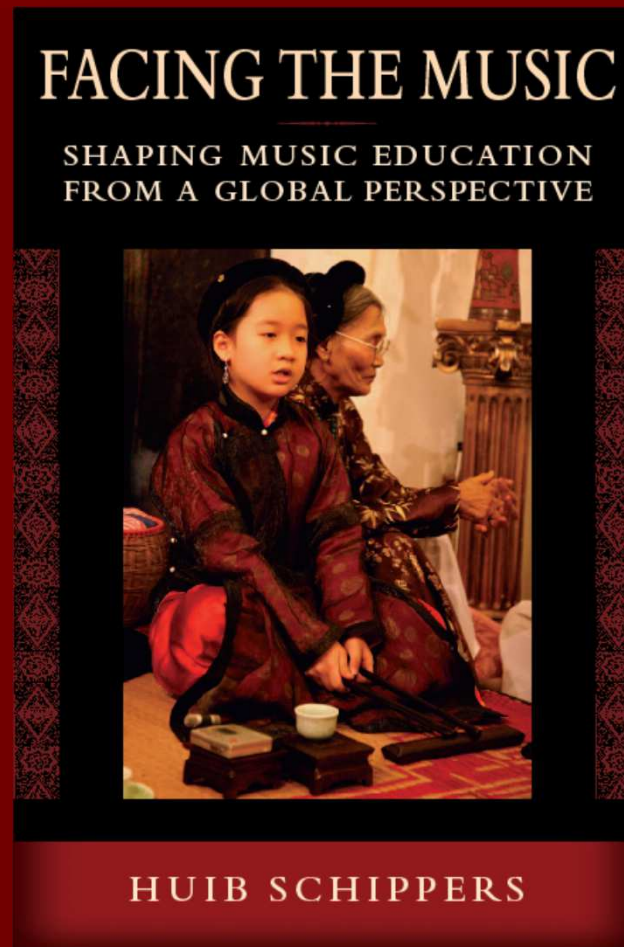


Facing the music

Shaping music education
from a global perspective

Atlas Academy
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The study of music education is the study of
musical practice in slow-motion,
revealing intricacies, intentions and value systems
that are usually difficult or impossible to gauge
in actual performance
(similar to composing in some ways)

Experience 1

While learning North Indian classical music on sitar for over twenty years, I received very little explanation on how this very complex aural tradition actually 'works'

As years went by, I found that my analytical skills got more and more attuned to this holistic way of learning, and discovered how it sharpened my learning abilities

Experience 2

While observing and working with musicians from Africa, I found they prioritised very different aspects of musicianship than the ones I had been taught to look for

They judged excellence in their own performances by criteria like finding new variations in age-old rhythms, achieving a sense of togetherness (ubuntu), and their ability to make the women dance

Experience 3

Witnessing a ceremony for the dead in a village in North Bali, I was the only breathing audience member (in the presence of over 100 urns) at a virtuoso *gong kebyar* orchestra performance

These musicians claimed they never learned music, and formed a close knit community that made music for the worlds beyond

Quest

These and other similar experiences untaught me everything I thought I knew about how people make and learn music.

It became part of a four-decade long search into practices and the history of learning and teaching music across cultures, which in fact starts almost 80 years ago, as well as the underlying approaches, values and beliefs

90 years ago

“When that great convention can sit together - Chinese, Hindu, Japanese, Celt, German, Czech, Italian, Hawaiian, Scandinavian, and Pole - all singing the national songs of each land, the home songs of each people, and listen as one mind and heart to great world music common to all and loved by all, then shall real world goodwill be felt and realized.”

(Frances Elliot Clark, quoted in Volk 1998)

80 years ago



50 years ago

Although his teacher Jaap Kunst had never actually played a gamelan, Mantle Hood began developing bi-musicality in his US students

In this way, he laid the foundation for a significant tradition of 'performing ethnomusicology' (Solis, 2004) in American music departments

40 years ago

“Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum. The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teenage music and avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures.”

(Tanglewood Declaration, 1967)

30 years ago

In the 1980s, the phenomenon of world music received major boosts from

1. Developing scholarly discourse
2. Government policies and funding influencing the arts and education
3. A highly successful 'world music campaign' launched by a number of independent labels in the UK in 1987

20 years ago

In June 1992, about thirty practitioners of 'Teaching world music' gathered in Amsterdam. Some had private practices, some worked in schools, others in community organisations, in teacher training colleges, or in university music departments. This was the beginning of an integrated international platform for discussion (which will gather for the 12th time in Helsinki in June 2015).

10 years ago

In the aftermath of 9/11, there was a growing sense of the 'failure of multiculturalism' (rather than a recognition that some approaches to cultural diversity may have been ill-directed or ill-informed)

This sense of a perceived threat from other cultures to the West has caused insidious withdrawal of support from initiatives that embrace many cultures

Key challenges

1. A failure to recognise the profoundly culture-specific (read: Western classical) nature of our approaches to learning and teaching music
2. Being unprepared for the conceptual and practical challenges associated with cultural diversity, and their impact on music education at large

A conceptual journey

Over the years, music learning and teaching has witnessed a number of important conceptual developments, many of which are increasingly and importantly becoming part of global thinking on cultural diversity

These can be represented as shifts of focus in discussions and practices

Foci and concepts - 1

From individual traditions 'in context', ethnomusicology programs, and world music in the classroom to dedicated practical degree courses, teacher training courses, community settings (within and outside cultures of origin), and popular world musics in contemporary urban environments

Foci and concepts - 2

From 'world music as material' to
appropriate 'world music pedagogies'

Reappraisal of (primitive or hi-tech?)
transmission through aurality, emphasis
on intangible elements, and holistic
learning. Confusion as a pedagogical tool
(applying cognitive dissonance to the
learning process)

Foci and concepts - 3

From mono-directional instructional didactics to acknowledging complex relationships between learner and teacher (or facilitator), including power distance, individuality/ collectiveness, short/long term orientation, and varying degrees of tolerating uncertainty (Hofstede)

Foci and concepts - 4

From static views of traditions to
acknowledging living traditions

From a single sense of (reconstructed)
authenticity to multiple authenticities and
'strategic inauthenticity'

From striving to recreate contexts to
acknowledging recontextualisation as a
reality of most music practices today

Foci and concepts - 5

From socially constructed cultural identities to individually constructed ones, acknowledging that the relationship between ethnicity and musical tastes, skills and activities is increasingly fluid (with interesting differences between first, second and third generation immigrants)

Foci and concepts - 6

From apologetic about being the 'odd one out' to confident of being able to contribute significantly to the world of music education

From western educational environments and concepts to 'world settings'

From personal passions to global concerns (cf UNESCO/IMC policies)

Areas of exploration

While there is a vast body of profound thinking and writing on learning and teaching music, it rarely transcends the boundaries of western folk and art music

A more global perspective adds depth on:

- Issues of tradition, authenticity & context
- Modes and foci of transmission processes
- Interaction between learner and teacher

Modes of teaching and learning

- Analytical – holistic: explaining and presenting material step by step, or maintaining integrity of whole piece
- Notation-based – aural (oral): writing down core material, or developing the musical memory of the learner
- Tangible – intangible: concentrating on technique and repertoire, or focussing more on creativity and values

Tradition, authenticity, context

Tradition, authenticity and context are multi-layered ideas, with ambiguous and even contradictory meanings. They are value-laden: traditional, authentic and 'in context' are deemed to be 'good'. While western mainstream thinking about music has tended to consider these concepts static, contemporary musical realities inspire a much more dynamic view of tradition, authenticity and context.

Model for approaching CDIME

Dimensions of Transmission

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| analytic/atomistic | ←—————→ | holistic |
| notation-based | ←—————→ | oral |
| tangible | ←—————→ | intangible |

Issues of Context

| | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------|
| static tradition | ←—————→ | constant flux |
| original context | ←—————→ | recontextualised |
| (reconstructed) authenticity | ←—————→ | new identity |

Patterns of interaction

In a study of constructs in corporations across nations, Hofstede identified

- a) small versus large power distance;
- b) individualism versus collectivism;
- c) *strongly gendered vs gender neutral*;
- d) avoiding versus tolerating uncertainty;
- e) long term versus short term orientation

These are eminently relevant to the study of musical transmission across cultures

Approaches to diversity

- Monocultural – having a single culture as the frame of reference
- Multicultural – accepting a variety of cultural expressions as existing apart
- Intercultural – exploring meeting grounds between various cultures (non-committal)
- Transcultural – profoundly embracing and mixing cultural expressions and values

Model for approaching CDIME

Patterns of interaction

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| large power distance | ←—————→ | small power distance |
| individual central | ←—————→ | collective central |
| gender-neutral | ←—————→ | strongly gendered |
| avoiding uncertainty | ←————— —————→ | tolerating uncertainty |
| long-term orientation | ←————— —————→ | short-term orientation |
| | | |

Approaches to Cultural Diversity

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | multicultural | intercultural | |
| monocultural | ←————— ————— —————→ | | transcultural |

Key properties and applications

- The model can be viewed from four perspectives: the tradition, the institution, the teacher, and the learner
- There are no right or wrong positions on each continuum; the model is essentially non-prescriptive and unjudgmental
- The model is primarily descriptive, but can also be used as an analytical tool, and for predictive and prescriptive applications

Relation to formal music education

- A general tendency to the left (analytical, notation, tangible, static concepts, hierarchical, monocultural) points towards formal settings; a tendency to the right towards a more informal community base
- When a 'right-oriented' tradition finds itself in a 'left-oriented' environment, practice shows increased risk of friction and unsuccessful transmission processes

Implications for Atlas

Learning and teaching music have numerous underlying dimensions, which, when considered, can improve programs that aim at excellent experiences for learners

While there are no absolute answers, there is a well-identified suite of questions that can aid better-informed analysis and choices across the range of continuums that define all music learning experiences.

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