

Musical Identities: Ethnic, National, Global, Occupational

(Abstracts in the English and the Bulgarian)

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by

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Abstract
(In the English)

Europeans took their musical traditions with them when they moved to North America. Eventually, however, the United States became so large and diverse, with such deep democratic roots, that different ethnic musical strands emerged and then combined to form important new forms of popular music. By then electronic playback technology had arisen and the United States had become the most influential country in the world, both of which helped propel one of these new popular musics, rock and roll, throughout much of the world, much like Europe and its music had proliferated during what musicians call the common practice period. Today, music teachers continue to be trained in the European-based art music tradition, but most of their work consists of teaching an array of musical styles to students of every imaginable ethnicity and background. These music educators tend to have dual professional identities: as classical musicians and as teachers of multiple styles of music.

Abstract
(In the Bulgarian)

с При преместването си в Северна Америка европейците взели със себе си и музикалните си традиции. В крайна сметка, обаче, Съединените щати дотолкова се разраснали и били различни – с дълбоки демократични корени, - че се появили различни музикални течения, а впоследствие се съчетали така, че да образуват нови форми на популярна музика. Към него момент технологията за електронен плейбек вече била развита и САЩ стават най-влиятелната страна в света, като тези два фактора помогнали за напредъка на един от тези нови популярни музикални жанрове – рокендролът – из по-големия дял на музикалния свят, до голяма степен по начина, по който Европа и нейната музика доминира и процъфтява по време на т.нар. от музикантите период на общата практика (common practice period). Днес учителите по музика в САЩ продължават да бъдат обучавани според базираната в Европа традиция на художествената музика, но в по-голямата си част работата им се състои от преподаване на студентите на спектър от музикални стилове от всяка етничност и произход, които можем да си представим. Тези музикални педагози обикновено имат двойствена професионална идентичност: те са класически музиканти и учители по множество музикални стилове.

Musical Identities: Ethnic, National, Global, Occupational

I want to express my appreciation to South-West University for inviting me to speak at this conference. I want to thank especially my friend Dr. Nikolina Ognenska for all her hard work and visions for the field of music and music education.

There has been much excellent work done on the role of music in society. My paper today focuses mainly on the case of the United States, from which much of the modern world's popular music culture originated.

Ethnic Music Identity

We understand something we did not understand even half a century ago: that all music is ethnic music. We also understand that all music is a product of its time and place, of the circumstances of its origins. While Western Europe was producing concert-hall art music designed to be listened to attentively as the focal object of the audience's attention, various ethnic groups in the Western Hemisphere had their own uses for this and other musics.

Spanish conquistadors and the priests and others who followed them used music to help bring the cultural ways of Europe to the natives in South and Central America. Later, French and English missionaries did similar things in North America. In most cases the natives' music was largely abandoned in favor of European-style music. Much of the music thus introduced had religious, generally Christian, connections. Although the European nations that were attempting to conquer the Western Hemisphere were all monarchies at the time, their monarchial systems did not transfer well to the New World, and neither did their music. Why? Because all music is of a time and place. Yes, it *can* be transferred

successfully across cultures--socially, geographically, and over time—but it never completely loses its original roots. Consequently, eventually various subgroups in the New World began to develop their own musics.

In the United States, the roots of what eventually became dramatic developments in music began in the middle of the nineteenth century when elements of African music began to find its way into popular tunes. This began with syncopated fiddle tunes that appeared in minstrel shows, a popular genre of musical variety show that began in England in the 1820s as a way of simultaneously making fun of both African people and the New World. From that point on, the emergence of different kinds of musics and musical practices occurred with increasing regularity in the United States. All of these musics and practices took inspiration from the other musics around them.

The United States is huge--larger in land area than Western Europe, even without the two non-contiguous states of Alaska and Hawaii. There are more than 300 million people in all. In the state of Arizona, the *county* I live in is about the size in area as your neighboring country of Macedonia; and the metropolitan area of the *city* of Phoenix alone is inhabited by approximately twice as many people as that country. In the earliest days of the English colonies in North America most of the people were of only one ethnic group, but there were several different religious groups. The percentage of the U.S. population with non-Western European backgrounds grew steadily from the earliest colonial days to the present. The country is so large that even groups with small percentages of the population are large enough to produce their own musics and musical practices. The British and French conquerors of North America kept the races separate, for the most part, whereas the Spanish, who settled Central and South America, mixed the natives and their own

people to create what we call the Hispanic ethnicity. Today, there are almost 40 million Hispanics in the United States, and almost that many of African heritage. That is more people than in most countries of the world, and more than enough to produce their own musics and musical practices.

From the time of the minstrel shows of the mid-nineteenth century until the present, musical development has taken many different paths. Many of the paths were oriented along racial or ethnic lines, with special separation between the black and white races. Those fault lines were initiated by the evils of slavery, which resulted in the most terrible war in my country's history (the American Civil War, 1861-65), but since then have gradually, very gradually, become blurred as racial harmony has improved—as evidenced by the recent election of the nation's first president of minority descent, in this case one-half African, something I thought I would not see in my lifetime.

Whatever the causes, the musics produced by both black and white people continued along their own paths. Whites produced country and western, bluegrass, and others, while blacks produced rhythm and blues from the blues tradition. These strands merged in the 1950s, with Chuck Berry on the black side and Elvis Presley on the white, with Elvis becoming “The King” of rock and roll.

National Musical Identity

One path of musical development in the United States was supported by choral societies, and eventually by orchestral societies and universities. This path was the American development of Western European art music, music that had much earlier become dominant in the world--in terms of prestige if not actual practice. This music had been forced upon European colonies throughout the world, but it spread and became

more influential than that. It became culturally dominant because Western Europe was politically, economically, and militarily dominant in the world at that time.

That changed in the twentieth century. The United States was already a powerful nation before World War I, but it emerged from that war with a greater awareness of its power and began to exert considerably more influence in the world. After World War II, its superiority was unchallenged except by the Soviet Union, but those challenges were limited to certain realms. In terms of prestige and cultural aspirations, the U.S. dominated the twentieth century, even before the fall of the U.S.S.R. toward the end of the century left the United States as the only remaining military superpower. American products and cultural values spread throughout the world during the twentieth century, a phenomenon that can be seen especially in the domination of the mass culture market by American products such as popular music, popular films, “fast food” (e.g., Coca Cola, McDonald’s), and attire (e.g., blue jeans). Much like Western Europe was the leading region in the world from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century, the United States led the world during the twentieth century (Humphreys, 2005). In both cases this influence included music, art music from Europe and popular music from the U.S. To some extent nationalist composers wrote “national” musics in the style of European art music—Smetana in Czechoslovakia and Copland in the U.S. to name only two examples—although increasingly scholars view the style of mainstream European art music of the common practice period as essentially German national music. Similarly, modern popular music in each country or region’s style, but based on U.S. style models, blares from taverns throughout much of the world today.

Globalization and Musical Identity

Where are we going? Even more than in the past, nation-states base their cultural and other policies on global concerns. This is because the process of establishing connections across numerous realms of human discourse and activity, called globalization, is increasing at a dizzying rate. To my knowledge no one fully predicted globalization and its results, although in retrospect the historical path seems reasonably clear. From the beginning of specialized labor in the Neolithic period until relatively recent times, the production of life's necessities required the labor of most of the world's population, primarily in hunting/gathering and then in agriculture. The industrial age, which emerged due to advances in mechanical and chemical technology, enabled a smaller proportion of workers to provide goods and services for the entire population than was the case during the pre-agricultural and agricultural periods. This was achieved in part because industrial-age advances in technology and delivery systems led to the production of more standardized products. Currently, spectacular advances in technology, especially information-related systems, are leading to significant changes in the nature of people's work. In this postindustrial, information age, an even smaller proportion of workers can provide necessities and even luxuries to the population at large (Humphreys, 2005).

The post industrial, information-age, globalized world is now upon us, which creates conflict within and among nation-states over the extent to which everyone's culture should be the same versus the extent to which various aspects of culture should differ. The dialectic resulting from this dichotomy manifests itself in two parallel sets of policies. One set seeks to develop uniform practices within and among nation-states,

whereas the other set is intended to maintain certain features of cultural diversity while simultaneously fostering individual creativity. Given the pressures of globalization in this direction, it is not surprising to find more and more similarities in the policies of nation-states toward many things, among them policies related to culture—including education, music, and the other arts. Indeed, even the desire to develop the capacity to produce a wider array of goods and services has led to rather similar policies among (and within) nation-states (Humphreys, 2005).

Some nations' policies emphasize similarities among cultures, while others place more emphasis on differences. Countries whose policies lean toward supporting local and national issues tend to advocate for indigenous folk music. Indonesia, for one, sees its traditional folk music as a cultural product with inherent commercial/economic value. At least partly for that reason, Indonesia's cultural policies are directed unabashedly toward resisting Western influences, and some of its specific policies are aimed overtly at counteracting the influences of commercial rock music. An example closer to Bulgaria comes from Croatia, where the school curriculum for children ages six through eleven states openly the policy-makers' intention to educate students in Croatian literature, language, art, and music. It is difficult to determine to what extent policies from Indonesia, Croatia, and other countries are driven by nationalism and related issues as opposed to economic concerns, but goals aimed at developing national pride are mentioned explicitly in the policy statements of many nations (Humphreys, 2005).

Occupational Identity in the Music Education Profession

I also want to discuss musical identity among the subgroup of people who teach music in the public schools. I define identity for this purpose as who a teacher is, as

opposed to what a teacher does (Stållhammar, 2006). Furthermore, I use the conception of identity as both a personal way of distinguishing oneself from others, and in a “collective sense” for groups (Joegensen, 2006, p. 28). My frame of reference is mostly the United States, teachers in what we call kindergarten through grade 12 in that country, although undoubtedly there are similarities as well as differences in issues related to music teacher identity in other countries.

Some of the first organized music education in what is now the United States began as efforts to improve singing in churches around 1710. By the time the American Revolution began in the 1770s, even the best-known singing masters were largely self-taught, and taught in singing schools in the evenings while making their living doing other things. Nevertheless, the occupation of music teacher in North America began with singing school masters and private tutors during the colonial era (White, 1964).

The social “markers” typically studied by sociologists are gender, race/ethnicity, and social class. First, all colonial and post-colonial singing masters who have been identified by historians were men. Music education historians have not examined race and ethnicity issues from the colonial era, mainly because most of the singing masters were white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Calvinist Christians. As for the third social marker, social class, historically the status of most music teachers in the United States seems to have been relatively low. Many of the best-known early singing school masters were also renowned for their compositions, and to our knowledge all of them had other occupations. For example, among the leading late eighteenth-century singing masters was a tanner, a comb maker, and a carpenter (White, 1964).

The first permanent state-supported music education began in the city of Boston decades after the Revolution, in 1838. By the end of the nineteenth century music education had spread to most American schools. Most early school music teachers had been singing school masters, but formal training for music teachers expanded somewhat in the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly some music teachers came to identify with their profession as a result of the Boston Academy of Music beginning in the 1830s, followed by the founding of various private summer training programs for music teachers.

Universal access to education became available in the United States during the 1820s and 1830s. Next came compulsory education, which occurred on a state-by-state basis due to education being the constitutional responsibility of the states, not the federal government. Next came widespread attendance beyond grade eight, and finally the required licensing or certification of teachers. The education system's belated conformation to the demands of the industrial economy manifested itself in the progressive education movement, which led to specialization among types of teachers, including the training of specialist music teachers (see Humphreys, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1998).

The emergence of music education as a profession with a group identity can be seen in the proceedings of music teacher associations that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Music teachers began to think of themselves as belonging to a distinct profession as opposed to being practicing musicians (mostly performers and composers) who also taught music, or as regular teachers who also taught music. The American teaching profession gradually became feminized, and music education followed suit. In 1907, 64% of the original members of what became the largest and most important

music educator organization were women, a major shift from the days of the singing schools to the era of public school teachers (Humphreys & Schmidt, 1998).

Two other major changes related to music teacher identity occurred in the first few decades of the twentieth century. First, as high school enrollments and curricula expanded under progressivism (Humphreys, 1988, 1992), specialist music teachers were employed. Second, general and music teacher education programs moved into universities. Hence, by the end of the 1920s most new American music educators were being trained in universities, as opposed to singing schools, normal schools, music textbook publishers' summer schools, church choirs, and local bands (Heller & Humphreys, 1991). All of this increased the status and undoubtedly led to some shared sense of identity among music teachers. This cadre of music teachers was more diverse than American music teachers from previous eras in that more were women (Humphreys & Schmidt, 1998), and they came from a wider array of religious backgrounds (see Berger et al., 2001).

University-based music teacher education programs resulted in changes in the status, values, and undoubtedly the identities of the profession, individually and collectively. I do not wish to slight the importance of the so-called personal "construction of identity" by individuals, because unquestionably the individual is more than a puppet at the mercy of broader structural cultural forces. However, clearly there are structural forces at work in university-based music teacher education programs. Therefore, a general approach to the study of identity among music educators is in order, because just as surely as individuals make career and lifestyle decisions, decisions that ultimately help shape their own professional and personal identities, individuals are also guided, even propelled by forces beyond their immediate control (Apple, 1995). It is also clear that there are forces at

work in music teacher education programs beyond the traditional cultural determinants of gender, race/ethnicity, and social class (see Woodford, 2002).

University music units in the United States are extensions of secondary school music programs, which consist largely of bands, choirs, and in some schools orchestras and jazz ensembles. The emphasis on performance is reflected in the results from a curriculum study in my large university music school, where the faculty estimated that undergraduate music education students spent more than 60% of their academic music time on performance, largely private lesson training and ensemble participation (Wang & Humphreys, in press). Due to accreditation requirements, curriculum is similar across most institutions.

The types of music studied and performed is also instructive. According to Christopher Small (1987), only large, wealthy countries with weaker democratic roots than the United States have supported their own versions of classical art music, namely India, China, and large parts of Europe. Indeed, classical music has never been supported by the various levels of governments in the United States—national, state, or local—to the extent it has been supported in these other places. Colonial singing masters were forced to teach popular indigenous American music. Music education was a private enterprise during that era, though it was open to the public (Britton, 1966). When music education entered the public schools, it became somewhat removed from the tastes of the general public, and in the universities it was, and remains, even further removed from public tastes and control. The result is that music departments and schools in American universities do not reflect real-life musical practices, but instead more closely resemble museums, enclaves where musicians can live and practice as if they were in the past.

The authors of the same study mentioned earlier (Wang & Humphreys, in press) also reported that university music education students spent less than 1% of their academic time on popular music. Ironically, many music teacher education programs in Scandinavian institutions require instruction in popular music, music with roots in American popular music (Humphreys, 2004). Small (1987) wrote that:

. . . by any reasonable reckoning of the function of music in human life, the Afro-American tradition is the major music of the west in the twentieth century, of far greater human significance than those remnants of the great European classical tradition that can be heard today in the concert halls and opera houses of the industrial world, east and west. (p. 4)

Similarly, less than one-half of 1% of the university music education students' time in the same institution was spent on non-Western based music (Humphreys & Wang, in press).

Unfortunately, despite the widespread presence of popular music in society (Humphreys, 2004) and the near universal calls for more musical diversity in the school curriculum (Wang & Humphreys, in press), the culture of university music departments and schools where music teachers are trained is determined by the structure and values of the empowered classes, in this case the music faculty, university patrons, music aficionados, and the like. Similarly, university music programs are linked to teacher certification at the state level, which gives university music units even more power as gatekeepers for the profession.

Most students in university music teacher education programs in the United States come from the lower middle and upper lower socio-economic classes (White, 1964), and many of them are first-generation university students. University-based music teacher education programs provide a feasible and respectable way for students to gradually work their way up in the world—for those who lack the resources to gain entrance into other

professions such as medicine or law, or into family businesses. However, Small (1987) argues that despite their modest socio-economic backgrounds, students who enter music teacher education programs are not disenfranchised. They have enough resources to enter and finish the university; they have already received some of the benefits of the capitalist society; and they want more of the same.

What happens when these students find themselves immersed in a highly esoteric university music curriculum? First, they are already comfortable with the performance of European-style art music from their many years of experience in secondary school music programs. In other words, they are predisposed to this type of music and musical experiences.

Second, teaching is seen as an upper middle class occupation in the United States. Thus, the typical American music education student will move up socially in prestige, if not economically, by obtaining a university degree and becoming a teacher. Music teachers come from somewhat lower socio-economic backgrounds than other musicians. Therefore, music education students must associate with performance and other types of music students and faculty who generally come from higher socio-economic classes than they do. Thus, as music education students they not only associate with an elitist musical culture housed in a museum-like institution, they actually become a part of it, if only relatively briefly, while at the university (White, 1964). All of these factors encourage and enable young people to internalize what is in the United States an alien, outdated musical culture, which is given a mantle of respectability by virtue of being offered by a university unit, as well as various status mechanisms within the department or school of music. In other words, music education students can raise their social status by attending a university, and

at the same time share the status of a superior cultural group in the form of the classical music community.

Clearly, certain segments of society benefit from a classical musical tradition, even in a relatively democratic country like the United States, and all societies depend on museum-like institutions for maintaining vital connections with the past. Toward those ends, university music units require students to serve the needs of the institutions, which mainly entails producing capable performing ensembles. It is therefore unfortunate that an elitist curriculum housed in a museum-like institution provides the training for future music educators (Humphreys, 2006).

Three scholars studied aspects of the identity of pre-service North American music educators during the 1980s and 1990s: in an urban American music conservatory (Kingsbury, 1988), and in university-based schools of music in the United States and Canada (L’Roy, 1983; Roberts, 1991a, 1991b, 2000). One researcher studied groups with quantitative research methods, while the other two studied individuals with ethnographic methods. Regardless of nation, type of institution, or research method, all three researchers concluded that music education students saw themselves performers, not as teachers. Other research suggests that most university music education students claim to have made the decision to become music educators while still in high school (Bergee, Coffman, Demorest, Humphreys, & Thornton, 2001).

The performance emphasis of secondary music programs and university music teacher education programs explains why these students seem to see themselves as musicians first and teachers second, if at all. Nevertheless, my personal observations contradict these research findings. Why? For over a dozen years I have taught a one-credit-

hour first-year orientation to music education class. One assignment requires students to write a brief “philosophy,” or purpose, for themselves as music educators. Additionally, during “sophomore auditions” near the end of the second year in the program students are asked to describe their goals to the faculty. Over the years, relatively few of the hundreds of students in either setting have even mentioned their own identities (or roles) as musicians. Instead, they tend to write and speak about the ways in which they themselves have benefited from their music participation, especially in high school, and how they want to help provide similar benefits for their future students.

The following is a partial list of perceived benefits of high school music participation mentioned by first-year students in the spring 2007 semester alone—benefits they want to pass on to their students: role model for students (as musicians, but more “as people”); character development; working together with others; an aid to learning other subjects; learning “how to act”; improving self-discipline; instilling respect for authority figures and peers; increasing composure; outlet for constructive self-expression; increasing multicultural awareness and knowledge; focusing one’s attention; opportunities for dedication; enhancing prioritization; and one of the most often mentioned, improving self-esteem/self-confidence. For some the “central purpose” of their lives is to lead people to an appreciation for music since “music is the passion” of their lives, something they “fell in love with” at some point. This statement, “I want to spread my love and passion for music,” is fairly typical. Some of the most often mentioned benefits are how music: helps young people deal with the “terrible environment” in schools and with their emotions; provides a deterrent for “expressing themselves in a violent and non-productive manner”; gives them reasons to stay in school; and offers creative outlets “so that their lives are not so restricted

by the conformity of today's society." These university students believe that secondary students should be taught the fundamentals of music (theory, mainly), and that this can best be done through performance. They frequently mention the importance of performance for their future students, but rarely for themselves.

Perhaps previous researchers merely took snapshots of students' views at a particular time, during a period when they had the persona of ensemble performer placed on them by their university music unit, a persona they accepted and probably enjoyed. Despite these findings, I find that when music education students are asked to look ahead, they see themselves as teachers. Generally they do not see themselves performers, although a few mention their desire to continue performing "on the side." It is understandable that music students for whom performance is the most important expectation from their respective institutions would see themselves as performing musicians, not teachers, during their enrollment in a university music unit.

To what extent do university music students carry these attitudes forward as they assume their professional roles? Some of the best information we have about music teacher identity comes from the early 1960s, when Howard White (1964) collected data from a nationally representative sample of 1,000 practicing music educators. These music educators seemed to view themselves as musicians, but more as teachers than they had when they were university students. White also reported that music teachers believed they were seen more as teachers than as musicians by the general public. After they began teaching the "desire to work with youth" became more important (p. 92). Some 64% of respondents said that music teaching was their first choice of a career, with the remainder having wanted professional performing careers (64% still performed publicly). The author

of another study published in 1997 (Clinton, 1997) reported that public school music teachers in Oklahoma were not frustrated performers, but actually enjoyed teaching full time and performing part time.

White (1964) found evidence that music teachers come from somewhat higher socio-economic backgrounds than do regular teachers, and that music teachers believe they are accorded higher social status than regular teachers by the public, perhaps because their work is more visible. He also argued that music teachers “exhibit the background and social characteristics of teachers and not musicians”; and that “[t]he values” perpetuated by music educators are “primarily are those of conservative, middle-class teachers and not those of musicians” (p. 366).

Thus, music teachers enter the teaching profession with their new degrees, for many at a higher social level than they enjoyed in their families of origin, and justifications for feeling culturally superior to their fellow teachers by virtue of their association with and expertise in an elite, exclusive musical tradition. Nevertheless, general teachers and classical musicians alike feel like they are underpaid and underappreciated. The fact that music educators are a combination of the two seems to lead to a certain level of paranoia among the music teaching profession (Humphreys, 1988). Many music teachers do believe that their work is valued by society, but “primarily as recreation or entertainment” (White, 1964, p. 322).

Relatively little research has been conducted on the identities of music education students in universities, and even less on practicing music educators. What is needed is more up-to-date data upon which modern and sophisticated structural theorizing can be

based, more ethnographic research on how individual music educators develop their personal identities, and why and how these identities change over time.

Our musical identities serve us in various ways: individually, ethnically, nationally, and as a subculture of professional music teachers. I urge scholars in Bulgaria to continue to examine national musical identities, as well as the other types, including how those national musical identities relate to our new global environment.

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