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Globalisation and Western Music Historiography

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Abstract

Globalisation of musicology and music history aims to fuse the divisions created during Western music's acme, and is referred to as "post-European historical thinking". Therefore, "post" and "pre" European historical thinking have much in common. One aspect of this process of fragmentation was that music history was separated from theory and that Western Music Histories succeeded General Music Histories (a development described in some detail in the article). Connecting global music history with "post-European" historical thinking is one among numerous indications of Western awareness that European culture has reached some sort of a terminal phase. Concurrently, countries that have been developing by following Western Europe as a prototype, are leading today some past phase of Western development, which, with the ideas of cultural relativism prevailing, are not considered inferior.

Keywords

Globalisation, musicology, music history, ethnography, "post-European", fragmentation

Globalisation of musicology and music history is a much-discussed subject nowadays. In order not to get disorientated by numerous interpretations, I give below points from two important texts concerning the objectives of globalised musicology. They are from Federico Celestini's and Philip V. Bohlman's "Editorial: Musicology and the Discourses of Global Exchange", in *Acta Musicologica*, the periodical of the International Musicological Society (Celestini and Bohlman), and from the site of the Balzan Research Project "Towards a global history of music", directed by Oxford professor Reinhard Strohm, awarded a prize by the International Balzan Foundation in 2012, conducted in 2013–2016 (<http://www.balzan>).

Both texts have kind of an apologetic stance for the central and leading position of the West in world musicology. Reading the *Acta* editorial, one realises that the attribute "international" in the society's title gets a new meaning that conforms to Western musicologists' appeased superiority awareness, and to Western qualms about colonialism. Essential features of global musicology are connoted in the brilliantly inclusive phrase "to promote post-European historical

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thinking”, used to describe the aims of the Balzan project (<http://www.balzan>). In conjunction with the consciousness testified to in both texts that a “pre-European” period existed in Western music history (and thinking) marked by “global” characteristics,² it is logical that the term “post-European” frames “European” between two periods with common characteristics, and shows the awareness that European cultural dominance has come to an end. Interestingly, the two extreme periods’ common features are perceived today as multi-nationalistic and multi-cultural, or else, characterised by the fusion or union of fragments. This perception is indicative of Western music historiography’s firmly, but recently, established “canons”, as this interpretation of “pre-” and “post-Europe” takes as the basis of culture the mid period.

A similar token of Western musicology’s deeply and rigidly rooted tradition, and dogmatism is the fact that the Balzan project, a project that aims at “post-European” thinking, is conducted by music faculties of Western European universities (Humboldt University of Berlin, King’s College of the University of London, the University of Oxford, the University of Vienna, and the University of Zurich), but for one exception (the Hebrew University of Jerusalem). It is certainly a fact that those institutions’ archives, libraries and technical facilities offer the best conditions for research on the music of the entire world. But, the aim of the program is not to change European thinking by getting to know the music of other civilisations (something much done already), but to try to understand how members of the other cultures think about their own as well as other music cultures (European included). Such an open receptivity presupposes radical changes in a broad territory of academic issues, from established concepts about scientific thinking and writing, to practices such as “exchanging references nets”, which keep academic constructions stable and self-proliferating. However, clues of such a change one may discern in the bridges that have been lately built between historical musicology and ethnomusicology.

Fragmentations

As I understand it, “post-European” means “after the dominance of European civilisation”, as moulded since the Renaissance, reaching its peak in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries with the development of nationalism, and standing as the model for progress for the largest part of the globe up to about the mid twentieth century.

² For instance, in the Balzan program we read that the “idea of a global history of music [...] may be traced back to enlightenment forerunners” (<http://www.balzan>), and the *Acta* editorial brings in as an example of “the flow of musical transfers across border regions” the expansion of modal theory and practice into “the Mediterranean and Asia for centuries” (Celestini and Bohlman 2014: 1–2)

Fragmentation was characteristic of the growth towards the acme of Europe, in several domains of music culture: in nationalism that energized antagonism, in the development of scientific research, in the separation of music history from ethnography and from music theory; in the emergence of national music histories that succeeded the “general histories of music” of eighteenth century writers. Also, in the massive industrial production of musical instruments, and the printing of musical scores (boosting bourgeois musical culture), in the specialisation of musical professions, of musical interpretation, and musical composition; most importantly, in music education that in the 19th century was for the first ever time divided into as many “schools” as there are music instruments in a symphony orchestra. Fragmentation has been thus related to antagonism (between nations, schools, persons), to a sense of equality in relation to specialisations (the student of any instrument receiving a diploma equal to all other) and to the democratisation of culture (through the commercialisation of music products and musical events).

Music history was separated from music theory towards the end of the 17th century. It is the directions of contemporary study of the past that have masked the involvement with music history of earlier writers known today as theorists, such as Franchino Gaffurio (in the 15th century) or Michael Praetorius (in the early 17th century). The union of theory and history is also illustrated the other way around: namely the earliest Italian work to contain in its title the words “music history” does not differ much from theoretical works discussing history. Such is the case with the work by the Italian Giovanni Andrea Angelini Bontempi that appeared in 1695 with the long title *History of Music, in which there is a full knowledge of the ancient theory and practice of harmonic music, according to the doctrine of the Greeks, who restored her to her ancient dignity, after she was first invented by Iubal before the deluge, and then, re-invented by Hermes; and as was the case with theory, it was also from ancient practice that was born later on modern practice, containing the science of counterpoint* (Bontempi).

As conveyed in this title, contemporary music is conceived as a tradition inherited from a common past where ancient Greek writers are fused with the Bible. Replications in early historic accounts are common because tradition was evaluated for its durability – before *progress* evolved as an attainment of culture. Boethius’ writings, for instance, circulated in hundreds of manuscripts, before the invention of printing and were a basic source.

Up to the 17th century ancient Greek literature, through Boethius or not, in Latin or in Greek, was the store of learned Europeans. This was greatly enriched in the enlightenment. Reason, scientific

knowledge and methodology, the discovery of new lands, as well as the trend to connect music to actual politics distinguish the works of the French Marin Mersenne and the German Athanasius Kircher.

Both were men of extraordinary knowledge. Although their works on music are not histories, they provided historians with very important new material. Acoustics, archaeological findings – beyond Greece – architecture, medicine and politics are connected to the study of music. A polyglot, Kircher extends his curiosity in his *Musurgia Universalis* (Kircher) to the music of all contemporary peoples that he came across in his travels, including the Mediterranean people.

The Autonomy of Music Historiography

Five years before Bontempi's history mentioned above, Wolfgang Caspar Printz published his own history, which is considered to be the first autonomous history of music, entitled *Historical description of the noble art of singing and playing, in which the origin and discovery, the progress and improvement, the various uses, the wonderful effects, the diverse enemies and the most famous practitioners from the beginnings of the World up to our times, will be narrated and exposed, as briefly as possible, composed from the most famous authors and brought into order* (Printz 1690). But Printz is also following the inherited tradition. It would take one more century for Germans to realise the cultural importance of Luther's Reform, and divert from catholic tradition.

In the 18th century two British historians much advanced music historiography, by searching for original sources of knowledge inherited, introducing critical examination of sources and, in the case of Burney, by travelling and experiencing musical life in other countries.

Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins describe in their *General Histories of Music* (Hawkins 1776) all activities connected with the creation and propagation of music, in all places they were able to have knowledge of. They give information on composers, performers, writers on theoretical and historical works, music instruments and their manufacturers, and various institutions related to education and the distribution of music, commercial or not.

Charles Burney (1726–1814), a PhD from Oxford, wrote one of the most fascinating music histories, entitled *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, in four volumes published from 1776 to 1789 (see Burney). He collected his information travelling to France, Italy, Germany and the Low Countries. He visited libraries, made interviews, listened to much

music, and was acquainted with all kinds of persons and institutions connected to music that might satisfy his interest in marginal European cultures. His history speaks of composers and performers, writers on music, instruments and their makers, music publishers and other institutions for music education and trading, in all places he could be informed about. Burney is progressive, an admirer of the Enlightenment, believing that his epoch is the summit of European civilisation. But music is not yet considered a high achievement of civilisation. He defines music as “An innocent luxury, unnecessary, indeed, to our existence, but a great improvement and gratification of the sense of hearing. It consists at present, of Melody, Consonance, and Dissonance” (Burney 1776: xiii)

Nationalism in music historiography was the product of German writers. Luther’s radical disruption of the tradition preserved in Catholicism, initiated a German tradition that would supplant it, in the 19th century. The revival of church music, especially Bach’s, occupied an important position in this pursuit, since German music tradition was so tightly connected to the Reformation. Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749–1818) played an important role in this revival with his *General history of Music* (Forkel 1788, 1801). The first volume speaks of antiquity, and the second extends to the 16th century. The third volume, a *Specialgeschichte der deutschen Musik*, was not completed and therefore the monograph on Bach, which should have been annexed to it, was published separately in 1802 as *On Johann Sebastian Bach’s Life, Art and Artworks* (Forkel 1802). German music history was conceived as a “special history” in this early period of the 19th century and was presented as a biography. Thus, nationalisation of music histories developed in parallel with the sanctification of the great composer and his work. Music histories appeared thereafter, as a rule, in the form of a series of biographies.

It is Raphael Georg Kiesewetter (1773–1850), an expert in both Greek and Arab music,³ who breaks completely with the inherited historio-graphical tradition and appends ancient Greeks to the back pages of his history of *Western* European music. It was published in Leipzig in 1834 under the title *History of Western European or our Modern Music. Presentation of its Origins, its Growth and its Gradual Evolution from the first century of the Christian Era to the Present, for every Friend of Music* (Kiesewetter 1834). In this work chronological periods are determined by outstanding musicians, whose names are the titles of the work’s subdivisions.

August Wilhelm Ambros (1816–1876) a relative of Kiesewetter, includes ancient Greece in his *History of Music* (Ambros) and also

³ R. G. Kiesewetter’s study on Arab music was amply acknowledged as unsurpassed, during at least the entire nineteenth century (Kiesewetter 1842).

divides the material into chapters headed by the names of musicians. His history, despite its title, did not reach beyond the Renaissance. The chapter on Greece is the third, since this is a world history and not a Western European one, the first in German language to speak of the music of other civilisations based on sources and not on received literature. The first chapter is on primitive people, and on the cultures of the Chinese, Indians and Arabs; and the second is on ancient civilisations except Greece (Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Phoenicians, Phrygians, Lydians, and Jews).⁴

In 1830 Fétis criticised French historiographers for writing on subjects that do not require real research and concrete evidence, but go on repeating old sayings about the moral power of music and about general aesthetics which, he says, when not studied from a musician's point of view, is useless (Fétis 1830, 167). His *Histoire générale de la Musique* in five volumes (1869–1876) is the first history in French to follow progressive trends in historiography. His history reaches the 15th century. In the first volume he discusses the genesis of music through social anthropology in a text of over 100 pages. Most sources for the beginnings of musical praxis are linguistic studies, the connection of the word to singing being firmly conceived by the French, as Gary Tomlinson's observations (discussed below) show.

Fétis gives transcriptions of aboriginal melodies, sketches of primitive instruments and quotations of travellers' impressions. Other more advanced non-European cultures are also extensively discussed. Fétis has no doubts that music was highly developed in Europe, but his task as an historian is to know what today's musicologists call "the Other".

The Acme of Western Musicology: Erasing the Predecessors

The multi-volume music histories published in the 20th century are great achievements of the science of musicology. In 1901–1905 Oxford published its first multi-volume *History of Music*, edited by William Henry Hadow. The six volumes were written by H. E. Wooldridge, C. H. H. Parry, J. A. Fuller-Maitland, Edward Dannreuther, and William Henry Hadow.

The summit of Western musicology is represented in the second multi-volume history, *The New Oxford History of Western Music* (Westrup et al. 1954–1990). Both the editorial board, and the editors and writers of each volume are top musicologists: Gerald Abraham,

⁴ Ambros was planning five volumes, but completed three. Gustav Nottebohm finished from his notes a fourth volume, that circulated in 1878, and Otto Kade published in 1882 a music anthology that had been collected by Ambros to be used in his history. No volume reaches beyond the Renaissance.

Martin Cooper, Edward J. Dent, Nigel Fortune, Dom Anselm Hughes, Anthony Lewis, F. W. Sternfeld, Egon Wellesz, and J. A. Westrup.

From the first chapter of the first volume we can see an important change in the attitude of music historiographers: a growing disapproval of past histories that led gradually to their oblivion. Marius Schneider writing the first chapter of the first volume entitled “Primitive Music”, a chapter much resembling Fétis’ coverage of the subject, opens with this wrong statement: “Until a few decades ago the term ‘history of music’ meant merely the ‘history of European art music’” (Schneider 1957: 1).

As stated by Gary Tomlinson, Guido Adler’s 1885 manifesto, proclaiming musicology as an academic discipline, “forgets the large literature on music history produced in the eighteenth century but also ignores a fact of subtler, deeper import: the presence of singing at the heart of eighteenth-century accounts of the history of European society, of Europe’s relation to other societies, and indeed of the origins of all societies” (Tomlinson 2003: 33). He shows that anthropology and history were a unity (as they tend to become today) that was gradually divided. The process of this division is tightly connected to the ascent of Western art music to its acme.

Tomlinson sees two stages in the development of Western music theorising that were crucial for the establishment of musicology at the end of the 19th century, and its division into systematic and historical. One was in the 18th century, when instrumental music was conceived as a specifically European music, distinguishing it from music of other cultures that continued to be related to the word, and an autonomous art (“absolute music”). According to Tomlinson,

“this conception of musical autonomy appears as a powerful philosophical assertion by elite Europe of its own unique achievement and status. In historical terms [...] it presumes the European instrumental traditions of its time as the telos of all musical progress. In doing this it simultaneously posits for territories beyond Europe a set of anthropological limitations. These locales are, now more than before, spaces of primitive (that is, static or a-historical) or regressive (historically failed) musical practices. In coming to seem a marker of European distinction, *instrumentalism* is now set off in complex ideological opposition to non-European *vocalism*. The singing that Rousseau could still offer as a trait shared across all humanity is now instead an index of human difference” (Tomlinson 2003: 38).

The other stage (in the separation of historiography from ethnography) was when (first in Forkel’s *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*) the distinction was made between written music and oral music. From then on, Tomlinson says, “European music history will

evolve from writing, while music anthropology encounters a space of orality” (Tomlinson 2003: 37).

Crossing to a New Era

The fragmentation of a broad discipline serves the quest for scientific perfection but is also pursued as a solution to the problem of professional inflation. But fragmentation has reached such extremes today that the result is like that of a pointillist painting; to see the picture, the majority of points are necessary, while no point is meaningful by itself. Studying one of the points gives inept knowledge, and creates meaningless goals. It is only logical to expect the process of specialisation and fragmentation to come to an end, and globalisation is evidently showing that.

Signs that we are today living in a post-European phase are all around us. National, democratic and humanitarian ideas and institutions degenerate; and so do most institutions and manifestations of that culture. Much has been already said about the end of history and the arts since the end of the 20th century. In 1992, *The end of history and the last man* by Francis Fukuyama appeared. In 1997 Arthur Danto published his *After the End of Art. Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Danto) and in 2012 Princeton University organised a conference to honour Richard Taruskin, entitled “After the end of music history”.

But while the West is going through a certain kind of terminal phase, countries that upheld western civilisation as a paradigm for their development, are in fact leading by earlier phases of Western culture (partially influenced as well by new changes), since successive phases of Western civilisation develop simultaneously in various regions of the world. The difference between today’s manifestation of this phenomenon and its past manifestations lies in the way it is confronted by Western historiography itself. Under the strong influence of cultural relativism, developed in the anthropological studies of the US, the concept of progress in culture was seriously disputed. Western civilization began to acquire even derogatory connotations, and Western historians, aiming at a global history, now try to exclude from their reasoning related to culture, qualitative comparisons and the meaning of *progress*. All levels that Western culture has gone through are regarded as equal. This is a novel situation in world culture, and an important transformation for cultures that have been consciously “following” the West. Although they have not reached the level they attained to, they are no longer supposed to be considered inferior. Most importantly, since the concept of *progress* is disputed, the dimension of time is not a priority in the description

of culture, and music history again acquires common features with ethnography.

Speaking about the end of history Francis Fukuyama notes that the “nationalities of Europe were closely intertwined with one another, particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe, and their disentanglement into separate nation-states was a great source of conflict” (1992: 266–267). Many gave political interpretations to this fragmentation, believing that it was fabricated by the Great Powers in order to dominate the region.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first steps towards a global music history describe the music of our region. Jim Samson’s *Music in the Balkans* (2013) marked a significant turning point in western approaches to the music of South East Europe. National narrations tend to be fused with each other; borders, geographical and disciplinary, tend to be erased. *Music in the Balkans* points the way to a meaningful global music historiography.

Neither is it strange to see that it is ethnomusicology, much more than the musicology of our areas, that is most influenced by recent trends, because this was the most representative product of the diffusion of nationalism into our area and of its fragmentation. Ethnomusicology was the representative product of the leading culture in its periphery. In European territories that did not participate in Western achievements of the 19th century, music was still connected to *word* in varied degrees. Singing being still dominant and orally transmitted, it was classified by Western visitors as a subject of ethnography, not of history. Then, Western musicians and scholars started the study of this material and the establishment of ethnographical institutions. Corroborating Gary Tomlinson’s argument, the first collections of *Greek songs* by Westerners were collections of folk poems that appeared in the first quarter of the 19th century (Fauriel 1824–1825). Bourgault-Ducoudray’s collection of Greek folk songs appeared in 1876 and is considered to be the first in staff notation.⁵ The first ethno-musicological institutions in South-Eastern Europe were established and manned by Westerners, as a rule. The resulting esteem of the music of the people was an effect of Western music education. Local elites that had the education to initiate the introduction of absolute music in those countries, adopted Western tastes, including the adoration of folk music. The impressive development of ethnomusicology in this area contributed much to the division of local societies into this educated elite and a

⁵ An earlier collection by the Danish A. P. Berggreen consists of folk songs and tunes collected mostly from published travellers’ chronicles (1869). Manuscript collections in Byzantine notation exist as far back as the 17th century.

majority instructed by the elite not to develop, in order to “preserve the tradition”. In the 20th century ethnomusicology in South Eastern Europe developed into one novel kind of bourgeois cultural activity. The music of the folk was not observed and studied; it was a corpus of music delimited, taught and controlled by educated musicians, who protected it from folk’s temptation to accept Western influence, conforming to Western taste.

Today, however, many able musicians and scientists, who, it should be stressed, are very collaborative across borders – national and disciplinary – are transforming ethnomusicology into one of the most vital branches of musicology; a reality, the meaning and the importance of which should be seen in the prospect of post-European thinking and globalisation. The most promising features of current ethnomusicology are bridges built to historical musicology, mentioned above, and to “folk”: the tight communication and exchange of information and knowledge between the “scientist” and the “folk”, usually in poly-ethnic performing groups.

Western Music history is crossing to some next stage. The trend towards global musicology and music history finds generous support because, among other causes, it offers an outlet to the phenomena of inflation in Western musicology. In the 20th century solutions given to the problem, such as the inclusion of all types of music as musicological subjects and the invention of numerous specialisations, have *inflated* inflation. Having included ephemeral music in their field of study, Western musicologists have significantly shifted their interest to the reception and diffusion of music – in contrast to its creation – a fact that obliges them to get involved in sociology and politics. By expanding the horizon of its field, musicology has lost the exclusivity of its competence and expertise.

Musicology is late to accord with contemporary developments in politics and sociology, and to adapt to contemporary changes. It follows these developments *at a slow pace*, because the institutions that serve its education and promotion are founded on mechanisms that have primarily to do with the study of the past, a study which in order to be effective, requires tight specialisation, and concentrated research that is often time consuming. Furthermore, musicology, as the academic science that developed in late 19th century in Germany (dissociating it from musicology that was vividly practiced before) was followed *at a slow pace* in countries that had begun their westernisation in the 19th century, as is the case with the southern Balkans, including Greece, and many areas and countries in other continents (such as South America, for instance).

These are some of the new phenomena produced by the crossing to a post-European age. It will take some time to conceive their essence and to see what they really contribute to the understanding

of the world's music and to musicology. As it usually happens during great changes, at first one can only see what has been lost. It will take some time before a backwards look will reveal the gains.

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Кеџи Роману

ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИЈА И ЗАПАДНА МУЗИЧКА ИСТОРИОГРАФИЈА

(Резиме)

На основу садржаја уводне студије објављене у часопису *Acta Musicologica* (2014) и истраживачког пројекта *Према глобалној историји музике*, којим руководи оксфордски професор Рејнхард Стром, ауторка коментарише настојања западних музиколога да отворе нову еру глобалног музичког мишљења. Она бележи да је од ренесансе, па до врхунца западне музике у XIX веку, фрагментација музичког живота (композиција, извођаштво, образовање, градња инструмената, музичко издаваштво итд.) била заправо пут ка савршенству. Усавршавање у извођењу музичких дела, њиховом стварању и пласману на тржишту зависило је од уплива грађанства у главне културне токове. Један аспект тог процеса било је одвајање музичке историје од теорије музике и од чињенице да је историјски развој западне музике следио пут опште историје музике (то је у тексту детаљније приказано). Према мишљењу Герија Томлинсона, постепено је нарушавано некадашње јединство антропологије и историје (данас пак постоје тежње ка њиховом поновном уједињењу).

Фрагментација широке дисциплине доноси могућност научничке перфекције, али и инфлацију професионалаца. У XX веку се дошло до таквих крајности да су у многим пољима дисциплине изнети неодговарајући закључци и постављени бесмислени циљеви. Глобализација тежи да превазиђе све границе. Повезивање глобалне музичке историје са „постевропским” историјским мишљењем један је од многобројних показатеља да на Западу постоји свест о томе да је европска култура достигла неку врсту своје завршне фазе.

Но, земље којима је западна цивилизација била парадигма сопственог развоја следе раније фазе западне културе. Новина данашње манифестације овог феномена је начин на који је он суочен са самом западном историографијом. Под јаким утицајем културног релативизма, западни историчари који

теже глобалној историји покушавају да из својих расуђивања усмерених ка култури искључе квалитативна поређења и идеју напретка. Будући да напредак није значајан за културу, историјско време се чини неважним, а историја поново дели са антропологијом задобијене одлике. Ови концепти су значајно утицали на етномузикологију у југоисточној Европи, у којој данас сарађују музичари и научници, превазилазећи границе међу нацијама и дисциплинама.

Биће потребно да протекне одређено време да би се смисао нових прилика које је донео прелазак у постевропско доба схватио, као и да би се видело шта те прилике заиста доносе музикологији. За сада, видимо само оно што је изгубљено; још увек не спознајемо шта је добијено.

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