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Introduction

Special issue
Crossing Borders: Music of Latin America

Over the years, *Popular Music* has produced a substantial number of Special Issues, some thematic, others focused on the music of particular social-geographical areas. It so happens that the first of these, which came out in 1987, focused on Latin American music. At the time this reflected the area interests of the now longstanding board member Jan Fairley (who was joint editor of that issue with David Horn), and the changing boundaries between ethnomusicology and the emerging 'popular music studies' in academia, as well as the boundary between 'traditional' and 'world' musics in the sphere of music distribution and marketing. It brought on board emerging scholars and activist musicians in Latin America alongside colleagues in other countries. It is also important to reflect on how this issue grew out of the intersection of personal experience and political involvement (Jan was teaching at the Catholic University in Temuco, Chile at the time of the 1973 *coup état*, and several authors wrote from direct experience of music under musical engagement with political struggle and also music under authoritarian rule).

As we put together this issue in 2010 it is impossible not to remark on how much Latin America has changed. In the mid-1980s various countries were still living through or just emerging from brutal dictatorships and their devastating aftermath. The end of the overt Cold War was not in sight, and in Latin America critiques of US and European cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism were deep rooted and widely held. Nationalism and regionalism were relevant concepts in explaining the relationship between music, place and politics there. The main focus was on understanding emerging and contested political systems within a historical and political context and how popular music was integral to such processes.

With this new issue 20 years on, it is clear that migration and diaspora have changed the very scope and definition of 'Latin America', quite apart from the political shifts consequent on the 'return to democracy' in the neo-liberal world and the rise of ethnic and other social movements in many countries. Our idea is therefore to explore the musical routes and social links between Latin America, Spain, Portugal and other parts of the world, which challenge conventional musicological and geographical categorisations. The papers broach dialogues in Latin American music that break with conventional ideas of a geographically bounded music, instead looking at music 'at the borders' both aesthetically and culturally. They re-examine accepted perspectives, looking at music that happens at the meeting points between cultures, at the blurring of boundaries, and at ideas of change and transformation. These are themes which we hope will open up opportunities for dialogues within Latin American music production and scholarship.

The subjects addressed in this issue explore the relationship between music, place and identity at both a theoretical and methodological level by giving voice

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to those responsible for making music 'borderless'. More significantly, the papers here look at historical change and continuities in the processes of making music as much as theorising about it. The focus on transformation, movement and hybridity stresses that the relationship between music and place is multiple – music does not belong to any one single place but to multiple locations simultaneously and as such is therefore claimed by different groups. Our authors find Latin American people being studied in places far removed from the geographical continent, hybridities beyond that original hybridity of Latin and America, and new ways in which music making is confusing the boundary of the virtual/technological and the real/face-to-face.

The response to the call for papers has been enthusiastic and the papers are bold in their concepts. Fred Moehn traces the movement of the Angolan freedom song 'Angolano segue em frente', from its original context (composed in 1974 just as the war for independence from Portugal came to an end), to a new cover version in Brazil 30 years later. Comparing these three versions, he looks at how the lyrics resonate in social contexts separated not merely by an ocean but by three decades in time, exploring forms, versions, exchanges and world music markets in the context of postcolonial Atlantic cultural flows.

In 'Salsa down under: Latin American migrant musicians in Australia and New Zealand', Dan Bendrups examines the music produced by migrants from South America to enable them to represent the continent in all its diversity. He shows how early 20th century conceptualisation of 'Latin' music and dance affected performance opportunities for migrants who began to arrive in that region from the 1970s onwards. His paper shows how the class politics of the 1970s and 1980s have dissolved into the 'social movements' of subsequent decades, how the concept of what 'Latin' means has been extended and developed, and how this is played out through music making. At the same time the musics being played reflect these origins in that early period, with its class politics and utopian ideals that seemed achievable. There is continuity with the earlier period in the expression of a 'sense of social purpose' by musicians of the Latin diaspora, which remains a strong factor for legitimation through time. Indeed, one might question whether the 'indigeneity' discussed by Bendrups is a dispersal of that political urgency of the earlier period, or whether the political emotion emblematised in a name of a group such as Arauco Libre (Free Araucania) is not rather a continuity with the past (particularly nuanced as we go to press by the recent human rights hunger strike of the Araucanian/Mapuche people in Chile).

This question links to issues raised in Henry Stobart's piece, which examines presentations of indigeneity in the practices of Gregorio Mamani, a musician and cultural activist originally from a rural area of North Potosí in Bolivia. Mamani creates VCDs of indigenous celebrations in his home studio in the city of Sucre. Despite his urban isolation, and curiously individualist, entrepreneurial motivations, Stobart shows how Mamani works from a desire to 'strengthen culture'. His creation of audio-visual expressions of Carnival, while using technological artifice to construct (or even 'fake') events, engages on a deep level with indigenous concepts of creativity and oral tradition. Mamani's clear politics of cultural assertion challenges us to question received notions of the relationship between creativity and community. The transformation which Moehn traced in the migration of one song is here paralleled in the way ethnicity and cultural identity have emerged as vehicles of political resistance in Bolivia and other countries in recent years.

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Helena Simonett explores the ways a government sponsored cultural project named Yoremensamble, involving a group of urban mestizo musicians from northwestern Mexico, appropriates local indigenous musical expressions to produce an album titled 'Hombre Digno' (Dignified [wo]man/person). She argues for the necessity of understanding global cultural interactions and musical appropriations or exchanges in the production of hybrid music through ethnographic research. The possibilities for such exchanges are marked by wider power conflicts, given the uneven distribution of and access to products of the global markets. By conducting ethnographic research on Yoremensamble's musical practices Simonett highlights the problems in studying and writing about hybrid music. She argues that Yoremensamble's fusion of different musical styles challenges the concept of genre- and place-specific music.

Sydney Hutchinson's piece brings us to the politics of terminology, as she considers ways in which musical categories used by scholars and musicians in different locations vary widely in meaning, complicating both analysis and disciplinary divisions. She examines the use of the terms *folklórico*, *tradicional*, *popular* and *típico* and argues that the concept of *típico* (literally 'typical', *viz*. of a region, place or people) needs revaluing as a people's term, worthy of serious discussion in the academy. She uses the case of Dominican *merengue típico* to show how musical categories are often intensely local, relying more on notions of place than of time, class, race or production. Despite this, she argues that the concept of *típico* can be helpful when examining transnational 'roots' music that bridges nations, classes and modes of production.

Finally, Hettie Malcolmson brings us back to the oral and written aspects of a genre's history by following the 'route' of *danzón*, an ever popular dance whose possible roots lie in three continents and which moves between neighbouring countries in the circum-Caribbean. By bringing together material from Mexico, Cuba, France and Britain, Malcolmson critiques standard histories narrated by *danzón* experts while arguing that by treating Africa as a conceptual nation (as it most often is), 'Africanness' becomes something extra, which racialises hegemonic European music-dance forms. Her conclusion evokes what Paul Gilroy – following African-American writer Leroi Jones (aka Amiri Baraka) – calls a 'changing same':

> Today this involves the difficult task of striving to comprehend the reproduction of cultural traditions not in the unproblematic transmission of a fixed essence through time but in the breaks and interruptions which suggest that the invocation of tradition may be a distinct, though covert, response to the destabilising flux of the post-contemporary world. (Gilroy 1993, p. 101)

In the introduction to the 1987 special issue, we admitted our need for knowing more about the music, the contexts of performance, the meaning for participants, musicians and audience, the way people use music in their lives. We exclaimed – ¡Y que continente! ¡Y que música! ¡Y que bailes! ¡Y que músicos! If in this introduction we have been tempted to look back in time, we should perhaps heed the words of a famous song from that earlier period of Catalan singer-songwriter Joan Manuel Serrat:

> Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar
> Al andar, se hace camino, y al volver la vista atrás
> Se ve la senda que nunca se ha de volver a pisar

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(Walker there is no path, you make the path by walking
Walking, you make the path, and if you look behind you
You see the track which you will never tread again)
(Joan Manuel Serrat 1969, 'Caminante no hay camino' from the album *Dedicado a Antonio Machado poeta*)

This powerful musical memory was evoked by the lyrics of 'Angolano segue en frente' (Angolan, keep going forward), analysed by Moehn, which evokes the text of Serrat's 'Español*i*to' (Little Spaniard) as it does other songs composed on the continent. Indeed, the popularity of Joan Manuel Serrat's nova canço music in Spain and in Latin America and its meaning for the political left from the late 1960s onwards is an example of the 'blurring' and crossing of boundaries from an earlier decade. Just as Els Setze Jutges, the group of artists Serrat belonged to, linked to Latin America's *nueva canción* and *nueva trova* movement, so, in turn, his album *Dedicado a Antonio Machado poeta* (Dedicated to the poet Antonio Machado) which reworked poetry from the 1930s Spanish Civil War period into seminal songs, had global reach in the late 1960s and 1970s. Español*i*to's famous metaphor of the 'two Spains' (the one that is dying, and the other that is yawning itself awake) set the stage for much of the social conflict of the 20th century. Already that image of the dynamic waking yawn seems apt in the 21st century, both for the new movements in Latin American music and for scholarly appreciation of it around the world. As Cuba's Silvio Rodríguez says in his song 'Vamos a andar': 'Let's walk, in verse … to reach life.'

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