

## What does “World Music” Sound Like? Identity and Authenticity in “World Beat”

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“The sounds of music cannot be separated from the technology involved in their conception, performance, transmission, and audience reception because the technology is an integral part of the sounds themselves.” (Seeger and Théberge, 235)

At the very moment in 1877 when Thomas Edison succeeded in capturing his voice and replaying it, the phenomenon of *schizophonia* was created. Although it would take one hundred years for this phenomenon to receive its name from R. Murray Schafer in *The Soundscape* (1977: 90), the separation of sound from its original source through electroacoustical technology instantly impacted the cultures of the world. This *schizophonic split* has arguably been the single most important moment in the history of music. “Originally, all sounds were originals” (Schafer 1977, 90), and originally *all* sounds were fleeting. Edison’s invention placed technology between the performance and the listeners by capturing the sounds for later playback. The once elusive, ethereal sounds, now fixed in physical form, rapidly became the commodities that have driven one of the most powerful industries on Earth. The phenomenon of schizophonia has granted technology the power to assume a widening role in the *sound* of our world’s music. While the words of Seeger and Théberge clearly ring true, technology has also provided a means by which corporations have gained and maintained *control* over what sounds are conceived, performed, transmitted, and received by any audience at any given time. Technology, in this sense, operates on a dual level, at once providing a resource for the creative construction, consumption, and use of music by its creators and audiences, while “at the same time providing a mechanism through which corporate profits are realized and social relation affected” (Lull 1987: 12). One hundred twenty five years later, technological mediation continues to define the sonic qualities of music in popular culture. Presently, the majority of music in human life is experienced through some form of technological mediation whether it is the cassette or CD player in the car, the ‘walkman,’ the ‘boom box,’ the ‘piped in’ music at the office, MP3s, the computer, or the

radio, the soundtracks in films, or the sound systems at concerts and clubs. No longer are all sounds originals. In fact, the majority of them are not.

Throughout the evolution of popular music, technology has changed the sonic nature of the schizophrenic product and in doing so, has exerted powerful influences on its *production* and *consumption*. Technology is therefore of central concern when striving to understand how the performers, composers, producers, and vendors of global pop music use sound to assert ideals of authenticity, identity and culture amid mass consumerism. Through seeking to answer: 1) what does ‘world music’ *sound* like? 2) how is sound used in “world beat” and “world music,” and does that *use* differ? 3) how are sounds used to represent authenticity? 4) who decides what sound is authentic? 5) how is sound consciously used by the musicians in the construction, assertion and maintenance of cultural, and/or personal identities? 6) who decides and/or controls what that sound sounds like? and, 7) how have sounds been appropriated cross-culturally?, this study hopes to illuminate aspects of sonic aesthetics and their inter-cultural application.

### *Whose World and Which Beat?*

All cultures bear their musical sounds, and musical sounds bear meaning. The sounds of the tabla and the sitar, the shakuhachi, the berimbau, the erhu, the gamelan, the cavaquinho, mbira, dijeridoo and the ukulele, all identify very specific cultures in very specific parts of the world. The sounds of the human voice can be just as effective in defining a cultural identity: Ganga singing in Bulgaria, the hocketing of Central African Pygmies, the kecak of Bali and the iscathamiya of South Africa. Sound is as much a part of defining cultural identity as any other delineator of custom, belief, behavior, cuisine or social organization. When considering our planet sonically, the question then becomes: with the music of the world having so many different sounds, what does ‘world music’ sound like?

In order to satisfy this question, it becomes necessary to differentiate, a bit, between the concepts ‘world beat’ and ‘world music,’ and the role of sound in each. The term ‘world beat’ has a history that goes back at least to Jack Kerouac’s 1957 novel *On the Road*, in which he used the term to describe the “all-encompassing nature of the mambo beat” (Kerouac 1957, 235). In the early 1980s, Texas radio disk jockey and musician Dan

Del Santo, who is generally credited with coining the phrase, offered the term to encapsulate the concepts of “all ethnic-pop mixings, fusion dance musics, and emerging syncretic populist musical hybrids from around the world, particularly from urban centers” (Feld 1994, 266). More specifically for Del Santo, it referred to his own fusion of African styles, American jazz, Cuban, Mexican and other global influences to create his musical identity. Shortly thereafter, a similar ‘movement’ surfaced among the musicians of San Francisco, who were also engaged in creating music that encompassed a multiplicity of styles. Musicians engaged in such ‘sonic collaborations’ were searching for a “catchy, all-inclusive phrase that could unite many musical styles while giving them a fresh tag, free of any built-in prejudgment” (Klump 1999, 7). However, before Del Santo, and others, ever uttered the terms ‘world beat,’ efforts by internationally known musician Peter Gabriel had already begun introducing the sounds of other music cultures to a wide *rock/pop* fan base in Europe, and later the United States with WOMAD. Gabriel founded WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) after becoming fascinated with the music from other cultures. “I was on a train one night listening to a cassette of some African music and I thought, well, I think this is some of the most exciting stuff I've ever heard. I'm sure there must be a lot of people out there who would feel as I do if they could hear this music” (Schnabel 1990). Gabriel used his industry savvy to organize the first WOMAD festival in 1981 where he united Burundi drummers, Sufi vocalist Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Gambian kora player Alhaji Bai Konte, calypso singer Mighty Sparrow, German experimentalist Holger Czukay, Pete Townsend and the rock group Simple Minds. “The idea was to introduce a rock-oriented audience to music from other lands” (Ibid.).<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, or perhaps subsequently, numerous local musicians throughout the United States and Europe during this time began incorporating the sounds of rock, reggae, ska, Brazilian styles, Cuban rhythms, jazz, blues, Indian styles, Afro-pop and everything in between into musical expressions reflecting the current social realities of their urban environments. In this ‘world beat’ philosophy, sounds were borrowed cross-culturally, internalized, and used to create musical identities that established sonic statements of emerging local cultures connected to a global community, or to a “‘one world, one people’ orientation that some young listeners embrace” (Lull 1987, 32). To

achieve the ‘world beat’ sound, musicians, usually from economically dominant nations, adopted the ‘exotic’ sonic identities of other cultures that had been established through centuries of tradition, and in a heartbeat placed them alongside traditions from their own worlds. Out of this sonic ‘appropriation’ rose some interesting music, however, the mere duplication of sounds alone was insufficient for success and often led to music that appeared to be “a replica of some ‘real’ situation, with a real context and real meanings elsewhere” (Stokes 1994, 98). For the music to avoid such *pulpification* and maintain honesty and integrity, it was necessary to fashion the borrowed sounds into a new voice that sonically represented the social environment of the artist as part of the ‘world beat generation.’ In this circular scenario the *use* of other cultures’ sounds fashions an identity, which, once accepted, becomes validated in popular culture, thereby authenticating the new use of the sounds.

In the early 1990s, one of my colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh was Jim DiSpirito, better known today as the percussionist from the band Rusted Root. Jim is a very accomplished tabla player who had lived and studied in India as part of his Ph.D. program. His playing style, considered traditional by most experts, reflected the nuances of North Indian classical music that had become internalized through his training. Seeking to add his sound to their global mixture, Rusted Root lured him away from his degree and onto the stages of the world. Their music was achieved through a fusion of global sounds that had a profound effect on the forming members. As Jim Donovan recalls, “I got really into a lot of African music from places like Ghana and Zaire, and that really changed my perception of music and what you can do with it. I listened to some stuff in Islamic nature and a lot of chanting and drumming repetition” (Smiley 2000). DiSpirito also echoed these sentiments in casual conversations I had with him when he expressed his satisfaction with the band’s musically all-inclusive nature fusing “rock and roll with other global sounds like West African and Indian music traditions” (DiSpirito 1991). The main point of this Rusted Root digression is that, through juxtaposing musical sounds from diverse and distant lands, the original sounds, *internalized* by individual musicians, are transformed through collaborative composition techniques, into a collective musical identity. Sonically, Rusted Root epitomized the ‘world beat’ philosophy.

Although the practice of integrating musical sounds cross-culturally is as old as the recording industry itself, the emergence of ‘world beat’ as a ‘movement’ at this particular time and place in the 1980s was, in part, the result of: 1) a powerful *media driven* transculturation process that brought the sounds of the world together into an amalgam of sonic identity, and 2) “a developing intention [among musicians] to turn the synthesis into a contemporary genre” (Lull 1987, 32). ‘World beat,’ therefore, represents a flourishing *mélange* of sonic ‘appropriation’ out of which ‘world music,’ the contemporary genre, was created.

### *What Does World Music Sound Like?*

The internationalization of musical sound encouraged by new musical technologies (Théberge 1997, 203), and a growing general trend toward globalization, created an extremely ripe atmosphere during the 1980s for the discovery of ‘international’ pop, or ‘world music.’ “The term ‘world music’ is a marketing concept, which originated among a group of record producers and other interested parties meeting in London in 1987, a catch-all devised to try to exploit the proliferation of local cultural traditions in the interstices of the market” (Chanan 1995, 177).<sup>2</sup> In this statement, Chanan leaves the reader to make the connection between media-fed transculturation processes and the subsequent proliferation of local cultures. However, Malm and Wallis are more direct, “Some of the numerous sounds and styles that emerge[d] from the ‘transculturation’ process have been accorded their own category in the business terminology of the music industry: ‘World Music’” (1992, 215). The popular usage of the term ‘world music,’ “corresponds to the globalization of mass culture at a particular stage of development: the moment when the same corporations that tout the ‘information revolution’ become integrated with the established entertainment industry on a transnational level” (Chanan 1995, 177). The resulting media conglomerates, referred to elsewhere as international “empires of sound” (Millard 1995, 175), were in perfect position to capitalize on the growing popular interest in the sounds of ‘non-Western’ music.

The “global penetration” of inexpensive cassette technology “provided for individualized reception, [by nearly anyone] anywhere in the world” (Garofalo 1993). While this provided a great tool for disseminating the world’s music it also exerted a

powerful force on local music markets as exemplified in Peter Manuel's *Cassette Culture*, which examines the proliferation of the cassette and its effect on the music industry in North India (Manuel 1993). CD technology, on the other hand, was initially introduced in the early 1980s with lukewarm results. For consumers to make the switch to the CD format required new investments in hardware, which at that time was moderately expensive and was not portable. In addition, the cost of a CD was nearly twice that of the vinyl or cassette versions sitting in the same store. Consumers were far more likely to simply copy the record onto a blank cassette for portable listening. Therefore, acceptance of the CD as the format of popular choice was delayed by prohibitive prices. Pricing the new format out of the market initially was very odd when one considers that digital recording technology had cut the cost of production to pennies on the dollar. It was now cheaper for the industry to produce and distribute more music than ever before. And, that is exactly how they eventually swayed the majority over to the new format. As the world's record labels shifted to the digital format, the consumers were treated to an explosion of releases and reissues of rare and previously unavailable recordings to which they responded with an incredible swell in purchases. The CD emerged in the waning 1980s as the popular medium for the dissemination of world's musical output, virtually replacing the cassette. The compact size of the CD and the extended playing time and improvement in sound quality were very appealing to consumers, and with the advent of affordable portable machines, the format took on new appeal. MTV, founded in 1981, was also partly responsible for the surge in the industry by beaming music into the homes of millions of music fans, 85% of which were between the ages of 12 and 34, a perfect demographic defined and delivered to the record industry. This stimulated market condition had a two-pronged effect: 1) it saved a sagging industry that had recently been posting huge annual losses, and 2) it contributed to the industry's push on the cross-cultural marketing of the world's music, which produced a sharp increase in the circulation of international popular music, both on CD and in promotional concert appearances. This interpenetration of the global and the local continued strong into the late 1980s and to anyone paying attention it soon became clear that 'world music' was far more than a passing affair with sonic unfamiliarity, it had become a

permanent part of the *glocalized* soundscape and a very lucrative part of the international recording industry.

Nowhere were these changes more immediately evident than in the local public radio stations across the United States, which suddenly began airing ‘world music’ as part of their weekly programming.<sup>3</sup> As the primary means of showcasing the world’s sounds, *public* radio regularly defined the sound of ‘world music,’ which often changed according to media initiated trends in popular aesthetics. By the time popular interest in ‘world music’ caught on in the late 1980s, African and Afro-pop music was the dominant sound. However, this trend had been ongoing for decades. In 1966 Charles Keil made the proclamation that, “It is simply incontestable that year after year, American popular music has come to sound more and more like African popular music” (Keil [1966] 1991, 45). Twenty years later the phenomenon had grown exponentially. In 1985, after hearing a cassette of mbaqanga and township music, Paul Simon rushed off to South Africa to record his infamous *Graceland* project. Earlier, it had also been African music heard on a cassette that stirred Peter Gabriel to create WOMAD. A further indicator of the popularity of the ‘African sound’ was Georges Collinet’s radio program *Afropop*, the only syndicated ‘world music’ program in the United States. “In 1988, interest in international pop was at an all-time high and *Afropop* was launched by NPR (National Public Radio) as a weekly series. It was the first of its kind” (Afropop Website 2003). A few years later the program expanded its repertoire to include the music and cultures throughout the African diaspora after which the program became known as *Afropop Worldwide*.

In addition to public radio, another tool that helped define what ‘world music’ sounded like in the United States was the annually televised Grammy Award Ceremony, arguably the longest commercial ever aired in the history of broadcasting (aside from MTV). As a marketing tool of the recording industry, NARAS, the National Academy for the Recording Arts and Sciences, and their Grammy Award, exerted powerfully persuasive forces on the music purchasing habits and musical aesthetics of the general public. NARAS was slow to accept the oncoming ‘world music’ trend as permanent, but in 1991, it conceded and created the Best World Music Album category.<sup>4</sup> In the new category NARAS lacked imagination and often did more to confuse than to inspire

consumers with votes that were either cautious, uniformed, or under the influence of the record industry. The first Grammy in the new category went to Mickey Hart for the album *Planet Drum*, winning over *Amen* by Salif Keita, *Brazilian Serenata* by Dori Caymmi, *Este Mundo* by the Gipsy Kings, and *Txai* by Milton Nascimento (O'Neil 1999, 518). Choosing *Planet Drum* over *Amen* or *Txai* in this category indicated that the conservative voting members of NARAS were still unsure of what 'world music' really was. This trend continued as successive Grammys went to Sergio Mendes (*Brasileiro*) in 1992, Ry Cooder (*A Meeting by the River*) in 1993, Ali Farke Toure with Ry Cooder (*Talkin' Timbuktu*) in 1994, Deep Forest (*Bohème*) in 1995, and The Chieftains with Ry Cooder (*Santiago*) in 1996. The creation of the Latin Academy of the Recording Arts and Sciences in 1997 coincided with a shift in attention that placed Brazilian music in the limelight until the turn of the century by awarding Grammys to: Milton Nascimento (*Nascimento*) in 1997, Gilberto Gil (*Quanta*) in 1988, Caetano Veloso (*Livro*) in 1999, and João Gilberto (João, Voz e Violão) produced by Caetano Veloso, in 2000.<sup>5</sup> Only in the new millennium did the Academy break away from Brazil by awarding Grammys to Ravi Shankar (*Full Circle*) in 2001, and Ruben Blades (*Mundo*) in 2002. With the media forces leaping from one cultural sound to another the answer to what 'world music' sounded like was becoming more and more impossible to define.

The sound of 'world music,' now a commodity as any other, became subject to fluctuations depending upon market conditions, corporate objectives and profit projections. With the record labels in control of much of the world's media, inclusion into the 'world music' arena was therefore controlled by a small number of multinational conglomerates. Through their hegemonic control over the production and distribution of music on a global level, the 'world music' category emerged as a tool of industry 'exclusion/inclusion,' exerting further control over its sonic characteristics. Inclusion into the 'world music' category often represented a double-edged sword for musicians, at once offering an opportunity at international fame and wealth, while on the other hand marginalizing the artist from mainstream media and culture. Being labeled a 'world musician' with its connotations of the 'exotic other' "is not only exclusionary, but implies notions of inferiority as well. Hence, such a classification becomes a legitimized cultural, musical and linguistic segregation" (Klump 1999, 13). This sentiment was eloquently



summarized by musician Angélique Kidjo who believes that ‘world musicians’ are systematically “left out of the mainstream, because this music is given the same weight in the market that the Third World is given on the global economic chessboard” (Kidjo quoted in Aubert 1992, 25). The persistence of this condition results in the permanent artistic ‘ghettoization’ of world musicians from mainstream culture. As part of selling the exotic, ‘world music’ marketing strategies came to mean “music of non-Western origin and circulation, as well as musics of dominated minorities within the Western world: music *of* the world to be sold *around* the world” (Feld 1994, 266). Such strategies are problematic in that they subjugate the importance of the musical sounds to their emanating source. In other words, using seemingly arbitrary criteria for inclusion that places emphasis upon geographic, cultural and linguistic, rather than musical elements, in ‘world music,’ the industry “has created a musical category where musical sound may be an irrelevant criterion” (Klump 1999, 13).

#### *Issues of Tradition, Authenticity and Identity*

As the recording industry explored the new market, many techniques were employed to sell concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘authenticity’ along with the music. Unfortunately, initial attempts to introduce music cross-culturally were marked by an outdated, evolutionist sentiment toward the ‘exotic,’ or the musical Other. Representing foreignness with arbitrarily assigned ‘primitive’ symbols such as a djembe drum, a berimbau, the kokopelli figure, or other ‘ethno-man’ icons (like the one that serves as the logo for the Society for Ethnomusicology in the United States), the marketing of ‘world music’ demonstrated an ethnocentric view of foreign cultures that encouraged the misuse of the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘authentic’ as desirable, ‘modern’ commodities. Through such attempts, the record labels “simultaneously fuse discourses of the exotic with those of tradition and authenticity” (Théberge 1997, 202). Ideas governing the commercialization of the ‘traditional’ adhere to strict definitions of tradition as the transmission of cultural elements from one generation to the next, usually through oral means, or a time-honored practice. Attaching connotations of musical tradition to a timeline extending into a fading cultural past is rooted in antiquated ‘evolutionist’ thought displaying the ‘salvage ethnography’ concepts long abandoned by the social

sciences. This logic manifests itself in the music industry through such incredulous CD themes as ‘ancient’, ‘traditional’, ‘authentic’, ‘forgotten’ and even ‘endangered’ music. This ‘exoticization’ of foreign cultures in ‘world music’ operates to “increase the mystique of the music to the Western viewer/listener” (Mitchell 1993, 315).

Concepts of authenticity are often used in ‘world music’ as validators for cultural behaviors, which are scrutinized against fossilized concepts of tradition. Authenticity, at best, is a relative, philosophical concept, which may or may not be entirely useful when applied to the study of music. In ‘world music’ it is safe to assume that the listeners’ views of authenticity would exist on many levels, contingent upon the receiver’s knowledge of the producing culture. Therefore, it is entirely possible for the same musical event to be simultaneously experienced on many levels, each with the same degree of authenticity to the listener. The more the listener understands the traditions of the producing culture, the better she is equipped to make judgments, should she so desire, concerning concepts of aesthetics, tradition and authenticity. However, when considering such concepts in music, it is naïve to think of local cultures as stagnant or that all members of a local culture share a common ideology of tradition or authenticity. While these concepts may remain useful to ethnomusicologists and the scholarly interested, their use as commodities in the ‘world music’ market, should be dismissed.

Authenticity, while not a highly valued commodity in the international music industry, is frequently established through authoritative, informative liner notes, photographs, and the involvement of scholars, or ‘experts,’ generally acknowledged as specialists in the cultural area. Record labels offering ‘world music’ such as Ryko, Rounder, Nonesuch, and Lyrichord in the United States, or Nimbus in the U.K., have built trustworthy reputations using this method. However, the Smithsonian Folkways series is perhaps the best example of this method. The global sounds presented on the Folkways label are ‘authenticated’ by experts in the field, thus setting the standard for authenticity as related to a particular musical tradition. Another method is found in pairing the ‘foreign’ artist with an established pop star of the ‘western’ world. Using this technique, the industry seeks to move ‘select’ foreign musicians from their previously marginalized position in the industry toward the mainstream of western public consciousness. Through releases such as Paul Simon’s *Graceland* (1985) and *Spirit of the*

*Saints* (1989), Peter Gabriel and Youssou N'Dour (*Shakin' the Tree* 1989), Ernie Watts with Gilberto Gil (*Afoxé* 1991), Hank Jones with Cheick-Tidiane Seck (*Sarala* 1995), Toumani Diabate with Taj Mahal (*Kulanjan* 1999), or Sting with Algerian rai singer Cheb Mami (*A Brand New Day* 2001), the 'western' pop star, an accepted musical expert among consumers, is regularly used by the industry to introduce the artists to western audiences while simultaneously validating the music.

For the average consumer, however, the commodities of tradition and authenticity offered in 'world music' releases hold marginal interest. It is not vitally important that 'outsider' experts, or academics hired by the transnational record companies to write the liner notes, attest to the authenticity of the music. The aesthetic appeal of the sounds remains the deciding criterion among consumers. Sound is the root reference for aesthetic acceptance by audiences, especially when listening to music containing lyrics that are sung in a language unknown to the listener. Without phonetic reference, the entire piece becomes a presentation of soundscapes that either evoke feelings of satisfaction or discomfort leading the listener to accept or reject the musical experience. Therefore, *sound* in 'world music' is far more crucial than tradition or authenticity in cross-cultural communication by introducing listeners to new cultural standards of musical aesthetics, often for the first time.

Closely linked to discussions of authenticity, and frequently considered interrelated, are concepts of identity and ethnicity. Amid the mass industrialization of music, global commercialization and consumerism, musical sound has proven an effective means of establishing, asserting and maintaining cultural and/or personal identities. However, in this globalized world the identity one projects is subject to adaptation and alteration by others, becoming swallowed by new identities emerging from the mix. These new identities reflect "a moveable, developing relational process of identification that links the traditions of the past with the all the dislocations of the world system" (Garofalo 1991, 33). Referring to identity in this global local dialectic Stuart Hall stated, "So one and the same time, people feel part of the world and part of their villages. They have neighborhood identities and they are citizens of the world" (Hall quoted in Garofalo 1991, 33). Likewise, musicians possess local and global musical identities that are negotiated and asserted through composition and performance, which is commonly

achieved by adherence to rhythmic techniques, instrumentation, language, repertoire and styles that are strongly identified with a particular group. However, meaning, identity and ethnicity, while more easily maintained on a local or national level, can become mutated, or devalued, as the sounds are incorporated into foreign musical expressions. This is evident in many ‘first world-third world’ collaborations, particularly ‘world music’ videos, where the geopolitical relationship is transferred to the musical project.

### *Cross-Cultural Use of Sounds*

The dissemination of the world’s musical sounds via huge media conglomerates and global distribution networks constructs a dynamic between the dominant world powers and less powerful nations. This dominant-submissive dynamic, termed *complementary schismogenesis* by anthropologist Gregory Bateson presents an interesting perspective that may be helpful in studying the cross-cultural use of sound (1972). As a logical extension of schizophonia, schismogenesis is found in the process of disseminating the disembodied sounds on a global level for corporate profit. This raises questions as to how the schizmogetic dynamic affects the schizophrenic product as it is prepared for diffusion throughout the world. In a complementary schizmogetic scheme the actions of individuals in group ‘A’ elicit responses from individuals in group ‘B’ which, in turn, intensifies the behavior of ‘A’ which then affects the behavior of group ‘B’ and so on. This circular dynamic is established in the international music industry through contract negotiations between local musicians and the transnational recording companies who control international distribution. The dominance is introduced as the industry acts as gatekeepers of the wealth-producing mechanisms controlled by the media conglomerates. In order for local musicians to pass through the gate, they must agree to lopsided contractual agreements that further enforce the uneven dynamic. According to Bateson, unless this type of distortion is restrained it results in a “mutual hostility” between the groups and “must end in the breakdown of the system” (Bateson 1974, 68). Evidence of this hostility, and perhaps even the breakdown of the system, may be seen in the current ‘war’ between the record labels, their artists and music consumers (under the guise of intellectual property issues), as digital technology has introduced options to existing corporate hegemony over music. In this dominant-submissive business environment, the

international recording industry, centered in economically dominant nations, appropriates, albeit through contract, the music of local cultures, mostly from less powerful nations. The choice of which music becomes a commodity relies upon corporate strategies and demographic market studies that act as a filtering process by which music is preselected for global distribution (Hirsh 1973). This filtering process, in effect, provides yet another layer of corporate control over the sonic characteristics of mainstream 'world music.' It is through this filtering process that the average fan is herded toward the sounds of choice and directed away from the others. Though not always successful, this process helps reinforce sonic stereotypes that lead to predictable sales while relegating the offerings of great musical nations to a single genre, or two.

In music making practices, appropriation is often misused and confused with concepts of influence and transculturation. Technically, appropriation exists when sounds are claimed or used without proper permissions or acknowledgments. These sounds are often used to realize profits for the taker while providing no, or little, retribution for the originator. Typically, it is the musicians of economically dominant cultures such as Europe, the United States or Japan who appropriate and use the sounds of more subjugated cultures, although this is not always the case. For these reasons, the word appropriation bears negative connotations. However, not all cross-cultural uses of musical sounds are appropriations. In this technologically driven shrinking planet many sonic adaptations are simply the result of years of influences and transculturations.

When Paul Simon headed to South Africa to make *Graceland*, the music he imagined for the project had been influenced by the sound of mbaqanga, isicathamiya and township music fused with his own Anglo musical influences. The South African sound was very familiar to him due to many elements borrowed from rhythm and blues in the U.S. and other music forms from the 'west' that had made their way to Africa via LPs and cassettes. "During the 1950s, for example, about 200 Cuban 78 R.P.M. recordings made their way to Africa, greatly influencing music there. And the spread of audiocassettes throughout the world sent American rock and soul music-James Brown, Little Richard and Elvis Presley-to Africa" (Schnabel 1990). Roger Armstrong of London-based Globestyle Records affirms, "We're talking about a gigantic melting pot and not only James Brown, Santana, Stevie Wonder and other groups that made American R & B

popular in Africa” (Armstrong quoted in Schnabel 1990). These reverberations, or ‘sonic echoes,’ are aural reflections of U.S. and Latin American music culture, consumed and incorporated into local cultures, as in Jamaica or Africa, then introduced back into the popular culture of the western world years later under the ‘world music’ rubric. Therefore, when Simon listened to South African isicathamiya singing he was hearing the local result of European Christian hymn traditions introduced by European Colonists that over time also fell under the influence of the gospel sound coming from the United States. Can it be said that South Africans had appropriated these foreign sounds, or would it perhaps be more accurate to describe the outcome as a product of influence or transculturation? And is this the same as when a major international pop star, such as Paul Simon, upon hearing this sound arranges to incorporate it into his Anglo centric pop project? From most perspectives the two are vastly different. However, they are alike in that they both represent musical interchanges between dominant and less dominant cultures. The second instance, however, involved large sums of capital that were exchanged for a sound, in this case the sound of South Africa, which Paul Simon appropriated and attached his name. “How then does one evaluate this type of trade, where the original creative product by primary tradition bearers is appropriated in exchange for symbolic respect and possibly some lesser, trickle-down economic payback, advancement or crossover in the marketplace?” (Feld 1994a 239). I have pondered this question along with other assessments of the *Graceland* project as a “process of appropriation, exploitation and domination” (Meintjes 1990, 47). However, when I spoke of *Graceland* with Joseph Shabalala, Ladysmith Black Mambazo’s leader, on his visit to UCLA, his point of view seemed to quiet the debate. “I did not feel violated or exploited. He made Ladysmith Black Mambazo famous all over the world. Our music reaches people now I never dreamed would hear it... like here, I am here now... when before? ... (Shabalala 2000). Regardless of one’s philosophic stance on the phenomenon, ‘first world-third world’ collaborations commonly bear sharp reminders of the lopsided effects of the schismogenetic dynamic at work in the international music industry.

In recent years a different method of cross-cultural sonic appropriation surfaced through the development of digital sampling. Unlike ‘world beat’ fusions, sampled sounds were not internalized by the musicians and were chosen solely for their sonic

characteristics and their contribution to the overall mix. These cultural sounds, along with their identities, became the “raw materials for the increasingly diversified and complex mix of musics tapped into by the widespread use of digital sampling” (Mitchell 1993, 319). Sampling technology presented a microcosm of the entire ‘world music’ industry in one electronic device. The amalgam of sound that beamed into the homes of the world a decade earlier was now available at the push of a button. With the invention of ‘sound libraries’ to feed to the digital machinery it became possible for mix masters to juxtapose even more unlikely musical sounds in their musical arrangements, such as Tuva throat singing and Cuban conga rhythms, or Balinese gamelan with the tenor sound of John Coltrane without having to learn how to play the instruments or find the musicians to deliver the desired sound. With sampling it was no longer even necessary to be a musician in the traditional sense in order to create music. All one needed was the equipment, an ‘ear’ and access to the ‘sound libraries.’ As Mitchell points out, “What is important about these vast collections of sound and excerpts of sampled performances—from Africa, Japan, Korea, Java, South America, the Middle East and India— is that they have been promoted almost exclusively as a kind of ‘sonic tourism’ for musicians in the industrialized world” (Mitchell paraphrased in Théberge 1997, 202). This philosophy was evident in digital instrument marketing campaigns that claimed to have packed the ‘sounds of the world’ into the instrument. Perhaps the most telling example of this was seen in the advertisement for the E-mu’s Proteus/3 ‘world in a box’ that invited the musicians to “Take on the World” and to “Enrich [their] Music with a Global Texture.” In the text of the ad this sonic appropriation was the main selling point: “As borders dissolve, traditions are shared. And this sharing of cultures is most powerful in the richness of music. With sounds that originate from around the world, among players, E-mu had gathered these sounds and more-192 in all. Use them to emulate traditional world instruments or as raw material for creating one-of-a-kind synthesized sounds of your own” (E-mu product ad 1993). From this text it is clearly evident that the ‘sharing’ is a one-way street flowing from the creators, the ‘players,’ to the appropriators. Here again we see the schizmo-genetic effect that allows the instrument makers from dominant industrialized nations to appropriate subaltern sounds for corporate profit, and in doing so effectively devalue the cultures and traditions from which these sounds emanate. Perhaps

even more damaging is that the “musician’s notion of the sound and performance traditions of world cultures are being filtered through the marketing departments of American, Japanese, and European instrument manufacturers and a small group of largely anonymous, independent sound developers” (Théberge 1997, 203).

### *Conclusion*

Ethnomusicologist Steve Loza once stated, “Latin America represents the most integrated convergence of cultures and continents in the most rapid span of time than any other cultural area in history” (Loza 1999). Although these words are certainly true when considering *physical* proximity and political colonization, they do not even begin to compare with the integrated convergence that has taken place in the media-driven ‘cultural area’ of ‘world beat.’ Whereas in Latin America the cultures of three continents collided and morphed over a five hundred year period, the integrated convergence that happened in ‘world beat’ involved virtually every continent and took place in less than a decade.

As we have seen, ‘world beat,’ was the sonic fruit of a global technoculture connected by networks and communication satellites, with digital audio technology and personal lasers. This technological savvy sparked the catalyst that produced the accelerated collision of cultural sounds that yielded ‘world beat.’ Out of this sonic *mélange* ‘world music’ emerged as the designation for the corporate appropriation of the sum of the world’s *marketable* sounds produced by this convergence. Therefore, whether it is Pete Seeger or the Kingston Trio ‘borrowing’ Solomon Linda’s “Mbumba,” or jazz players’ appropriation of the bossa nova sound, W. C. Handy’s habanera rhythm at the beginning of St. Louis Blues, Dizzy Gillespie ‘Manteca’ with Cuban conga player Chano Pozo, or the Japanese salsa bands Orchesta de la Luz and Orchesta de Sol, the cross-cultural incorporation of sounds and therefore identities is the essence of the international music industry. “In this globalized sense the designation ‘world music’ is almost a misnomer, for what once designated the music of the Other, now kidnaps otherness for consumption by and for the pleasure of Self” (Bohlman 2002, 24).



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The trend of internationally famous pop stars introducing foreign music to ‘Western’ audiences continued with Paul Simon, who, after hearing South African mbaqanga music and township jive, used his industry connections to arrange a recording session with some of the top musicians in that country. The resulting project *Graceland* introduced the world to the whispery sounds of isicathamiya and the township jive and mbaqanga of South Africa. *Graceland* led to a sustained international career for the South African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Upon hearing the popular music of Brazil and Cuba, David Byrne was prompted to release a five CD set of Brazil Classics and a three CD set of Cuban Classics and has made extensive use of Brazilian and Cuban musical traditions in his own music, leading to an explosion in the popularity of Brazilian and Cuban music among the consumers of the U.S.

<sup>2</sup> Although Chanan accurately points to the origin of the term used in the music industry, he makes no allusion to its earlier uses. In 1909, Georg Capellen used the term to describe the international influences found in the music of composers Debussy and Stravinsky. Around 1963, German jazz critic Joaquim-Ernst Berendt used the term “Weltmusik” to label a movement in jazz that incorporated musical styles from outside the United States. Also, by the early 1960s, the term was being used by ethnomusicologists Robert Brown and Jaap Kunst as a label of inclusivity. See Brad Klump, “Origins and Distinctions of the ‘World Music’ and ‘World Beat’ Designators” in *Canadian University Music Review* 19(2): 9.

<sup>3</sup> In 1987, I was an independent producer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania seeking to air an informative program on Brazilian music. I approached WYEP, a local community FM radio station, with a proposal that delivered a full hour of high quality weekly programming at no cost to the station. They declined the offer. Later that year, apparently after receiving the press releases and industry news that the industry push was on to promote ‘world music,’ I was contacted by J. Mikel Ellcessor, the program director of the station, who offered me the opportunity to air my proposed show. The program began in early 1988 (and ran until 1991), and along with others at the station who specialized in the music of Africa, or Europe, or India, we formed the *International Connection*, a weekly program in prime time that was scheduled for ‘world music.’ At that time the station was one of only a handful of stations in the United States programming ‘world music.’ When the show began, the consumer was hard pressed to find any of the music they had heard on the radio for sale in the stores. (Most of the music used on my program had been imported directly from Brazil). However, within a year, every store in town had ‘world music’ and ‘international music’ sections. It was the birth of a new genre.

<sup>4</sup> Preceding the Best World Music Album Grammy and reflecting the sharp increase in the ‘African sound’ of popular music of the United States, Paul Simon’s *Graceland* was awarded a Grammy for Album of the Year in 1986, and in 1987 it won the prestigious Record of the Year award (Schipper 1992, 242 and 247). The commercial success of *Graceland* was pivotal in introducing the *sounds* of African popular music to a wider cross section of music consumers outside of Africa. The music on this record was *not* African popular music, however, it did utilize many of its sounds and their meanings.

<sup>5</sup> During the height of Brazilian musical popularity among the consumers of the United States, Paul Simon released *Rhythm of the Saints* (partially recorded in Brazil) and featuring Brazilian superstar Milton Nascimento, percussionist Naná Vasconcelos, instrumental ensemble Uakti, and the cultural drumming group from Bahia, Olodum (recorded live in Bahia’s historic Pelourinho district). While the music on this release did very little to capture the essence of Brazilian musical culture, once again, as in *Graceland*, we see Simon attaching to himself the sounds and meanings of ‘Third World’ music traditions that have become popular in the ‘western’ world.

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\* denotes Grammy winner for Best World Music Album