion of present understandings of the nature of music, and the facilitation of performances and publications.

In all these ways, music technology opens windows to music and music-making for disenfranchised sections of the population.

We recommend the following initiatives:

- utilize existing and evolving networks of all kinds, from the grass-roots level to formal institutions local and world-wide
- foster collaborations that finance and share technological resources
- demystify technology by emphasizing and creating user-friendly strategies
- expand access to existing technology centers and resources
- recognize that technology is not equally available in all countries and communities
- reflect critically upon the limitations of technology (including issues of cost, ownership, accessibility, institutionalization, and forward-looking vs. backward-looking adaptations)

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July 18, 1998

To: The ISME Board

From: The Community Music Activities Commission

We are pleased to report that the Community Music Activities Commission enjoyed a very productive and inspiring meeting in Durban during July 13-17, 1998.

In the spirit of Ubuntu, our commission concluded that it is urgent for the survival and development of ISME that we work to broaden people's concepts of "music education." In today's world, men and women learn a diversity of musics in a wide range of circumstances for a large number of reasons and purposes.

ISME's traditional focus on music education as "school music" does not acknowledge the depth and breadth of these community music activities and their importance in the wider population of people who live, work and learn outside schools or in creative partnerships with traditional school curricula.

In addition, the documented achievements of many community music projects hold important lessons for music teachers concerned with issues of motivation, curriculum, teaching strategies, music technology, musical pluralism, and more. Indeed, ISME need only look at the vibrancy and success of community music in South Africa to see "music education" in new and exciting ways.

In conclusion, the Community Music Commission urges ISME to take action in two ways:

- 1) ISME needs to reflect critically on its nature and development in the near and long-term future; and
- 2) ISME needs to increase its involvement in community music activities worldwide and, especially, in the new South Africa after this significant conference concludes.

“Many Musics – One Circle”

*The Eighth Biennial Meeting for the ISME Commission for Community Music Activity
Durban, South Africa, July 13 - 17, 1998*

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The Nature of Community Music

At the heart of excellent Community Music programs are the following characteristics:

- emphasis on a variety and diversity of musics that reflect and enrich the cultural life of the community
- active participation in music-making of all kinds (performing, improvising and creating)
- the development of active musical knowing (including verbal musical knowledge where appropriate)
- multiple learner/tutor relationships and processes
- a commitment to life-long musical learning and access for all members of the community
- an awareness of the need to include disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups
- a recognition that participants' social and personal growth are as important as their musical growth
- a belief in the value and use of music to foster inter-cultural acceptance and understanding
- respect for the cultural property of a given community and acknowledgement of both individual and group ownership of musics
- an on-going commitment to accountability through frequent and diverse assessment and evaluation procedures

Distinctive Means of Community Music Programs

Community Music programs accomplish their aims through the following means:

- flexible teaching, learning and facilitation modes (oral, notational, holistic, experiential, analytic)
- excellence/quality in both the processes and products of music-making
- the honoring of origins and intents of specific musical practices

Present and Future Ideals

Community Music is a vital and dynamic force that provides participants with access to and education in a wide range of musics and musical experiences. Community Music programs and activities are based on the premise that everyone has the right and ability to make and create musics. Accordingly, such programs can act as a counterbalance and complement to formal music institutions and commercial music concerns.

In addition to involving participants in the enjoyment of active music-making and creativity, Community Music programs provide opportunities to construct personal and communal expressions of artistic, social, political, and cultural concerns.

In the pursuit of musical excellence and innovation, Community Music programs also contribute to economic regeneration, create job opportunities in cultural sectors and enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities.

In all these ways, Community Music programs complement, interface with and extend formal music education structures.

Calls for Action

Cultural Diversity in Community Music

Musics of the world are relevant for musical practice and music education because of increased accessibility (through the media and travel) and increased mobility (migration). This diversity creates the possibility for openness and innovation through many practical models of teaching and learning at all levels. Community Music programs should encompass an appropriate range of musical practices, processes, materials and philosophies from different cultures.

We recommend the following initiatives:

- encourage collaboration and cross-over between music educators in school systems and community musicians
- fundamentally re-structure music education across the board
- establish music practice-oriented pilot projects both outside and within existing structures of music education
- develop resources and make them widely available
- approach music education and music in education from a "world" perspective (including music history)

Cultural Context and Recontextualization:

- recognition that musics/arts removed from one setting and replanted in another will change their nature
- honor cultures and culture bearers, but acknowledge that music and arts continue to grow and change
- empower students and families as sources of musical/artistic expressions and negotiate ways of infusing their cultures into community and educational settings
- utilize pedagogical materials that are developed in collaboration with culture bearers

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- honor intricacies of different interactive transmission processes
- encourage educators to participate in diverse cultural communities that surround them

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To facilitate and enhance collaborations we recommend the creation of a Community Music website and electronic journal for the international exchange of Community Music case studies and narratives, resources, strategies, and experiences. Such use of the WWW would:

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The present and future of Community Music depends on the effectiveness of practitioners in this field. This requires that a number of strategies be developed and implemented.

This commission advises community workers to consider the following:

- capitalize on the growing goodwill of formal institutions (e.g., universities)
- work with existing (as well as with emerging) systems of training, education, employment, health and so forth
- reflect within, with and outside your own community
- negotiate on the basis of mutual benefits
- advocate and market Community Music initiatives to the entire web of potential supporters
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In addition, new technology allows Community Music programs to function as fulcrums for the development of new musical languages and styles, the expansion of present understandings about the nature of music, and the facilitation of performances and publications.

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Paper to be presented to the ISME Community Music Commission Seminar in Durban 13-17/7/98 and the Special Sessions of the 23rd World Conference of the International Society for Music Education in Pretoria, South Africa on 19-25/7/98.

In the context of UBUNTU is the notion of "multiculturalism" - potentially so attractive as a political and educational concept that promotes greater understanding - nothing more than a way of promulgating homogeneity? Is it not a new form of cultural imperialism? Are there not better ways to encourage specific cultural voices that secure value and meaning?

*What educates is significant experience.
(Mursell, 1934, cited in Paynter, 1982, p. xiv)*

We live in a changing world. Increasingly, countries and peoples find themselves inhabiting a new social and political dynamic. More often than not this dynamic is led by international, even global, understandings of how social and political "justice" and "freedom" shall be achieved. One of the first possible casualties of such worldviews is that of cultural identity. Worldviews as we currently understand them tend to be orientations of Western perception.

*"Our investigations and discussions have led us to the perception that community music activity is characterised by the following principles: decentralisation, accessibility, equal opportunity, and active participation in music-making. These principles are social and political ones, and there can be no doubt that community music activity is more than a purely musical one. In this respect it is an attitude towards music-making and music learning which challenges traditional Western-world concepts of music education. We believe that Western-world institutions (and their imitators throughout the world) must attend to that challenge in considering their own activities and structures, at all levels."
(Olseng, 1990, p. 84)*

In the sense just described community music praxis embraces the spirit of UBUNTU. It is vital that we not only develop approaches to community music activity that encourage diversity, understanding and humanity but also that we ensure that identity, the very purpose of cultural expression and the outcome that gives meaning to the previous qualities listed, is secured in the process. To this end we must not allow ourselves to be party to sloppy liberalism and we must be rigorous in our methods if we are to achieve opportunities for the development of personal autonomy, which is the very basis of freedom, and a sense of worth, which is the foundation of justice.

The term "multicultural" has become very popular in recent years as a description of societies made up of varied groupings of people who, apparently, have their own cultures, and the sum total of these is the national multicultural. From this definition a concept has been generated that is "multiculturalism", and it is the impact of this concept on societies in general, those people for whom specific cultural activity has particular meaning and the implications for art, artists and educators that is the prime concern of this discussion.

A profusion of terms rain down on us in order to define tiny incremental steps, to all intents and purposes in the same direction, in the development of the concept of "multiculturalism", such as "intercultural", "cultural diversity", "cultural pluralism" and "cultural democracy", but as they are effectively modifications of the same intent, and that intent has the significant weight of history and understanding behind it, in this argument we shall take them to mean effectively the same thing, which is how they are commonly interpreted.

The discussion will seek to explore the notion and nature of multiculturalism and to ask whether this concept has more to do with Politics, with a capital P, than with the representation or definition of the lives, achievements and social and political, with a small p, interaction of different groups of people. It will also consider what cultures appear to qualify to be put in this category, who makes these decisions and why.

To begin close to home the report of the 1992 ISME CMA Seminar in Auckland, "Intercultural Music Education: an international perspective", a document that attempted to find common ground with difficulty as the principal author John Drummond concedes, the following definition can be found:

In some countries the term multicultural is used in official policy as a means to disenfranchise groups identified with that policy. In other countries it is used as a means to promote cultural preservation, participation and interaction. It is therefore a term of local variation.
(Drummond, 1992, p. 63)

This is clearly a definition that identifies the political policy function of the concept. It is policy employed as a means of manipulation and does not appear to reflect the needs or desires of individuals but emphasises the desirability of certain social outcomes. Whether you were in the first group of countries or the second group the impact of the policies would be the same; received identity, almost separate development. It is Habermas' "bourgeois public sphere" at work.

The communicative network of a public made up of rationally debating private citizens has collapsed: the public opinion once emergent from it has partly decomposed into the informal opinions of private citizens without a public and partly become concentrated into formal opinions of publicistically effective institutions. (Habermas 1962/1989)

Through these "publicistically effective institutions", increasingly antagonistic to intellectual and individual freedom, particularly in the west, the authority to make decisions is steadily being removed from the citizen and replaced by an arbitrary moral obligation that she/he live by received rules. Just look at what "political correctness", now endemic in every institution, has achieved for the individual responsibilities and rights of the people - any people - in recent decades. The extensive range of examples in America, where it could be argued multiculturalism grew up, are graphically and

effectively detailed in the recent critiques *Culture of Complaint* by Robert Hughes (1994) and *The Disuniting of America* by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (1991). Just one image, of the many acute observations made by Hughes, reflects significantly what he feels multiculturalism has done to the meaning of quality, and therefore value, in creative activities.

As a maudlin reaction against excellence spreads to the arts, the idea of aesthetic discrimination is tarred with the brush of racial or gender discrimination. Few take a stand on this, or point out that in matters of art "elitism" does not mean social injustice or even inaccessibility. The self is now the sacred cow of American culture, self-esteem is sacrosanct, and so we labour to turn arts education into a system in which no one can fail. In the same spirit, tennis could be shorn of its elitist overtones: you just get rid of the net. (Hughes, 1994 i, p.6)

Whilst I might not agree with Hughes as to what we might each think excellence is, and that would be a discussion that I would delight in - not because it would be antagonistic but because it would be so stimulating, I must categorically agree that it is desirable. And it is my experience and knowledge that everybody I have ever known and, particularly, worked with would think so too; whether they would admit it is, perhaps, another thing. This issue lies at the core of debates about practice in community music in Britain in that much of the work is driven by ill-conceived policy that is, in turn, ill-applied and the discussion, if it takes place at all, of meaning tends to revolve around the sacrifice of the practitioner for the good of the community, and not around issues of quality, relevance, aesthetics, power, value, of excellence. We shall return to these issues in later discussions.

These policies and practices promote a sense of cultural homogeneity in that they do not recognise the way in which people value things, culture among them. They encourage a sense of valuelessness and this has an impact way beyond any particular artefact or cultural product. Knowledge and experience are also victims here. To understand is to learn and to understand more is to learn more. An understanding of value is a subjective and developmental process, we can argue about whether value itself is a subjective or objective property at another time, and so cannot be received in an arbitrary way; it must be lived. Once understood, whatever that means, the individual confident in their understanding, is able to make judgements about the value of new things and new experiences.

Lawrence Stenhouse, the influential educational thinker, argued powerfully for the benefit of enquiry-based methodologies of teaching. The fundamental premise for such an approach is that students, of whatever kind in whatever situation, learn best when they inform and understand the learning process; when why and what they learn is relevant to themselves. A crucial part of that relevance is the significance of their lives and the knowledge and experience base they have already developed, their culture. If this knowledge and experience base is given credibility as the position where learning more begins the conclusions and decisions these students reach will inform ever broader and greater judgements made with increasing confidence.

This theory is informed by the thinking of the psychologist, George Kelly (1963, p.43), that recognises the act of will in human participation and the diversity of understanding and experience implicit in that process of decision-making.

...man comes to understand his world through an infinite series of successive approximations. Since man is always faced with constructive alternatives,

which he may explore if he wishes, he need not continue indefinitely to be the absolute victim either of his past history or of his present circumstances.

It is now time to attempt a definition of culture. Culture as a definition of product, depending upon one's perspective, tends to be either established art, the quality of which is recognised by its enduring nature, or the dynamic the new and exciting art and art forms that push the boundaries of taste and understanding and stretch the ties with history. The area where these definitions crossover reflect the understandings of the culturally "au fait" and, though there are ends to this spectrum, traditionally they who aspire to this status do so on common ground, the tradition of culture, embraced or rejected. The terms of reference are the same but the interpretations, the value judgements, are different. This is not surprising given the predominance of the technical rationalist western cultural tradition, whose obsession with absolutes and objectification were assumed from the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, etc., etc. before them, and its impact across the world. Incidentally, the case often made for the justifiable predominance of this cultural mindset is that no other threatens it as an alternative; therefore, by default, it must be the best. However, other cultures do not compete because it is not relevant for them to do so, it is not even a desire or objective to be considered. They are the aspirations and demands of the people whose lives they reflect. (Of course the notion of multiculturalism raises the spectre of competition! As a consequence it could be interpreted as seeking credibility for cultures not recognised by the western tradition within that tradition. Where does that leave the context and purposes of these cultures?). By the way when I speak in this way of "western culture" it is not a judgement on the art that it embraces, but a judgement on those who sought, and seek, to exploit the art as a medium of imperialism.

I concede that the above description is argumentative, but then it is intended to be. I believe that this is an accurate description of the hegemonic use of culture to preserve the notion of "status quo". I don't think I would be doing the job I do if I didn't. However, it is fair to comment that most *individuals* would acknowledge a far more diverse cultural understanding and experience.

Culture as a definition of the context of the social and political lives of people is another perspective. Even within the western tradition there were those that recognised the dynamic potential of culture that believed, and believe, that it is a form of popular expression that brings relevance to the lives of the living, an appreciation of what has happened in the past and an expectation of what might happen in the future. Consider the relevance to our discussions of the thoughts of the philosopher and educationalist Matthew Arnold. Arnold's words, written towards the end of the last century, are particularly significant as he considers culture to be an ever contemporary popular expression that is politically and socially understood by those who identify it. A perception of individual autonomy, even if it is romantically identified as an absolute, that increasingly resonates with our interpretations of the process of community music across the world.

He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred: culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even greater! - the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man: it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light..... Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses... But culture works

differently....It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely - nourished and not bound by them. (Arnold, 1932, pp. 69-70)

Arnold's identification of the contemporary relevance and social and political nature of culture substantiates much of the thinking of previous seminars, both individually in presentations (note 1) and collectively in previous ISME CMA seminar procedures and reports (note 2). His thoughts on, and concerns about, machinery have also been echoed, not only by anxieties over misplaced priorities regarding the supremacy of technology - such as computers etc. - but with regard to human machines that also might constrain rather than affirm the individual - such as institutions, organisations, traditions, class structures, political systems, policies, etc. - and which come to use rather than be used if they are not watched very carefully.

This dynamic view is also reflected by two further descriptions that recognise the autonomy of the "cultural" (a more developmental and current term than "cultured"), and which also resist the potential hegemony of institutionalised technology. The Italian philosopher Gramsci (1975, pp. 20-21) argued the following,

Culture...is the organisation, the disciplining of one's inner self; it is the appropriation of one's own personality; it is the conquest of a superior consciousness whereby it becomes possible to understand one's own historical value, function in life, rights and duties.

and Lawrence Stenhouse, of whom I spoke earlier, comments,

"As well as being a product of social action, culture is also a determinant of it. It determines who can talk to whom about what. We talk to one another by virtue of what is common in the cultures we have learned; we are unable to talk to one another when we lack common experience." (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 8)

These descriptions depict culture not only as dynamic but also as spontaneous, and I would like to cite one last description of the function of culture as an intrinsic and spontaneous part of contemporary life, art and society. Christopher Small (1977, p. 56-57) considered the complex music and dance ceremonies of the Chopi of Mozambique. These ceremonies are a vital part of the life of the Chopi and express

Cunning mixtures of mirth and sadness, political comment and just plain gossip, outbursts of vitality which remain indissolubly linked to the concrete lives of the people from whom they arose, and yet at the same time bearing a universally human and spiritual message.

Small goes on to describe the complexity, diversity and inventiveness of the art (music and dance), a tradition of development employing master composers, musicians and choreographers that continually creates something new and relevant out of the old through a process of devising in collaboration with the performers (the people) without any recourse to pen and paper.

The new work is inserted into the existing work, movement by movement as it is completed, finally replacing the old completely. The old work is then forgotten, however fine or masterly it might have been, it has served its purpose and can be let go.... To these African musicians it is the process that is important; the product is relatively unimportant and can be discarded without compunction, a sign of self-confidence on the part of these richly creative artists that seems to be lacking in the west.

I have argued, in a very short space, two perspectives on culture that describe very different ways of looking at the same world. Both perspectives are depicted in relation to understandings of western culture because it is perceptions of the impact and dominance of that tradition and the belief, often justified, that it resists and ignores other cultural experience that gave rise to the need for some kind of action, some kind of response. This response grew to be known as multiculturalism.

Propositions

Now that a definition of what culture is has been attempted some questions will need to be answered, including:

What does the term "multiculturalism" mean?

Multiculturalism is a specific policy designed to raise the profile of cultures that are perceived to stand outside the western tradition, that do not fit within the perceived dominant Eurocentric mindset, particularly of "the establishment", wherever they be found. As such it was intended as a policy to be employed at any level to raise the consciousness and understanding of these other cultures in order that they might be valued as part of a diverse common culture. Grimshaw (1990, p. 550) describes it as a concept "*that grew out of the policy of integration*", as interpreted by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, "*(rather than assimilation) developed with respect to minority groups. (It implies the recognition and acceptance of social diversity)*".

As the impact of the applied policy has increased a particular consequence has been that, though the cultural activity and product of minority groups has been encouraged as of equal status within the common culture, it is not believed to be appropriate to interpret the value of this activity and product by the same criteria that are applied to "the mainstream". This is a problem associated with the political and social relevance of these minority cultures and has led to calls for their status to be seen as equal but different; in effect, separate. This issue, while undermining the intended effectiveness of the policies, is embraced by the establishment and the minorities because neither wish to adjust their understandings of quality to any that might be common to all. Many minority groups believe that if such common ground were to be sought, let alone found, then the unique properties and meanings of their cultures would be assimilated and they would be silenced. Gundara (1998, p. 3) argues

It is worth considering whether it is possible to move beyond the rhetorics of race, class and gender which would require a more complex understanding than the cosmetic and superficial gestures of the past.... The ways, means and mechanisms of voicing the silenced in the public domain remains a complex, even elusive task.

Does the term "multiculturalism" relate to all cultures?

As a policy objective the answer is no. In the Arts Council of England's Cultural Diversity Action Plan (1998), the latest policy initiative, the following note is to be found

"Cultural Diversity", in this Action Plan, must be taken to refer to African, Asian and Chinese Arts: a reading specified by the Council of Arts Councils in July 1994. However, it is intended that the broader principle of diversity as a whole is encompassed within this reading. (p. 5)

Further in this document can be found the following references under "Key Principles"

The principle of Diversity applies more widely than ethnicity and the focus of this particular Action Plan. It refers to the right - endorsed in UNESCO's "Our Creative Diversity" - to cultural self-definition and the value given to the individual voice. (p. 11)

and

Diversity is central to every aspect of cultural life. It has been instrumental in contributing to the creation of a distinctively British form of contemporary cultural expression and is responsible for some remarkable developments. (p. 12)

Confusing, isn't it? And to add to this confusion here is Hughes (1994 ii, p. 86) again.

Unhappily, you do not have to listen very long to the arguments on the other side before sensing that, in quite a few of its proponents' minds, multiculturalism means something less than genuine curiosity about other cultural forms. The first casualty of this is the idea of Europe itself - for how can anyone with the slightest acquaintance with the enormous, rich, contradictory range of European literature and thought presume that it forms one solid "Eurocentric" mass, "as if", in Russell Jacoby's words, "Adolf Hitler and Anne Frank represented the same world"?"

What is a culture when it's at home - i.e. when it is indigenous?

It is the expression of meanings and values of particular societies embracing, even if through antagonism, influences from elsewhere. These meanings and values may be different for diverse groupings, whether identified by race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, political belief or attitude.

What is a culture when it's not at home - i.e. when it has been transported to another place?

It is the expression of meanings and values brought from another social and political context and reconciled, to whatever degree, with the realities and demands of a different and dominant social, political and cultural context. Such a definition is only relevant to first generation immigrants. I would argue that once further generations are born in the country to which parents or grandparents have

emigrated their cultural position is in direct relation to the prevailing cultural conditions in that country.

A positive and benign view of an experience of transplantation would be

...my own environment, though highly monocultural (Australia in the 1940s - 1970s) was not monolithic: it gave me tools to react against it, which I did by leaving, living elsewhere, and getting interested in the hybrid, the impure, the sense of eclectic mixture that is at the heart of so much of twentieth century creation. Culture and history are full of borders but they are all to some degree permeable.
(Hughes, 1994 ii, p. 82-83)

Is a multicultural society a western concept?

Yes it is in that, as we have seen, the specific intent of the concept as applied policy is to counter the perceived imbalance of opportunity, acceptance and credibility of "other cultures" due to the understood dominance of the western tradition and the contemporary and global culture that has grown from it.

Is multiculturalism an imperialist concept?

Yes it is in that, in its original intent, the policy was to identify and integrate a broad, but specific, range of minority cultures into the common culture and make good citizens of them all. This view is further confirmed by the current practice, arising from the perceived failure or, at least, shortcomings of the first intent, of abandoning the objective of a diverse common culture and encouraging distinction and separateness. In this sense, within a country such as Britain for instance, this approach reflects a form of indulgent imperialism - a form of sloppy liberalism - which is open to abuse and ignorance because it lacks any stimulus for the discussion of the meaning and value of cultures, let alone culture, in the social and political context of the nation.

How does the expression of a culture through art have meaning?

I must cite Gramsci again here:

The supreme problem of culture is to master one's own transcendental ego and to become at the same time the ego of one's ego. Thus, it is not surprising to find the complete lack of intelligence in others. Without a perfect comprehension of ourselves, we cannot truly understand others. (Gramsci, 1975, p.20)

Cultural process and product have meaning to those who invest them with meaning. To do this the responsibility for the intentions and outcomes of cultural activity must be realised by those who act culturally, whether by making or participating, in the broader social and political context. That meaning is identified by each individual as the way in which they understand who they are, what they believe in, who they care about. In each case this approach potentially recognises complexity and

variety in the contemporary cultural context but only if those actors can learn of the significance of other cultural acts and creations because of the relevance and value of their own to themselves.

Does the concept of multicultural disempower any social or political group in society whose own cultural processes and products have particular meaning for them?

Yes it does as it is currently, and simplistically, applied in practice as a form of social control. If such groups, whoever they may be and from whatever side of the perceived divide they might come, are forced to recognise equal status for cultural activities and products without the opportunity to develop and value their own cultural product and negotiate understanding in a broader cultural context then knowledge and experience is increasingly diminished. Misunderstanding and antagonism is inevitable without dialogue. Dialogue is a process of developing individual understanding. In the current context, where dialogue is minimal and, as a result, respect is confused, simplistic assumptions and biases prevail, in part because the apparent argument for tolerance is to embrace the unknown without question rather than understand any meaning that can be derived from a unique individual perspective of inquiry. An approach to this problem is argued by Catherine Ugwu (1998, p. 2).

Some cultural strategies that have been employed to challenge stereotypical representations include the replacing of negative images with positive ones such as diversifying the range of racial representations and the complexity and hybridity of the black experience. Another strategy is what I now suggest to be the substitution of one stereotype for another.....I believe the impact of interrogating received stereotypes rather than creating new ones is a far more persuasive and influential strategy. That is appropriating the stereotype itself and contesting it from within.

This is an argument for applied intellectual inquiry that must recognise a range of different judgements and developing understandings, irrespective of who the inquirer is or where they stand. As such it is a worthy process that is likely to stimulate and encourage greater respect for cultural aspiration and endeavour because it is premised on investigating understood rather than received meaning. Of course, one of the things to be understood is, hopefully, how much meaning has already been received at the beginning of such an inquiry.

Workshop Questions

We all live in the hope that authentic meetings between human beings can still occur.
(R. D. Laing)

1. If the argument is successfully made that multiculturalism is, indeed, a Political concept (or even policy), is its application:

- * relevant?
- * well-intentioned but misguided (i.e. inappropriate positive discrimination)?
- * convenient?

* divisive?

* appropriate in directing, and possibly dictating, artistic and arts education endeavour and development?

* necessary?

2. Is the "common experience", described by Stenhouse, an effective means of identifying and valuing distinction?

3. Is the growing social and Political emphasis on multicultural not leading us in the opposite direction from that "common experience"?

4. If the application of multicultural policy is indeed damaging to the identity of the individual and the value of his/her culture then what are the implications for community music praxis?

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BH 7/98.

Global Implications, Paradigms and Promises in Community Music

Kari Veblen and Jackie Small

Introduction

The term community music evokes a circle, a localized group of people where lines between performer and audience blur, where the processes of teaching and learning meld with participating. We might envision a garage band, a choir, jazzers and chamber music groups -- dozens of images, rural and urban, from many places.

But what of the musical communities that are not rooted geographically? What are the emerging global contexts? This paper examines two musical moments -- one in rural Ireland fifty years ago, one recorded recently in a London recording studio -- to decipher components and to propose models for interactive networks of community music making.

Listening: BBC ARCHIVES (1998). FIELD RECORDING OF SEAMUS ENNIS "THE COPPERPLATE."

Community Context in Connemara, 1946

This recording invites us to an outdoor festival in fine weather. Listen to the high pitched gymnastics of a tin whistle being countered by a dancer's rhythmic hoofing. The crowd cheers and eggs on both player and dancer, hoping for even fancier footwork, higher leaps and more dazzling melodic feats. This BBC Archival recording from 1946 captures a moment in Connemara. More

tellingly this recording gives a sense of the connections between community, musician and dancer at this time and place.

"Come on, Stephen, come on!" – words of encouragement and exhortation to a young dancer, Stephen Folan, on a special occasion in Connemara, in the far west of Ireland, nearly fifty years ago. The occasion is a visit to the Irish-speaking village of Carna by the collector and master musician Séamus Ennis, who is an old friend to the music community here, and whose visits are significant events in this isolated and neglected area.

On this occasion, Ennis is acting as facilitator and guide to the American folklorist Alan Lomax, who is on a collecting trip, recording music around the world for a historic series of recordings.

And now it's time for the young dancer to strut his stuff. Stephen's community is around him, proud of his prowess as the standard-bearer of their local tradition, and eager to show him off at his best. There is a keen air of expectation, palpable in the atmosphere generated first by the calls of encouragement from the assembled spectators, and then by the introductory flourish on the tin whistle, played by Séamus Ennis. Heir to a long and classic tradition of uilleann piping, Ennis is one of the great figures of the twentieth century in traditional music; but here it is the dancing which is the main performance. The music, while essential and of absorbing interest in itself, is subordinate to the dance.

The tune begins, a familiar dance tune, the reel known as *The Copperplate*, and after once round the first section or 'part' of the tune at a sparkling pace, we hear the characteristic tapping of Irish solo footwork as the dance performance begins. It is heralded by a call from a spectator, as ever the standard encouragement for a dancer in this part of Connemara, the exhortation "Faoi do chois é!" ["It's under your foot!"], as if the caller is pointing out something the

dancer needs to stamp out with his tapping feet! We hear the tapping feet of the dancer on the recording, interacting with the dance of notes and fingers on the tin whistle – the melody endlessly varied and embellished with a wealth of flourishes, the phrasing and rhythm being reshaped in a myriad of ways to enhance the experience and the interplay with the dancer. Of the dancer's performance, obviously, we only experience what is audible, what is 'close to the floor'. Other significant aspects of the performance which we can't, of course, experience are visual – how his shoulders are loosely gesturing, lifting, and shrugging as he dances; the gesticulating arms and hands; the swaying hips. In *sean nós* or 'old-style' dancing as traditionally performed in Connemara, there is little of the rigidity which is stereotypically associated with the more regimented Irish dancing taught for formal competitions. The dancer here has a free flow of bodily and temporal expression: he can respond at will to the moment and to the atmosphere.

As Stephen dances, the interaction with the spectators goes on as their verbal interjections continue, swell, subside, continue again. They call to him, he responds with ever more flourishes, they shout in appreciation in return. "Ah, grá mo chroí thú!" ["Ah, you are the love of my heart!"], says one voice. Another exclaims, "Dia leat, a Stiofáin!" ["God be with you, Stephen!"]. As the dancer adds ever more intricate footwork and more flamboyant hand gestures and body movements, the exhortations and calls of appreciation finally rise to a climax at a high point in the dancing, with full-blooded roars of delight from the spectators. Even after this peak in the performance, the calls still continue, "Dia go deo leat!" ["God be with you forever!"].

Finally, as the dance draws to a close, the tin whistle finds an improvised final cadence in a high phrase at the end of the tune. The happy and satisfied applause is accompanied by more words, now of appreciation, from the

spectators, the participating community who themselves have been such an integral part of the performance.

The whole cycle of this complete performance has taken less than two minutes, beginning with community expectation and exhortation and continuing through a collaborative musical performance which provides community interaction in a dramatic setting including a musical climax, leading to fulfilment and happiness in the successful expression of their soul in music. Yet – short as it is – the essence of the Irish tradition is expressed in this tiny happening, and to experience it and to enjoy it and to participate in it, even as a listener fifty years later to the sound recording, is to become part of the happening and to become part of the Irish tradition. This is a music which welcomes ‘outsiders’ and makes them feel ‘at home’ very quickly.

Irish Community Context Diagram

Taking a look at this moment diagramed in Figure 1, we recognize how the community asserts and perpetuates itself. The performance itself serves as a model of teaching and learning. The components diagrammed are by no means all that is going on, but they give a hint of the micronarratives suspended in webs of historical and ideological significance.

The Dance

Stephen Folan, the dancer in this recording, is sean nós -- or ‘old style’ dancing, his face intense as he improvises steps, lifting his knee high, one arm gesturing, feet clogging out the rhythmic counterpoint to the melody. We catch the echoes of a kind of dancing which exists outside of the institutionalization and codifying of dance which happened as part of the cultural renaissance about 100 years ago which in its political manifestation led to the establishment of the Irish state. This dancing is a survival from before dancing was organized by centralized organizations connected to the national movement and also connected

to the rigid Catholic moral ethos imposed by the new state. There’s a freedom of bodily movement of hands and arm gesture, of personal expression, of improvisation, of response to the moment which is absent from the stratified and strictly regimented regime imposed by national dancing organizations.ⁱ

The Dancer

The dancer, Stiofáin Ó Cualáin or Stephen Folan, was a teenager at the time of this recording. He went on to train as a schoolteacher, and he led a productive life in the community, teaching its children, and performing occasionally as a dancer. We could call him a community musician/teacher.

Community of Dancers

It is likely enough that other people in the crowd would have danced with or before or after the dancer being recorded and that several other musicians might have been able to play along with the tin whistler. While some people in a locality might be known for their playing or dancing (as well as for singing, story telling or many other social graces), many if not most of the people enjoying this day would be musicians and dancers and singers as well.

Community Expectations

The Irish social context which encourages spontaneous performance is furthered by other musical expectations. Irish traditional music is an art form on a small scale; listeners enjoy the nuances of ornamentation and tune juxtaposition played by a solo whistle as well as variations on familiar steps done by a solo dancer. On-lookers may savor the familiarity of a tune, the individuality expressed in a performance as well as virtuosity, if it is present.

As this listening example illustrates, a lone musician playing (or singing) a tune is considered a complete performance by itself. While other instruments or harmonic accompaniment or other melody instruments might be welcomed, they are not necessary for music to happen. Any number or combination of instruments may play together, but usually all will play the tune in unison with no

intentional counterpoint.. Such flexibility and-- in the case of the tin whistle -- portability -- help create and enhance the spontaneous community and supportive community context which ensures this genre's popularity.

Tin Whistle

The tin whistle has an honorable pedigree in Ireland. Ancestors of the modern tin whistle are depicted on medieval High Crosses and mentioned in old poemsⁱⁱ, talesⁱⁱⁱ and in the laws governing ancient Irish society.^{iv} The oldest known surviving specimens, 12th century bird-bone whistles, were recently unearthed in the old Norman quarter of Dublin. It is thought that the tin whistle was made of hollowed reeds, ripe oat straws and other stalks, as well as wood and bone. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the tin whistle and other flageolets enjoyed a great popularity. At this time, much experimentation in materials, design and fingering systems resulted in the current tin whistle form.

It is significant that the music played at this occasion on one of the most common Irish instruments is often the first instrument a musician plays before investing in another, more expensive one. But although it looks like a toy and is associated with beginners, Irish musicians accord the tin whistle as much status as a flute or fiddle when in the hands of a virtuoso. And in this recording, Dublin-born Seamus Ennis the whistler is not only a virtuoso (on uilleann pipes as well as tin whistle), but a pioneering collector of traditional music, an urbane raconteur beloved in rural areas, and a legendary drinker.^v

Musical Form: Tune Type: The Reel

The tune featured here "The Copper Plate is a reel, by far the most popular tune-type in the Irish tradition: the lively dance which accompanies it was originally performed solo by both men and women and has long since been incorporated into the quadrille sets which are so popular now.^{vi} In published music collections the reel is given variously as being in 4/4 time, common time,

2/2 time, or split common time. High virtuosity in the playing of reels has developed among players and 'sessions' or informal gatherings of musicians can often consist almost entirely of reel-playing.

The reel first came to Ireland when a resurgence of interest in it in Scotland as part of the Romantic revival in the late eighteenth century brought a handful of examples to the country. The reel was immediately popular and engaged all the exuberant creativity of 19th century Irish rural musicians who generated a total of at least four thousand reels where, in the words of the great scholar and collector Breandán Breathnach, 'a dozen would have done them!' More reels are being composed today, recent examples often in styles influenced by pop music and by the harmonic consciousness implicit in it which is now beginning to be part of the internal music apparatus of younger traditional musicians.^{vii}

Gender

This event is entirely male-dominated. The dancer and the instrumentalist are male, and if there are women among the spectators we hear no verbal contributions from them. Solo exhibitionist dancing in the Irish tradition have been traditionally male, especially dances which require heavy footwork.^{viii}

Traditional music and its associated social practices -- including, stereotypically, heavy alcohol consumption and extended frequenting of pubs -- were considered inimical to the family ethos which 'protected' women in their primary function as mothers in an overwhelmingly Catholic community. It was socially taboo for a woman to appear in a pub; if she played or sang, she performed at home, and only on certain instruments.

Only in recent years -- since the 1960s -- have women been active in large numbers as performers in the Irish tradition, and the adoption of it by

significant numbers of women as a means of expression is one of the biggest revolutions in the Irish tradition in recent times.

Connemara and the Irish Language

In the piece of community music we are experiencing in this recording, there is a significant verbal component. Calls, shouts, and whoops from the spectators signal their participation in the performance rather than mere attendance at it.

The performance takes place in what was then – and still is, if a little less so – a strongly Irish-speaking area, and most of the interjections we hear on the recording are in Irish. Although such remarks are formulaic, they are none the less deeply felt and meant for that. The well-trying formulas testify to the vivid presence of music and dance among this Irish-speaking community. The largest remaining *Gaeltacht* [Irish-speaking areas] now remaining is that in west Co. Galway, where this recording was made: the area still has a rich singing tradition, known as *amhránaíocht ar an sean nós* [singing in the old manner]. Cultural values implicit in the language and of relevance to the music tradition in Ireland include the nurturing of 'old ways' of singing and dancing. The other *Gaeltachtaí* – principally those in counties Donegal, Kerry, Cork, and Waterford, as well as the artificially created one in the midlands ~~which~~ – also incorporate rich traditions of music, dance, and particularly song.^{ix}

Other Factors

Note the ideological framing: political, social and cultural forces as well as invisible factors such as the BBC recording crew that was undoubtedly there. And yet, even though we can only hint at these broader factors in this account of "The Copperplate," even the details examined show how history, culture, transmission and context are encoded in one tiny, happy musical performance that took place ~~50-some years ago~~

a half century ago

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Community Context of a World Music Recording 1996

As illustrated through "The Copper Plate," Irish music arose from specific historical conditions and a geographically bound place. However, as this traditional music (like others) has met technology, what was formerly enjoyed at local gatherings inside Irish communities now moves in new contexts; it circulates freely among people who may have no contact with Irish people or any personal knowledge of what this music means.

This newly marketed Celtic or world music carries familiar features, perhaps with unfamiliar components as shown by this excerpt of a song *Éistigh Liomsa Sealad / Listen to Me* by The Afro Celt Sound System recorded in 1996.

Ayest de Lumsah Shalad

Listening: EMMERSON, SIMON (PRODUCER). (1996). *Éistigh Liomsa Sealad* SUNG BY IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD, AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM: VOLUME 1 SOUND MAGIC [CD]. 214

In this brief cut from a longer track, a *seán nos* song is spun out over synthesized drones somewhat reminiscent of uilleann pipes, suggesting a dark surging tide. The touchstone harp sound ebbs through the sung verses but with an exotic flavored arpeggio that suggests other exotic places -- maybe Africa, maybe the Middle East.

How Irish is this music? How African? Is Irish/African music -- as heard in global contexts -- now no more than a faintly exotic / faintly familiar flavor on a pop-music base? When an essentially non-harmonic music like Irish traditional music allies itself with a hegemonic language of enormous resources and prestige (like international pop music) dominated by a simple harmonic paradigm, does the Irish part of the music linger on only in the timbre?

And how do we interpret the words if we don't know them or speak Irish?

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They are veiled to us, maybe exotic, maybe endangered.

Éistigh Liomsa Sealad [Listen to me awhile]

Céad glóire leis an Athair, N'ar mhór le rá A 'ainm, Tá go cumhachtach ins na Flaithis, Le trácht ag an saol.	[A hundred glories to the Father, Whose name is greatly revered, Who is powerful in the Heavens, And greatly spoken of in the world.
Do chúm 's do chló na haingil, Go lonnrach, soillseach, lasmhar, Gan smúit, gan cheo, gan pheaca, Gan teimheal, mar an ngréin:	Who created and fashioned the angels, Resplendent, luminous, shining, Spotless, stainless, sinless, Without tarnish, like the sun:
Do riarraigh spéartha 's scamail, Chuir solas árd sa ghealaigh, Na réiltín' chugainn ag taitheamh Gach oíche ar an spéir,	Who made skies and clouds And set the high lamp of the moon, The stars to us shining Each night in the sky,
Do líon gach abha is caise, Le slaodaibh tiubha len' fheartaibh, 'S an mhór-mhuir bhrúchtach fhairsing, Lán dá chuid éisc.	Who filled each river and torrent Miraculously with thick waves, And the expansive, tidal ocean Full of its fishes.

This is an eighteenth-century religious song, a long hymn to God the Father, composed in Munster, ascribed to an author named Marrinan. The melody used is that of a popular song *Seán Ó Duibhir an Ghleanna*, named after an Irish rebel. That earlier song is a lament for Gaelic losses of life and property in battles with the English.

Iarla Ó Lionáird, [Ear-lah Oh Len-ard] the singer on this track, comes from Cúil Aodha in West Cork, a place noted for its singing traditions. "My mother, grandmother and grandfather all sang sean-nós. My grand-aunt Elizabeth Cronin was also a noted singer, better known to the archivists than anyone else . . . From my childhood it became apparent I could sing like her and

without the slightest prompting. But I want to say something to you about sean-nós. It is somewhat a continuum. If you look at the way traditional music has become, we are at the tail end of the meaning of continuum because it's the way music is made today and the way in which it's handed down."

Although it may seem a contradiction to feature a genre of vocal music that has previously been the province of a specific and linguistically-bound community as well as the researchable domain of connoisseurs, Ó Lionáird feels that he has something to say in modern music: "Emotion and performance is everything . . . Nowadays my music is injected into other musical landscapes -- Ambient, New Age, Techno, Dance and Traditional. God knows what I'll be working on next, but let me tell you this, I'm looking forward to it (Caren 1997b:7).

There are a number of paradoxes embodied in this recording. How do we interpret this -- as a blurring of traditions or as a refining of individual expression? Even as "freeze-dried" music becomes readily available through global commodification, an individual musician may assert his or her personal style and musical ideas. As in the case of The Afro Celt Sound System, the musicians don't always feel that they need to adopt the old context or in some cases, be of Irish heritage.

London-born tin whistle player James McNally of the Afro Celt Sound System describes his vision of the music as "predominantly dance with a two-dimensional off-shoot: Irish music and African rhythms." He reminisces of the band's beginnings: "It was a surreal situation with musicians adding pieces here and there, the blend and mix was phenomenal . . . It took six to seven months to get the band right, the correct balance; although the Irish musicians were fairly constant, the African guys were always fluctuating. It's been quite an effort to get this band to happen, lot's of hassles with visas and red tape especially for African band members. Rehearsing was a sheer financial nightmare, we had to

fly musicians in from Brussels, Paris, Senegal and Dublin (Caren 1997a:10-11)."

Éistigh Liomsa Sealad / Listen to Me, in addition to illustrating contemporary means of production, distribution and commodification, raises a number of interesting questions for us who are interested in communities and community musics

Globally Expanded Irish Community Diagrams

Looking at the Globally Expanded Irish Community Diagram^s, we can see that that the community is now expanded to numerous communities. Many components are still intact, but multiplied. For instance, the context/ social expectations that encapsulates the performer/performance is still there -- the singer has embodied the expectations of his family and other singers, the instrumentalists are indoctrinated into their musical practice. However, there are more expectations and more kinds of expectations. Musicians in this instance are consciously combining and shaping their music. It's new, yet incorporates older parts, older expectations.

What seems to be happening here is a reinterpretation of community, a new context for performance and an expanded context for understanding and asserting identity. As Lipsitz reminds us:

Today, shared cultural space no longer depends upon shared geographic space . . . New discursive spaces allow for recognition of new networks and affiliations; they become crucibles for complex identities in formation that respond to the imperatives of place at the same time that they transcend them. The interdependence of people throughout the world has never been more evident. From popular culture to politics, from the adoption market to the drug trade, new technologies and trade patterns connect places as

well as people, redefining local identities and identifications in the process. (Lipsitz, 1994, p.6)

In Conclusion

This conference celebrates Ubuntu or the concept of a sharing and nourishing musical context -- a notion is also central to work in community music. In this paper of two musical moments, I've tried to sketch out the great changes which technology and our modern age have wrought as we move from geographically contained communities to increasing fragmentation, variety and pluralisation. While the full implications of technology and globalization are still unfolding, we witness change and the seeds of change in our everyday life. What was previously accessible only to a local community or to a privileged few is becoming more available to increasing numbers of people; Tradition bearers now may shape their own music or to combine it with others.

The biggest challenges and promises of these changes may be seen in how we can understand, re-conceptualize and envoke community and community ^{music!} making in emerging global contexts.

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END NOTES

ⁱ Currently sean nós dancing is enjoying a resurgence in Ireland and is connected with melodeon.

ⁱⁱ In the ancient poem *Teach Midgchuarta* a seating plan of royal feasts at Tara is given. Cuisleannach or pipe players are seated with smiths, shield makers, jugglers, trumpeters, shoemakers and fishermen, among others. The Cuisleannach received the pig's thigh as their allotted portion at the feast.

ⁱⁱⁱ There is a tale in which Ailen., a chief of the fairy tribe Tuatha de Danaan uses the feadán (tin whistle in Irish, also called feadóg stáin, cuisle or cúiseach) to cast a spell of sleep over the inhabitants of the High King's palace at Tara, so that he can carry out his annual November eve vengeance.

^{iv} Players of the feadán feadán (tin whistle in Irish, also called feadóg stáin, cuisle or cúiseach) are mentioned in the descriptions of the King of Ireland's court found in the Brehon Laws dating from the 3rd century A.D.

^v Seamus Ennis was a historic figure in the world of Irish traditional music. As a collector, he assembled the biggest manuscript collection of song in Irish in existence; as a broadcaster, he was seminal to the post-war folk revival in Britain and Ireland. Fluent in all of the dialects of Irish and in Scots Gaelic, he had a wide ambit as a collector. As an uilleann piper he was an incomparable performer, one of the few in the twentieth century to be the repository of a style reaching back many generations, a style now regarded as being in the classic tradition of piping, in contrast to the popular styles now in vogue. Seamus Ennis has made an enormous contribution in many ways to according a new relevance and popularity to Irish traditional music in the second half of this century.

^{vi} In published music collections the reel is given variously as being in 4/4 time, common time, 2/2 time, or split common time.

^{vii} Whereas all of the tune-types present in the Irish tradition represent some phase of the Enlightenment project (and all of these have separate relations to it), the reel is especially fruitful in this regard. It is possible to see Irish dance music as an indicator – in the particular conditions obtaining in Ireland – of modernity, of the Enlightenment project, the vision of the future (within Western civilization) which was the child of the discovery of the New World, posited on the beginnings of colonialism, and of the 'triumph' of rationality in the early seventeenth century – a vision long since become a nightmare in the experience of enslaved and colonised peoples and of war-ravaged continents.

The reel became localised in Ireland during, and as a result of, its fashionable vogue in Scotland, and it is of absorbing interest that we have the reel in Ireland originally *not* as a folk or traditional form but as a phenomenon of high fashion. The reel was the voice of the contemporary *zeitgeist*, the height of intellectual and political chic. The newly composed examples of the reel – the 'genetic' progenitors of the thousands in the Irish tradition today – expressed the romantic interest in the 'noble savage' of Rousseau; as the musical equivalents of Macpherson's 'Ossian', they represented a new (or newly reified) cultural genre in the image of a dim and idealized past, a fashionable and politically aware genre formed by, and forming, a new consciousness. It is hardly an accident that the arrival of new fashionable genres – the hornpipe also arrived, via the English stage, about this time – coincided with the first recorded efforts to collect the music of the older harpers in Ireland.

^{viii} Lighter dances, performed noiselessly in soft shoes, were regarded as more suitable for women. In the days of house-dances (they died out in the 1930's) it was often a feature to have an exhibition solo dance between the quadrilles: sometimes a half-door would be taken down to form a platform for the dancer. Solo dancers were predominantly male: exhibitionism – and the horseplay which often went with this kind of male showing-off – were regarded as unsuited to women.

^{ix} The Irish language now clings to a few isolated areas, mainly on the Atlantic coast, where its speakers have traditionally eked a spartan living from the sea. Irish is one of a number of Celtic languages still spoken: the other main survivors are in Scotland, Wales, and Brittany. Irish is the only Celtic tongue to be the first language of an independent state; but this status has not prevented it from suffering an alarming decline. The great Irish famine of the 1840's wiped out the rural underclass which was then probably the largest repository of Irish, and the speaker base of the language has declined catastrophically since then, despite the efforts (often misguided) of the cultural movement and of the new Irish nation, initially set up in 1922, to redress the situation.

Cultural values implicit in the language and of relevance to the music tradition in Ireland include the nurturing of 'old ways' of singing and dancing. With the loss of the Irish language from an area, significant repositories of song, and perhaps also of music and dance, are lost as well. This process has prompted the setting up of state agencies – principally the Irish Folklore Commission, founded in 1935 – in an emergency effort to attempt a salvage operation. Large archives now exist from areas from which the Irish language, and its attendant riches of lore and song, have since disappeared.

tristler

whistler
S. Cunnis
the man
+ legend
insider / outsider

history

accompanies main event
we follow the audience

Performance

what comprises an event
community, more than an audience
Context, social expectations

Sean nos dancing
dancer
S. O'Cuallain
his story
community of
dancers

Conemara
Irish language

gender:
male
virtuosity

Form:
dance
reel

Ideological framings: Political / social / cultural

invisible factor:
BBC Recording crew place
gear, van in a rural place