ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

by Timothy Rice

I am not quite sure when the world fell apart. When I began my study of ethnomusicology in 1968, there was a great deal of excitement and optimism about this relatively new field of study, even though the United States was in the middle of a horrible war in Vietnam. It seemed that, as we say in English, "the world was our oyster." We could apparently go anywhere (with the possible exception of Vietnam) and study any music that struck our fancy. Since then, however, not only has this naïve optimism and energy been subjected to a withering postcolonial critique but, especially since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the situation for many people in the world seems only to be getting worse and worse, making the prospect of doing fieldwork in a growing number of places in the world nearly unimaginable. For a few people, including most readers of this journal, our personal worlds have probably improved during this period, but what of the rest of the world, including the poor and unfortunate in our own countries? The United Nations today lists more than sixty countries in which there is open, armed conflict between groups or between resistance groups and the government. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has wracked some parts of the world, most notably Africa. All reports indicate that the gap between rich and poor is growing, both in developed, capitalist countries, and between rich and poor regions of the world. Climate change seems to be posing an ever-more-obvious threat to life on our planet, and rising ocean water levels are causing some people in the Pacific to plan for a future far from their native atolls. Where can we go to work ethnomusicologically today, and what kind of work should we be doing there?[1]

It is my contention in this article that only in the last fifteen years or so have ethnomusicologists fully embraced a new set of themes concerning the relationship of music to the social, political, economic, and ecological crises facing so many people in today's world, a set of themes that constitutes a new form of ethnomusicology in times (and places) of trouble.[2] These new themes represent a

1. This article is a revision of a paper presented at the 2013 World Conference of the ICTM in a panel on "new research." I began with this brief introduction: "The 'new research' that I want to talk about today is most emphatically not my own new research. It is new research being done by members of ICTM, many of whom are in the audience today. The new research that I am singling out for attention concerns the study of music in places and times of trouble, and I intend my comments to honour their pioneering work."

2. Ethnomusicologists, in their attempt to understand the relationship between music and the cultural, social, economic, and political processes it reflects and influences, typically organize their work around one or more particular themes or issues. Alan Merriam, in his 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music*, provided probably the first extended list of such themes, twelve in number, for the nascent field: (1) shared cultural concepts about music; (2) the relationship between aural and other modes of perception (synesthesia); (3) physical and verbal behaviour in relation to music; (4) musicians as a social group; (5) the teaching and learning of music; (6) the process of composition; (7) the study of song texts; (8) the

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major break, it seems to me, from the way ethnomusicology was conducted for the first half century of its history beginning in 1950.

More than twenty years ago, by the early 1990s, anthropologists already had a long history of reporting on the very real world of traditional societies beset by modernization and globalization in various forms: disease, exploitation of formerly pristine forests and lands, missionization, the impact of oppressive government regimes and policies, the shock of war, and on and on. Twenty years ago I could not find much evidence that ethnomusicologists had, in fact, begun such work. Back then I wondered when we in ethnomusicology would start conducting such studies, and why we had not already begun.[3] It is clear now that only recently have ethnomusicologists begun to engage in a sustained way with music's role in solving or worsening contemporary social, economic, political, and ecological problems, and it is this work that I am reviewing in this article.

Why has it taken so long for ethnomusicologists, and only a few of them at that, to come to grips with an ethnomusicology of troubled times and places? I think there are five principal reasons for this delay. First, ethnomusicologists often, but not always, conduct their research on music that they love. That is, many of us are moved, first of all, by the sensual and aesthetic pleasure that music provides and only later come to the intellectual and social themes and questions that an anthropology of music investigates. Second, music is associated, in the anglophone imagination, with good things; "that's music to my ears" goes the common expression when hearing felicitous news (cf. Nettl 2005:18). So the possibility that music can be associated with the worst aspects of human existence is neither attractive nor intuitive. Third, ethnomusicological paradigms suggest that music is produced principally in stable social settings where an entire society, an effective government, or a few wealthy patrons support music making. When societies fall apart under the pressure of war, violence, widespread illness, unrest among minority groups, or ecological devastation, it may surpass our imagination that music will be produced in such settings. A fourth reason, perhaps, is that in the early days of ethnomusicology, scholars concerned themselves primarily with what this organization labels "traditional music" performed in traditional settings. This predisposition may have led us to ignore the new genres and styles of music necessary to deal psychologically, emotionally, and socially with contemporary real-world problems. Fifth, it is hard to imagine working in unstable and dangerous environments that lack the infrastructure to support safe research

uses and functions of music; (9) music as symbolic behaviour (the meaning of music); (10) aesthetics and the interrelationship of the arts; (11) music and culture history; and (12) music and cultural dynamics. Ethnomusicologists have added significantly to this list in the half-century since Merriam published his seminal view of the field.

3. David McDonald asked a related question a few years ago: "Why haven't ethnomusicologists sought to understand the histories of death, displacement, and dispossession effecting and affecting the societies within which they work?" (2009:59). John Morgan O'Connell wrote, "The study of music in war and music for peace has received surprisingly little attention in ethnomusicology" (2011:112), and Margaret Kartomi, before a helpful review of war- and peace-related studies in ethnomusicology, claimed that "ethnomusicology has neglected war and peace studies" (2010a:453).

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conditions and that harbour distracted populations unable to engage productively with music researchers. All of these reasons seem to have combined to make ethnomusicologists slow, compared to their colleagues in anthropology, to deal with the severe problems facing people around the world, and to consider how music is being used to ameliorate or to exacerbate those problems.

A brief review of the literature reveals that concern for the study of music in times and places of trouble began relatively recently. Some of the earliest studies originated in the countries that emerged from the fire of war in the former Yugoslavia. Perhaps predictably, the first ethnomusicologists to deal with the impact of war on music were those living amidst its terrors and consequences, not those with the freedom and the money to travel abroad to study music in a "foreign" culture—ethnomusicologists like me, in other words. These studies from the countries of the former Yugoslavia first appeared in English in 1998 when Croatian scholars who had lived through the horrible, ethnic-cleansing wars attending the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s published a heart-felt collection of essays called *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, edited by Svanibor Pettan (1998a). A year later, American ethnomusicologist Adelaida Reyes (1999) wrote a book-length study of the music of refugees from Vietnam. These were among the earliest harbingers of a move in this new direction in ethnomusicological study. A review of the major journals in our field since the late 1990s reveals surprisingly few studies that continue this line, but about a decade later a number of edited collections of essays on these themes appeared, including *Music in the Post–9/11 World*, edited by Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry (2007); *The Oxford Handbook of Medical Ethnomusicology*, edited by Benjamin D. Koen (2008); *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Morgan O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (2010); *Applied Ethnomusicology: Historical and Contemporary Approaches*, edited by Klisala Harrison, Elizabeth Mackinlay, and Svanibor Pettan (2010); and *The Culture of Aids in Africa: Hope and Healing in Music and the Arts*, edited by Gregory Barz and Judah M. Cohen (2011).

As ethnomusicologists absorb studies of these new themes, at least three questions ought to be asked about them, questions that place this research in the larger context of the history of the field of ethnomusicology. First, will an ethnomusicology of times and places of trouble change our theories and methods in any way? Second, can our understanding of the nature of music, built up in countless studies conducted in relatively peaceful, stable settings, prove helpful in ameliorating cases of conflict, violence, disease, and social disruption? Third, how will the study of music in times and places of trouble affect our understanding of the nature of human music making? I provide preliminary answers to these three questions by examining six themes that constitute what I am calling an ethnomusicology in times of trouble: (1) music, war, and conflict; (2) music, forced migration, and minority studies; (3) music, disease, and healing; (4) music in particular tragedies; (5) music, violence, and poverty; and (6) music, climate change, and the environment.

Before I begin, here are two caveats.

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First, although many of the studies I cite have an applied aspect to them, this paper is not about applied ethnomusicology *per se*. The subfield of applied ethnomusicology may be traced to a set of influential articles on the topic by Jeff Todd Titon, Daniel Sheehy, Bess Lomax Hawes, Anthony Seeger, and Martha Ellen Davis in a special issue of *Ethnomusicology* in 1992 devoted to "music and the public interest" (Titon 1992).[4] Many of these articles focus on sustainability and preservation of traditions, particularly in the Americas. Beginning in the late 1990s applied ethnomusicologists from central and southeastern Europe extended applied projects to "life-challenging" problems in troubled places in their backyards (Pettan 2008). The literature in applied ethnomusicology has many strains: from those who suggest all of our work is applied in some ways to those who restrict it to engagement with systemic social change; from those who view it as serving a "higher purpose" than academic work to those who are leery of making a sharp distinction between pure and applied research; from those who view it as an alternate career to those who regard it as a cherished aspect of their scholarly and pedagogical persona; from those helping to preserve traditions threatened principally by modernization to those working in areas threatened by war, violence, disease, and climate change; and from those who regard applied ethnomusicologists as selfless and theoretical ethnomusicologists as selfish to those who worry that applied ethnomusicologists are caught in the same webs of self-interest as supposedly pure researchers. Harrison sums up the variety in the field, writing that "applied ethnomusicology currently consists of a series of applied ethnomusicologies" (2012:525).[5]

Second, for the poor, dispossessed, and oppressed in this world, every day is a time of trouble. Such troubles have their roots in time immemorial and are hardly the product of the last twenty years or so. Ethnomusicologists, since the beginning, have studied musical traditions that flourish in environments of relative poverty and want. Rather than focus on the below-standard material and spiritual conditions of the music makers, however, we have a long history of celebrating the richness of the music created under these conditions and its presumed psychological, cultural, and social benefits. In the United States, the musical traditions of African Americans are perhaps the *locus classicus* of these kinds of studies. The musical richness of communities in most of the cases of poverty familiar to ethnomusicologists is so

4. Applied ethnomusicology, by other names, has a history that goes back at least into the early twentieth century. It includes the work of Charles Seeger, and John and Alan Lomax, in the United States, and the work of musical folklorists in Europe intent on finding ways, often through arrangements, choreographies, amateur and professional performance ensembles, and festivals, to keep rural, village traditions alive both for their own sake and in the interest of national identity.

5. Useful recent histories, overviews, and definitions of applied ethnomusicology include Pettan 2008; Harrison and Pettan 2010; Hofman 2010; Van Buren 2010; Harrison 2012; and Dirksen 2012b as well as the websites of the SEM Applied Ethnomusicology Section, founded in 1998, and the ICTM Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology, founded in 2007. For the ethical and applied implications of "pure" research, see Hellier-Tinoco 2003, Seeger 2008, and Berger 2014. Other recent publications related to this field include special issues of *Folklore Forum* (Fenn 2003); *Muzikološki Zbornik/Musicological Annual* 44/1 (Pettan 2008); and the *Yearbook for Traditional Music* devoted to music and poverty (Harrison 2013a).

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great that even insiders, who are relatively poor in economic terms, do not view themselves as impoverished in cultural terms (Dirksen 2013; Titon 2013a). What may be different in today's times of trouble is that more people live in "absolute poverty" than ever before, while the "relative poverty" of others is sinking lower and lower (see Harrison 2013b for the distinction between absolute and relative poverty). It may be that a third category of psychological or cultural poverty, including the denial of human rights, upward social mobility, occupational choice, freedom to construct one's own identity, and access to cultural expressions such as music, is worsening in these times of trouble as well.

1. Music, war, and conflict

Working in war zones, post-war zones, and other places of violence, conflict, and profound loss has led many ethnomusicologists to design or participate in practical projects to ameliorate the conflict, heal the wounds of loss and separation, and, as John M. O'Connell puts it, "promot[e] a functional harmony ... where groups in conflict achieve inter-communal understanding through sonic expression" (2011:116). He believes that ethnomusicology is the ideal discipline for creating projects that "offer[] parity of esteem to the musical traditions of communities in conflict" (ibid.:viii). On the other hand, one of the sobering realizations brought to the fore in these studies is that groups in conflict often use music to shut out, antagonize, exacerbate differences from, terrorize, and even torture "others," while ethnomusicologists, and those favouring peace, generally believe that music is an ideal expressive form for conflict resolution, intercultural understanding, and healing.[6] As O'Connell puts it, music is "a double-edged sword used both as a poison to excite hostility and as a potion to foster friendship" (2011:117).

In Northern Ireland, during the "Troubles" between Catholic Republicans and Protestant Unionists from the 1960s to the 1990s, Protestant extremists used loud fife-and-drum bands to mark places as their own on certain holidays, throwing music in the faces (ears) of those they opposed and terrorizing them with their loud iconic threats of military-style violence. The 1998 peace accords that brought an end to the violence did not end the use of music as a marker of ethnic difference. They also put in place mechanisms for supporting and funding cultural distinctions in music created during the Troubles. This is worrisome since, as David Cooper reports, "The danger inherent in [their] long-term use is the maintenance of a silo mentality and the establishment of a further site of conflict, in which our 'Ulster-Scots' music is placed in opposition to their 'Irish' music" (2010:103).[7]

In a study of Palestinian peoples' everyday experience of violence, David McDonald (2009) argues that the study of musical performance can extend and

6. On the US government's use of music as torture in its wars in Afghanistan and Iran, see Cusick (2006).

7. See also O'Connell 2011 for the use of nationalist discourses on traditional music in the Republic of Ireland to create a symbolically violent and personally troubling distinction between an Irish us and an English other.

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contribute to theories of the political and economic causes and effects of violence being developed in other disciplines. Viewing violent behaviour and mimetic performances of violence as part of a coherent system "laden with cultural meaning" (ibid.:59), he argues that ethnomusicologists, with their theoretical understanding of the effects of musical performance on identities and subjectivities, can contribute to "theorizing the performative capacities of violence and … the meanings violent performances carry for victims, perpetrators, and witnesses alike" (cf. Loza et al. 1994). He explores the intricate way that stone-throwing violence, musical performances as "a form of cultural violence," and other expressive genres like film, dance, graffiti, posters, funerals, and literature are symbolically coherent (McDonald 2009:60). A Palestinian musician corroborated McDonald's reading of music "as direct (violent) encounters with occupation forces," stating, "I know exactly what my music can do … Music is resistance … What I do on stage and what martyrs do on the streets are one and the same, just with different instruments" (ibid.:58, 61).

Some ethnomusicologists have reported on the devastating effects of war on traditional musical practices. In Afghanistan, for example, the Taliban banned most music making, and Islamists transformed romantic songs into laments and tales of heroism. Even after the end of Taliban rule, music teachers were hard to find, since so many musicians had emigrated. Veronica Doubleday concludes that "the constant, destructive presence of armed conflict needs to end if Afghanistan's remarkable musical culture is to regenerate fully and flower again" (2007: 309). In a similar vein Margaret Kartomi (2010a, 2010b) reports that the long civil strife in the province of Aceh, Indonesia, between Muslim separatists and the government, especially between 1989 and 2004, caused most local musical activities, such as music for weddings, circumcisions, and other festivals, to come to a complete halt because people felt insecure. The government censored the performance of songs supporting the separatists as well as religiously based songs and rituals, and only a few government-sponsored events were held. The dearth of performance opportunities led to a significant decline in the quality of performances. At the theoretical level she suggests that "to understand the effects of war on the performing arts in society it is necessary to analyse the cause(s) of the conflict, the type(s) of military personnel engaged, and the waxing and waning intensity of the war" (Kartomi 2010a:474). After listing a number of wars and post-war zones that are in need of study, Kartomi concludes that "the collective research task is enormous, given the fact that wars show no sign of reducing in number and intensity across the globe. Concerned ethnomusicologists arguably need to step up their studies of this area of human engagement, at least until humankind finds a way of substantially reducing, and even abolishing, war altogether" (ibid.:478).

Studying music in places and times of trouble has also led some ethnomusicologists to broaden their studies beyond musical sound to the study of sound in general. J. Martin Daughtry (2012), for example, has studied the sound world of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. He describes how they are trained to discern the specific nature of the threat to their lives by distinguishing between the sounds of incoming fire. How far is it away from them? Is it celebratory fire or hostile fire? Is it small arms

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fire or artillery fire? These are life-or-death sonic distinctions of greater importance than learning to distinguish between the major and the minor modes. The soldiers then adapt this training to their musical experiences, teaching themselves how to listen simultaneously to music on headsets, often to pump themselves up for battle, and still discern external threats by listening to the sonic environment beyond their headsets. It seems inevitable that our studies of music in times and places of violence and war will lead us to broaden the scope of our studies to the sonic environment in which musical life occurs.

2. Music, forced migration, and minority studies

Wars and other forms of conflict, as well as economic deprivation, often force people to migrate from their homelands to other parts of the world, where they not infrequently become unwelcome minorities within nation-states defined by nationalist ideology as coterminous with the majority nationality. In one strain of research on such people, they form culturally productive diaspora communities and maintain relationships with homelands, a process that protects them, spiritually at least, from the predations of unfriendly local actors or the sense of loss they endure. Much research in this domain celebrates the dynamic musical lives that diaspora communities are able to create, often in societies that define themselves as multicultural rather than mononational (Levin 1996; Sugarman 1997; Shelemay 1998). A second strain of research has been dealing with the relatively recent times of trouble in Europe, where the wars in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia and economic opportunity in the European Union have attracted migrants from eastern and southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The problems these immigrants encounter are so stark and pervasive that the ICTM created a study group on the music of minorities. One of the important legacies of this research problem is the strong strain of "applied" research that it has engendered. Two examples indicate the general direction of this research.

In the wake of the wars attending the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, Svanibor Pettan (1998b, 2010) produced CDs, films, and other publications aimed principally at policy makers to educate them about the plight of Roma (Gypsy) musicians displaced by the war between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. In another project designed to deal with the feelings of loss and separation felt by those forced to leave Bosnia because of the war, he worked in Norway to create musical bridges between Bosnian immigrants and Norwegians through shared musical performances of Bosnian repertoire. His goals included "strengthening Bosnian cultural identity" in their new home and "enlightening majority groups" about the plight of immigrant minorities in their midst. Pettan, acting on what he calls "an ethnomusicology of conscience," employed an ethnomusicological understanding, developed in a myriad of studies of traditional music, of one of the ways music functions for human groups: to communicate across social and ontological

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boundaries. He believes that carefully defined musical projects can ameliorate the problems faced by those displaced by war.[8]

In Austria, Ursula Hemetek (2006, 2010) has devoted much of her career to championing the plight of non-German minorities, some of them autochthonous and some recent migrants from southeastern Europe and Turkey. Her many projects, in collaboration with other Austrian ethnomusicologists and civic and governmental organizations, include collecting and publishing Styrian Slovene songs to prove that these people have their own language and culture and are thus worthy of being recognized as a *Volksgruppe* under Austrian law and of enjoying the rights associated with that status; presenting concerts of Turkish musicians in Vienna to help overcome negative stereotypes in the wake of 9/11; and helping new Roma immigrants from southeastern Europe establish their identity as a *Volksgruppe*.

In the post-communist era the Roma of eastern and southeastern Europe have had to endure debilitating poverty and racial discrimination in employment. No longer guaranteed jobs and safety as they were under communist governments, many have left their home countries in search of money and a better life in the European Union. Once there, the problems they faced at home have not faded; rather, the Roma are typically viewed as a criminal group without a culture of their own. As Hemetek (2006:36) points out, the problem for minorities is domination by and subordination to dominant groups. She and others took on the project of helping them enact their self-identity and demonstrate their culture to an Austrian audience and government in order to secure the privileges of recognized "ethnic groups" in Austria. The process began in 1989 after a Roma youth was denied entry to a disco because of his race. The first Romani political organization in Austria was founded shortly after the incident, with the goal of achieving recognition as a "*Volksgruppe*, a political category in Austria granting certain rights to ethnic minority groups," including government funds to preserve their culture and the inclusion of their language in elementary schools where they live (ibid.:43). The organization understood that they would have to make public in-group markers of ethnicity such as language and music and that ethnomusicologists could help them to do so. In 1990 scholars and community organizers developed what Daniel Sheehy calls "new 'frames' for musical performance" for non-Roma listeners at folk festivals and in schools (1992:330). These and other efforts, such as making recordings, were a success in the sense that Roma were accorded the status of a *Volksgruppe* in 1993, and "to a certain extent Romani culture has become part of Austrian national consciousness" (Hemetek 2006:48). Unfortunately, this has not prevented discrimination and violence against the Roma; in 1995 a right-wing terrorist bomb killed four Roma. One of the theoretical implications of Hemetek's work with Roma immigrants to Austria is connected to her observation that many young Roma do not value what some scholars might call traditional music. Instead, they seek to make their music "as modern as possible." So one of the first cultural reactions to the bomb attack was "a rap in German as a political statement against

8. See Sweers (2010) for a similar intervention by an ethnomusicologist working in Germany.

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racism" (ibid.:51). In her conclusion she writes, "Researchers should no longer expect 'difference' or the 'exotic' as the starting point; rather, strategies have to change according to political realities" (ibid.:53).

3. Music, disease, and healing

Ethnomusicologists have long been interested in the relationship between music, illness, and healing. However, only recently have they finally turned their attention to what role music might play in dealing with diseases and health issues that help to constitute times of trouble, in particular the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. In the case of HIV/AIDS, many local eastern and southern African musicians, community groups, and health organizations are using music, dance, and theatre to educate people about the clinical reality of the disease in a context where public policy and cultural ideologies combine to obfuscate the causes of the disease and deceive people into ignoring safe sexual practices.[9]

Gregory Barz (2011) describes how songs have been utilized in Uganda to deal with HIV/AIDS through health education, biomedical interventions, promotion of communication about disease, and as a way of linking children to their history. Barz is optimistic about music's efficacy in this case, arguing that musical interventions, in conjunction with governmental and medical programmes, can be part of the solution. Partly as a consequence of musical interventions in this context, the incidence of HIV/AIDS has dropped significantly in Uganda over the last two decades. On the other hand, Ric Alviso (2011), working in Zimbabwe, described a very different situation. The government there, preoccupied with other issues and perhaps inclined to see HIV/AIDS as another plague colonialism has visited on them, has largely ignored the problem. Talk about it has been veiled in an embarrassed silence. One musical artist, the so-called "queen of the *mbira*," performed a song with her band about HIV/AIDS hoping to educate people about condom use and other safe-sex practices. Sadly and ironically, all the members of her band died of AIDS, and Alviso concludes that music alone was not an agent of change in this cultural context. In comparing the case in Uganda with the one in Zimbabwe, we can perhaps conclude that in the former case music participated in the construction of a new "cultural system" of safe sexual practices. In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, there was not a culture of change, and musical performance seems to have been ineffective on its own in provoking or "constructing" new cultural attitudes and practices. Here is a real-world challenge to ethnomusicologists' claims about the potential for music to model new and perhaps yet unimagined modes of cultural and social behaviour. Such instances might cause us to modify this claim about the nature of music in light of this and other apparently negative instances that may come to light in the future as we accumulate more case studies of music in times of trouble.

9. See Barz (2006) and Van Buren (2010) for reports on their efforts to help locals in Africa and in England caught in the grip of this disease.

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4. Music in particular tragedies

It would be difficult to claim that there has been a rise in the number of environmental tragedies that people have had to deal with, but in the last decade or so three of them have received worldwide and ethnomusicological attention: (1) Hurricane Katrina's ruin of New Orleans in 2004 (Spitzer 2006); (2) the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 (Kartomi 2010a, b); and (3) the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 (Dirksen 2012a, 2013). Dirksen's studies document remarkable instances, both before and after the earthquake in Haiti, where

> several groups engaged in the rawest form of grassroots organizing … [by] band[ing] together to tackle neighborhood problems … [and engaging in both] music-making and community service … Such organizations include a classical music school in Cité Soleil that offers students music lessons and the chance to participate in a symphonic band as an alternative to gang involvement and drug use; a professional music theatre troupe that has run intensive performance training for youth in tent cities; a hip-hop collective that has assisted US deportees with integrating into Haitian society; and a rap Kreyòl group that launched a long-term project to remove trash from the streets while simultaneously releasing singles highlighting Haiti's environmental degradation … These groups use cultural action to address on a small scale the needs of the population that elsewhere might be met by a state with solid infrastructure. Thus, in certain contexts, cultural production provides a modest means to press for change and community development and may in fact involve efforts directed toward the reduction of violence and poverty. (Dirksen 2012a)

The "hip-hop collective," for example, took on the job of educating the public about the hazards of uncollected rubbish in the streets of Port-au-Prince both in their songs about the degraded urban environment and through practical action: they collected trash and cleaned the streets twice a day in the year before the earthquake. After the earthquake "the constant battle with daily survival interfered with the best of plans" (Dirksen 2013:52), but they did not give up on social action. Some of them turned their attention to an even more pressing problem than garbage: access to potable water in their neighbourhood. The impulse of some musicians to critique existing political, economic, and social conditions led in this case to social action quite unrelated to music making itself. Dirksen observed that this sort of "cultural action" has a long history in Haiti and thus resonated with a broad range of musical artists. Is Haitian culture unique in this respect or is cultural action an inherent, if largely unexplored, potential of group music making everywhere? If the latter, then what are the conditions that might stimulate such a move from musical to social or political action? These are theoretical questions that an ethnomusicology in times of trouble invites us to ask.

While no amount of bravery, resilience, and initiative can mask the human toll of tragedies such as the Haitian earthquake, silver linings occasionally lift the clouds that attend them. Margaret Kartomi (2010a, 2010b), for example, tells the fascinating story of the restoration of artistic traditions in Aceh, Indonesia, in the wake of the 2004 tsunami, which killed an estimated 200,000 people. The death and havoc the tsunami caused helped to end the separatist conflict in Aceh that had

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been going on for decades. The tsunami had the effect of leading to a peace accord between the antagonists so that both sides could take up the task of post-tsunami recovery. Kartomi describes the various efforts to restore the musical traditions of the region, including building new musical instruments and establishing schools for teaching children, all motivated by the belief that musical performances are therapeutic and thus would help people recover from the trauma, suffering, and damage of the war and tsunami. Here, local people acted out both their own and an ethnomusicological theory about the healing capacity of musical performance.

5. Music, violence, and poverty

Yet another aspect of our troubled times is the violence facing many people around the globe who live in neighbourhoods and regions wracked by poverty, unemployment, and drug trafficking. What might the ethnomusicology of such lives suffused with violence look like and what implications might such studies have for our understanding of ethnomusicology? Brazilian scholar Samuel Araújo and his colleagues and students at the Ethnomusicology Laboratory of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro provide one answer (Araújo et al. 2006). Araújo and his colleagues argue that, in addition to the dangers of real physical violence, residents of a poor neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro called Maré are subjected to debilitating symbolic violence as well. This symbolic violence is perpetrated on the residents of Maré by governmental policy, police actions, the interpretations of social scientists operating from privileged positions outside and "above" local, lived experience, and the suppression in the broadcast and recorded media of a genre of music produced by the residents of Maré to narrate their own experiences in this neighbourhood. The genre goes by the colourful names "prohibited funk" (*funk prohibidão*) or "evil funk" (*funk do mal*).

The research group's principal methodological move was to try to eliminate the structural inequality between university-based researchers and their subjects, the poor people disconnected from sources of power. If the standard *modus operandi* of ethnomusicology is to write interpretations of the musical life of the poor for the benefit of the powerful within a kind of vertical power structure, these researchers tried to create a horizontal relationship in which the university researchers worked with local, community-based group as equals. They argued that, in the Brazilian case, this imagined conversation between equals was virtually impossible, but they force us to wonder whether we should all be trying harder to construct real intellectual equality between "us" (the researchers) and "them" (the subjects of research). Araújo and Cambria argue against do-good efforts that assume that the population the researchers aim to serve is an aesthetic and musical *tabula rasa*, a "lethal" form of symbolic violence (2013:38). They further argue that the theoretical potential of such horizontal, nonviolent interventions is quite high: "Once the 'culture of silence' that oppressed people are caught in is broken, apparently simple questions usually answered with common-sense 'truths' (such as 'what is samba?,' 'what does funk music represent?,' 'what is good music?,' and

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even, 'what is music?') began to acquire new meanings and answers" (ibid.:39; see also Araújo 2008).

The Haitian case that Dirksen documents contains an interesting mix of top-down and bottom-up projects. While Araújo and others decry the colonialist symbolic violence of the former, imagining that such projects do not reach some of the most needy and participate in a larger system of real and symbolic violence perpetrated by the powerful on the poor, there is some evidence that top-down projects aimed at helping the poor can be effective. Harrison, for example, reports on the positive effects of music and performing arts programmes in a neighbourhood of Vancouver known as "Canada's poorest postal code" (2013b:59). As in the Haitian case, many types of music and performing arts programmes are offered to poor residents in the neighbourhood, and she offers substantial anecdotal evidence that participation in these programmes raises the self-esteem and economic status of participants. Harrison goes on to argue that since economic and social status are directly correlated to longer and healthier lives, these kinds of interventions may have effects on well-being and mortality that go well beyond their aesthetic, psychological, and economic benefits. Long-term studies of such cases seem to have enormous potential to verify and extend ethnomusicological theories of the health benefits of musical performance (cf. Koen 2009).

6. Music, climate change, and the environment

Musicians from every culture respond in one way or another to the animal and natural sounds of their environment. Bird songs have been a widespread and obvious choice, whether the "cucu" of the European medieval canon, "Sumer is icumen in," Vivaldi's "Spring" concerto from the *Four Seasons*; Haydn's "Bird" Quartet, Op. 33, No. 3; the nightingales and partridges of Prespa Albanians; or the Bosavi *muni* bird. Natural and built sonic environments have also inspired Kaluli "lift-up-over sounding," George Antheil's *Ballet Méchanique*, and, presumably, Eddie Van Halen's "Eruption," to name just a few. These "celebratory," culturally coherent, iconic approaches to animal and natural sounds have become more "anxious" in the last forty years as composers and musicians react negatively to urban noise pollution (Schafer 1977) and more recently to the threat of climate change and global warming.[10]

Tina Ramnarine (2009), for example, describes the acoustemology—a term Feld (1996) coined to describe the way people know their world through sound—of the Sámi of northern Europe, famous as reindeer herders. Sámi use a genre, *joik*, to vocalize people, landscapes, and animals into existence, in the process placing themselves discursively in the environment rather than in relationship to it—a way of talking about the human-nature relationship rather different from European-derived ones. Ramnarine pays close attention to the "symphonies" of Sámi composers who place *joik*s within a recorded soundscape of birdsong,

10. The distinction between "anxious" and "celebratory" is borrowed from Steven Feld's characterization of narratives "about the world, and the music, of 'world music'" (2000:179).

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water sounds, and reindeer bells to express the unity of man and nature and to call attention to indigenous concerns about the degradation of the polar environment due to climate change, nuclear-waste dumping, and forest logging. In some recordings, Sámi composers have placed *joiks* in a sound environment that includes snowmobiles and other motorized equipment as a way of engaging critically with their emerging soundscape as experienced, not with a mythical, idealized, "natural" past. These new Sámi compositions are in harmony with the newly noisy polar soundscape and challenge, according to Ramnarine, "the notion that sound mediates between humans and their environments, inviting us instead to consider human musical creativity situated within sonic ecosystems and across species-boundaries" (ibid.:205). Studying music and sound in this way opens up the possibility for what Ramnarine calls "environmental ethnomusicology" (ibid.) or what Nancy Guy (2009), in her study of popular songs about environmental degradation in Taiwan, calls "ecomusicology." Her vision of ecomusicology leads her to ask an important question that implies both a critical stance not typical of ethnomusicology to date and a new function for music: does music contribute to our survival or is it indifferent to our possible extinction?

This greening of academic music studies is not restricted to ethnomusicology; scholars of popular music and European classical music have also taken it up recently. In the domain of popular music, the anthropologist Mark Pedelty begins his book *Ecomusicology: Rock, Folk, and the Environment* with the provocative line, "U2 hates the planet" (2012:1). He goes on to complain about the enormous carbon footprint of their massive touring stage shows, even as they sing about the poisoned environment in songs like "Where the Streets Have No Name." While more local music making might begin to address the problem, this unsustainable music is what most people love and listen to. Since only a relatively few will drop out of that scene in favour of local community music, this solution will probably do little to sustain the environment globally.

Jeff Todd Titon (2009, 2013b), Thomas Turino (2009), Huib Schippers (2010), and others interested in musical sustainability might respond that "you have to start somewhere" in order to provide alternative models to, and defend endangered musical traditions from, the commercial popular music scene. One of the few ways acting locally makes sense ecologically is if local action becomes a metaphorical domino that, when tipped over, starts a chain reaction that eventually leads people everywhere to change their approach to music consumption so that wasteful acts of production are disincentivized. Pedelty, on the other hand, refuses to "glorify local music or suggest that it holds all the answers to environmental engagement, community building, or social change" (2012:8). "Ecomusicology must grapple with the most widespread and popular of global musics" (ibid.:20). In a review of efforts by some rock bands to mitigate the environmental impact of their tours and their fans' travel to concerts even as they fail to sing songs about the environment, he concludes that "judging from the sounds surrounding us today, popular music is more likely to form a soundtrack for excessive consumption than to inspire more sustainable orientations" (ibid.:38).

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A group of five historical musicologists, in a "colloquy" published in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* in 2011, took up environmental issues under the rubrics "ecomusicology" and "ecocritical musicology" (see also Ingram 2013). Two of them attend to music in the present time of trouble. Aaron Allen argues that western classical string players' demand for bows made from Brazilian *pernambuco* is "ecologically destructive" because the wood is nearly extinct "due to many ecological pressures" (2011:419). He implies that musicians (and musicologists) in this "elite" tradition should be alert to the effects of their choices, which are "felt well beyond the ephemeral space of the concert hall." Alexander Rehding makes an interesting theoretical suggestion, dividing concerns for the environment, including climate change, into two camps: (1) an "apocalyptic mode" accompanied by "a profound sense of acute crisis"; and (2) "a sense of nostalgia" for a simpler, better time in the past (2011:410). He suggests that music, with its "appeal to the power of memory," may be better suited to the latter. He argues that while "the attention-grabbing apocalyptic route … raise[s] awareness by instilling a sense of acute crisis," ecomusicologists may find it more productive to "enlist the commemorative and community-building powers of music in the service of ecological" projects (ibid.:412–14). Maintaining this distinction in practice may be difficult, as the Taiwanese and Sámi examples illustrate.

Finally, Jeff Titon (2009, 2013b) has written extensively on how to sustain threatened musical traditions, employing a metaphor that transfers concern for the natural environment, expressed in terms of the sustainability, ecology, ecosystems, and opposition to economic growth and development, to concern for sustainability of any local musical tradition, whether threatened by environmental change and degradation or not. His application of the notion of ecosystem to musical cultures may be quite productive. Such a move implies, among other things, that ecomusicologists cannot in good conscience or good scholarship adhere to the disciplinary boundaries of music study. Maintaining such boundaries risks ignoring the global ecosystem of contemporary music in these times of trouble, whether they are local participatory musical get-togethers, huge stadium rock concerts, western-classical-music concerts and touring soloists, orchestras, and conductors, or the music of people living in deserts and rainforests and on inundating atolls.

Conclusions

I draw twelve conclusions from this brief overview of the six themes that I believe constitute an ethnomusicology in times of trouble—conclusions that begin to answer the three questions I raised at the beginning of the article.

On the question of whether an ethnomusicology of times and places of trouble will change our theories and methods in any way, I suggest that:

1. Studying music in conditions of gross social and economic inequality can drive ethnomusicologists to rethink their methods and move them away from vertical knowledge structures to horizontal ones in which knowledge is created in equal partnerships with communities and community musicians.

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2. Studies of music in times and places of trouble tend to engage ethnomusicologists in local, practical projects and, as a consequence, may have the effect of diminishing the conceptual distance between so-called theoretical and so-called applied work in our field (Sheehy 1992).
3. If we are not already there, an ecosystems approach to musical sustainability will require attention to all the music of the world, not simply to those genres that have, in the past, defined our discipline's boundaries.
4. As we engage with the political, social, economic, and ecological problems affecting today's world, our theories about the nature of music should contribute to research well beyond the boundaries of our discipline.

On the question of whether our understanding of the nature of music may prove helpful in ameliorating cases of conflict, violence, disease, and social disruption, I suggest that:

5. Ethnomusicologists' understandings of the nature of music, its power to generate meaning in human culture, and to function in human societies can provide the means to create helpful and effective social and educational programmes and policies.
6. The impulse to act practically depends partly on the context, and seems to be amplified when ethnomusicologist work at home rather than abroad.
7. There is more work to be done on how musical behaviour in groups may be marshalled to generate social action, as in the Haitian case.
8. Music may only be effective in ameliorating severe cases of disruption when it is combined with other forms of social and cultural action.

On the question of whether the study of music in times and places of trouble will affect our understanding of the nature of human music making, I suggest that:

9. People use music for good and for evil.
10. The study of music in places of trouble calls into question ethnomusicologists' claims that music can, of itself, change and construct new social orders and cultural understandings.
11. The study of music in times and places of trouble may push ethnomusicologists further in the direction of the study of sound as the field of practice within which the nature of music is conceived, to an "ethnosonicology" perhaps, or, more likely, to "sound studies."
12. Finally, our studies of music in places and times of trouble may lead us to new theories about the nature of music, new theories "forged," as Anthony Seeger (2008) has put it, "in the crucible of action."

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