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国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

Choice, Preference and Cultural Perimeters

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We tend to think of traditions in terms of nations. The United States is a relatively young society with only a little more than two hundred years as a political entity. Great Britain is much older and China can trace its civilization back for several thousand years. However, if we think of it in another way, within the United States, although it is a relatively new country, the individuals that make it up have traditions which go back to the British Isles, to other parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and what is now Latin America and thus, in fact, represent cultural traditions, learning traditions, which go back much further than those of the particular country in which they live. All human societies have had an equal period of development on this planet and each has its own antecedents. When societies develop over long periods of time in isolation from each other, the differences between them become so immense as to be perceived as unfathomable. All around us we see unmistakable signs of rapid technological development. However, we need to remember that because our technology becomes more refined, our culture does not, of itself, get better.

Differences in the rate of technological development are not something which can be reflected in the quality of the arts of a society. Mozart was not a better composer than J. S. Bach because he lived later. Nor would Mozart have been a better composer had he had the opportunity to use modern computer technology for his music. Mozart was great in his own time and the appreciation of his work lived on after his death. In the same way composers like Tan Sen of India and Lotring of Bali have transcended their own time in their own culture and are valued even today. Each music is subject to and works within the parameters set by its own time and culture. Each composer/musician works to express himself from the starting point which has been provided by his past. Each sets out to do what he believes he decides to do, but which is already defined for him by what preceded him. On each other's turf, both Mozart and Tan Sen might have a difficult time reaching each other's audiences. It is perhaps possible that some few might have been able to bridge the gap, but for most, the cultural and historical distance would be too great.

Hearing and Understanding

In all cultures, music provides an index of minute differences in form and in feelings. To those who are familiar with a tradition, songs which to an outsider may

sound all exactly alike, display differences which are meaningful and important to them. Consider the vast genre known as country blues. The differences between the singing and playing style of Mance Lipscomb, Lightning Hopkins and Bill Broonzy are immense if you know their music and yet perhaps indistinguishable if you do not. In the same way, each of the particular Blues of these musicians is also meaningfully different from the others. Even for those people who say they have no knowledge of music, distinguishing differences between one song and another are important enough that they are able to select preferences based on their response to them. Even for those who are not specialists in music, there is a vast index of sensitive responses to differences in music with which we are already familiar. It is quite possible that these differences of form, rhythm and mood may, by enriching our emotional vocabulary, influence the way we talk and even think. In this way, music may play an important role in “civilizing” us.

Performers and Listeners

In music, communication between composer or performer and listener may come with difficulty as the result of a conscious attempt by the composer or performer to modify the context with each new performance or composition by expecting increased familiarity with the style and requiring deeper concentration for fuller perception of what the creator has attempted. For communication to take place under such conditions there must have been a supporting cultural context in which pre-existing aesthetic parameters have been defined in order that they either now be followed or redefined. The cultural context will define not only the basic aesthetic system to which changes and redefinitions can be superimposed but must also define the degree of expected deviance which can be tolerated.

While we can always be certain that music has been heard - that is that sound waves have actually reached the ear drums - we cannot ever be certain that the sounds thus heard are having any immediate or postponed affect on the listener. We cannot be certain about how much of the sound has been perceived or how much of the signal might have reached the level of consciousness. The signal can be clearly heard and perceived but the “message” may remain opaque. The nature and degree of distinction between signal and message in music is one of the most perplexing questions and one which remains virtually impossible to satisfactorily unravel.

Although we have no means of measuring is communicated when listening to music, we know that communication takes place. Some folks may go to concerts just to be seen there and because it is a cool thing to do. Most, however, go to hear the music and thus whatever drives this social activity is in the music itself. The external behavior verifies what we cannot yet measure.

If we can observe that individuals respond when exposed to selected kinds of

music, one of the conditions we can predict is that no positive response to a music can occur without a preexistent cultural context which defines the experience for the listener. This does not mean that only music from one's own culture can be appreciated. For the experience to be a positive one, the listener must be predisposed to regard what he is hearing as something which falls within the realm of what he defines as music or at the least something he defines a pleasant sound it before what he hears can interest him. A listener who comes with a cultural context radically different from the one in which the music was first created would predictably respond negatively. However, much will depend on the degree of distinctiveness and remoteness of each culture from the other. How far must the listener stretch to make "sense" out of the music he hears. How much does his cultural predisposition to what he has heard even allow him to wish to stretch toward acceptance of it. For any music for which someone declares that he finds in it great significance, some other could be found to declare that it was all just so much noise.

The old 19th century saw about music being a universal language was based narrowly upon the presupposition that the Fine Art Music of Western Europe was, or perhaps could when presented in its ideal form, be indeed, universally accepted as superior to all others. Such aesthetic "imperialism", sad to say, has many proponents even today and although not limited exclusively to the West, there are, however, many there. To believe that that which what one loves and believes to be beautiful must truly be so is a predictable human predilection and is something which can be found noted in almost any culture group world which has come in contact with another one. Such an attitude is understandable as an example of the manner in which one culture defines out of consideration all that which lies beyond its own parameters. The idea that (Western European) music can be a universal language may be in itself a definition of music as expressed in one culture but it does nothing at all to define the relationship of music to culture in the larger sense.

Musical Values as Culturally Defined

Rationally, it seems clear that value and meaning, whatever we decide that that may mean, must be defined within the parameters of the culture about which we are speaking. Whatever inherent meaning may be attributed to a particular music composition or performance is defined by and thus can only be examined within the context of that culture. Is there anything inherently meaningful or great about Mozart's Symphony No. 40, K. 550 which makes it great in and of itself? Western musicians would argue that this must be so. But that greatness, must be defined as great by the tenets of the tradition of the period in which it was composed. Mozart was a product of his time and created music within the context of his own unique experiences and understanding. We accept the greatness of the symphony because

we are a part of that tradition subscribe to the cultural tenets of the 18th century, as we now understand them and through all of the additional layers of value and experience which have been superimposed on it since then.

Can there be a reasonable basis by which this particular symphony of Mozart can be in some absolute way a “better” example of music, say, than the composition *Senshuraku* of the Japanese Court repertoire, or than the *Irak Ayin* composed by Dede Efendi of the classical Turkish Mevlevi repertory. Each of these works is considered great in the context of the aesthetics of the particular time and place in which it was created and by those who adhere to those traditions, even today. Each continues to be considered great by many because the cultural context supporting those aesthetics has been transmitted and has survived. Each of these particular compositions is also considered, within the context of the culture, to be better, more successful, more beautiful, whatever value definition might be applied, than many others in the same tradition. But what happens when we try to compare then across cultures. A hard adherence to cultural relativism would mean that these works that are considered to be masterpieces in their own cultural context can have no meaning outside that cultural context and in another in which the aesthetic tradition is different. Do we believe that what is beautiful is the result of a culture which defines it so or do we believe that some things are naturally and innately more beautiful than others.

At this point it is important to clarify that this belaboring of the concept of a basic cultural relativism is justified and indeed necessary because it is possible to think of this in both ways. A masterpiece by a composer like Mozart, for example, is both something which is a great musical expression in and of itself and also is defined only by the principles of that culture. The difference hinges on whether one focuses on the idea that what is beautiful is the result of a culture which defines it so or whether we focus on the observation that some things are naturally and innately more beautiful than others. But can we really have it both ways?

There are factors, such as a high level of congruence and cohesiveness in the form and structure of certain compositions, or even in the works of certain musicians and composers over others which help to explain why they are more highly regarded in their own musical culture than others. In many musical traditions there are some efforts which because of care, skill and sometimes chance seem to work better and are more lasting than others. Since we find this to be the case in many isolated cultures of the world then it might follow that at some level it should be possible to appreciate values across the barriers of different cultures. Culture as a determinant of perception and thus a definer of the parameters of values is, however, so strong a factor that it is only with great effort and a willingness to be retrained that this sort of traversal can ever take place. Excellence where it is a value to be sought after in the culture is something which, in these cultures is recognized and acclaimed.

Hitting it on mark when we enter from outside the culture can possibly occur when we have had the opportunity and desire to absorb some of the elements of that culture, or when valued elements in two cultures are found to overlap. Although this seems to be a definite possibility from time to time, there is always the greater danger that we are forcing our own value system on a culture where it is not appropriate to the culture. Ideally, Mozart or Shakespeare are great examples of Western culture, but may have little meaning for those outside that culture. We may wish to strive to understand for ourselves what this greatness that so many have accepted might be.

It may be difficult for some to think of those works of music which they consider great to have been the result of collective cultural processes rather than as simply great in and of themselves. Yet the ability to appreciate the greatness of these works comes about through gradual inculcation and training and that usually considerable training was also required for the composer to be able reach a level of skill as well as experience and judgment which enabled him to create the work. Both of these processes are part of the manner in which cultural traditions are transmitted and neither the composer nor the listener could have existed without them. However, to recognize that Mozart was a product as well as a reaction to an age is not to say that it was inevitable that the 18th century should have produced him or a genius like him. He was a unique individual, a result of a combination of unique individual abilities and experiences borne out of the context of the times in which he lived. The cultural tradition and the period set the context through which each individual must then find his own way.

Just as the aggregate of experiences in our own culture tends to define what we tolerate as predictable and acceptable, it also defines the limits of surprise and deviance we can assimilate. The delicate balance between the comfortable acceptance of the familiar and periodic incursion into new territory is differently defined by each individual. How long each of us will remain with the familiar before moving away or dropping off to sleep is a very personal matter and the need to vary one's fare may in itself vary considerably between one person and another and even from one point in time to another for any one individual.

One can imagine, for example, immersing himself deeply into the world of the Beethoven Op. 59 middle period String Quartets so thoroughly and for such a long period of time that listening to Op. 131 could come as great but perhaps startlingly refreshing change. The degree to which then listening to the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, or perhaps even Hausa *gurumi* music from Nigeria, would affect the same listener, and whether that response would be one of rejection or welcome change, might depend on a great number of factors but would certainly be affected both by the length of time spent with the Op. 59, then exclusivity with which those works were heard, as well as the degree of previous familiarity with either

Stockhausen or Hausa music.

The degree of previous exposure has everything to do with how that particular composition, form or type of music is received. The significant variable is the intensity and duration of any previous familiarity. It is most likely the nature and degree of this prior exposure which defines for each of us the boundaries of stylistic familiarity beyond which that which is new and different will be perceived as related or new and thus, by extension, more readily accepted or rejected.

Balancing the Familiar with the New

The potential for acceptance or rejection of music heard is bound to a host of other factors, physical and psychological and will affect concentration, receptivity and attitude. These, in turn, have a controlling effect on the listener and as such do much toward predisposing him in one direction or another. That a newly heard music might be defined as falling within the parameters of what should be acceptable does not guarantee that it will be accepted. It is also possible to have a situation in which all conditions of receptivity, concentration and attitude are at the optimum levels, but in which cultural conditioning will mitigate against the listener's acceptance of what he is hearing. A group of people looking forward to an evening performance of Heavy Metal would not likely be receptive if in its place there were to be an evening of string quartet music, or vice-versa.

Considerable economic pressure is exerted on us during the routine of our daily lives in order to make us aware that the ideal of modern, and especially, urban humans should be constant consumption of whatever is new. The focus is on seeking variety and regarding this variety as a necessary and almost vital element in our lives. We are continually besieged with advice to seek change and to replace the old and familiar with the new and one hopes, the improved. Variety has become an important element in many of the world's societies but it may not be, in fact, as necessary as it has been presented to us. There is an old Turkish saying which goes, "the bear knows two hundred songs, all of them about honey", a jibe at both the natural tendency to pursue the familiar and the foolishness of the dogged pursuit of the familiar. Yet on the other hand, the Shona people of Zimbabwe have a saying which goes, "If a man eats the same food every day, he knows what it was that killed him." What is too rich and varied a diet for one may be monotonous to another, yet sanity would suggest a balance between stability and a moderate degree of variation. But there can be no agreement on what constitutes stability or variety.

If one enters deeply into the formal and structural world of the Beethoven Op. 59 Quartets, one finds almost endless variety and depth. The more one listens, the more subtle treasures one can discover. There are numerous such repertoires and have been across time and around the world which have this same qualities to offer

increasing fascination the deeper one delves. The Repertoire of the Imperial Court Musicians of Japan, for example, consists of over one hundred different compositions. These compositions are all set in a very similar formal texture and performance style, so similar, in fact, that to most inexperienced listeners it is almost impossible to detect the difference between one composition and another. Yet if one has the patience to listen closely and carefully and to become thoroughly familiar with the basic style of the music so much that he can begin to distinguish the subtleties of form and melodic style of each piece, then gradually each composition begins to reveal its own clear character and unique subtleties.

This was neatly expressed by Colin McPhee in his book, *A House in Bali*, when he said that the individual compositions of the Gamelan music of Bali were like leaves on a tree. All are alike and yet no two are identical.¹⁾ Clearly, to appreciate the intended purpose of either Balinese Gamelan music, the Imperial Court Music of Japan, or the middle period Beethoven quartets, a more highly powered perceptual microscope will increase the level of awareness which the listener can bring to the task. Without it or the willingness to try to see more closely the entire body will seem gray and uniform. Repeated listening to a music will heighten familiarity and thus better allow the perception of nuances and of multiple layers of structure. This familiarity also constitutes a framework against which new musical experiences can be measured.

We perceive the contours and characteristic elements of a musical style only as the result of concentrated and focused listening, but it is not always necessary that positive and conscious effort at gaining familiarity be an absolute requirement. Each of us carries about in his consciousness his own musical culture, those musical structures, experiences and associations which together constitute for each of us a unique and inimitable pattern of musical preferences. No two such individual patterns of music preference can be found identical any more than could two sets of fingerprints or voiceprint patterns. And yet, if we could each examine our own particular musical culture, we might be very surprised to learn what manner of layers and mazes of sound structures we are carrying about with us in our heads throughout the days and years of our lives which wait only for a certain stimulus to be again recalled into our consciousness. Our individual music culture is certainly more complex and is larger than we usually imagine it to be.

Likes and Dislikes as a Part of Culture Pattern

Our own pattern of personal preferences constitutes a personal value system. It then follows that such a system must contain referents from which new experiences can be tested. We must carry referents around which let us know when something takes us too far from our familiar ground and referents which help us identify sound

structures for which we have negative associations. We all have in our minds, the sound image of musics which we do not enjoy, which bore us, which may make us laugh, and perhaps even a few about which we can say with genuine relish that we hate!

A rather peculiar situation arises when we recall associations with extra-musical experiences which distress us so much that we feel animosity or even violence towards that music. Although, in reality, the music is only an inanimate pattern of consciously controlled vibrating sound waves, we can react to some of these patterns very strongly, because they represent a set of feelings which we understand to be communicated and these we wish to reject. Worse yet, we may even begin to feel animosity towards those individuals responsible for the creation of this music.

In order to have an effective value system such a system must contain both negative as well as positive referents. Although the development of negative referents in our individual musical cultures may be a result of the regularly occurring changes in our patterns of preference - excessive familiarity may bring us to a point of disliking some musics which earlier had appealed to us - some negative referents in our personal value systems must have always been perceived negatively. Such negatively perceived musics were those which, even at first hearing, were perceived as falling outside our already well established value system.

Many such referent may have come about as the result of negative extra-musical associations remembered in connection with the particular context under which one last heard such music. For example, there are many who abhor the musical language and style employed by MUZAK, the producers of "canned music". This is a commercially packaged and transmitted form of background music used in different public places, such as supermarkets, or some larger stores and offices. MUZAK is produced in order to create a "pleasant" sound in the background. The melodies are distinguishable, but generally with few distinguishing performance qualities. In modern Japan many stores, large and small, have a single piece of music associated with that store, played endlessly again and again. The sound blends into the background in order that the listeners do not have to concentrate on listening to it so that they can do whatever it is they have entered those premises to do. Some may find canned music unacceptable because it falls beyond their own limits of a good musical performance. Yet for others, recalling the sound of such music playing softly in the background of their dentist's waiting room may be quite enough for them to decide that, given a choice, they would prefer never to listen to this music in any context. Since the pattern of development taken in each individual's own musical value system must be a reflection of, and a response to, all of his musical experiences, this pattern, to the degree that it can be made perceivable to any other, often appears illogical or unusual to anyone else.

Culture shock is something which is experienced when we find ourselves immersed in a new cultural environment and it is the sense of loss and confusion that the individual feels when finding himself or herself in a place where everything is different. We usually think of culture shock as occurring when one travels to a distant culture where a different language is spoken. However, some degree of culture shock occurs even for Americans who spend time in Great Britain or in Australia for example. Everything is familiar and the language is understandable, but even the language is different enough that after a time a feeling of discomfort or confusion and disorientation takes place. Something like this can occur when we find ourselves exposed to or immersed in musics with which we are unfamiliar. Sufficient exposure will get us past the shock and we may never be conscious of having experienced a sense of disorientation. However, gradually exposure to new and different kinds of music may in some way also change what we feel about musics that we had enjoyed previously, which is one of the classic ways in which culture shock often works. We sense it more keenly upon our return to that environment which we assumed was static and familiar.

Cultural differences are not always the obvious ones. There is a great cultural difference between having a musician up on the stage and separated from the audience from the performing musicians being mixed in and scattered within the group. There is a difference in the culture when musicians are not given a special name but are members of the group who perform when it is required. There is a difference when musicians are paid professionals, when they come only from certain hereditary families and when musicians are amateurs who devote the free time to playing music and these are different from cultures in which everyone in the group is expected to participate in the performance.

Think about how different it is for a Western classical musician to practice for years on his instrument until he is good enough to join an orchestra and even then when there is a difficult composition to play, taking the music home and practicing his part alone. An African drummer would never imagine taking his part and practicing it alone without the other instruments. What has to be mastered is getting the one part together with all the others and the idea of doing it alone simply doesn't fit the culture. Think about the traditional audience for Indian classical music. Here, the audience understands that it has a responsibility to understand and follow the technical intricacies of the performance. Everyone in the audience may not be able to do this, but it is the ideal for which most Indian concertgoers strive, something very different from going and simply enjoying the music.

Shared Culture and Agreement

Individuals who live in the same cultural context will share many more

common or similar referents and thus find themselves in frequent agreement on a great many musical experiences. These shared values are what we consider to be our common cultural heritage. During the past 50 years an intensification of the educational patterns and cultural experiences similar to those of the West have made the number of shared personal cultural values of many people in Japan and Korea, and more recently China, similar to our own. Japanese and Koreans of today have developed a love for Mozart and Beethoven which is both sincere and profound in spite of the fact that it is only relatively recent in its development there. With the gradual Westernization which has exerted a growing influence in scientific and technological education in those countries for over one hundred years now, that Western music should also have been introduced should come as no great surprise. Nonetheless there are vigorous segments in each of these societies which remain loyal to their older traditions and many individuals in those societies who do not regard the adoption of the new musical culture as an unquestionably superior choice.

While it seems that in every culture there is a recognition that certain musical performances or compositions seem to “work” better than others and that in many cultures there is some value placed on the degree of congruence which is manifested in certain works, these values and the judgments which result from them, are defined entirely within the context of each culture. Concentrated effort may allow us to gain insight into and appreciation of the values manifested in the musics from other cultures, even some which are culturally very removed from our own. Yet, there is nothing inherently better, more valuable, in the sound structures we refer to as Beethoven’s Op. 59 Quartets than there is in the music of Beethoven’s South Indian contemporary, Thyagaraja, or in the Navaho *Yeibeichai* “night” songs. Each has developed out of the particular cultural and historical context of the society in which it developed and was guided and molded by the common perceptions held by the members of that group. That set of shared personal value systems held by each individual in the group created in each culture a support system which patterned the development of the style, defined its role and thus also pointed out the path which even the most original of its innovators were by default required to follow.

Cultural Relativism – Cultural Development

Is cultural relativism, viewing each culture on the basis of its own value system, a good thing to do? Are there cultural practices which are simply not good by virtue of some absolute standard or do we allow each to be judged on its own. In matters of the arts, it is important to note that these systems arising as they do out of historical traditions are basically arbitrary. Our very strong opinions about what is good and beautiful are based on what we are already accustomed to. Probably many people today are accustomed to accepting some concept of cultural relativism as logical and

natural. We understand that different people have different ways of doing things and that these people also tend to prefer things other than what we may prefer for ourselves. We must remember that culture is the arbitrary result of all those historical, political, and economic factors which have played upon it. We need to remind ourselves that the use of advanced technology in the service of the arts in the West can serve as no indication that the arts themselves have advanced. Technological changes in the arts are a natural reflection of those options which are currently available within the society. Neither does this detract from the value of the music of the Western world. India also has a great music tradition, one that has developed in ways significantly different from those of the West. It has evolved without, until very recently, the technological developments of the West. In spite of this, Indian music incorporates certain musical practices which are so complex that they are virtually irreplicable in the Western world.

Using Music to Talk about and Describe Music

Until recently, it was most unusual for a music performance to quote another kind of music in the midst of the performance in another style. There are a few rare examples of this and gradually as awareness of other cultures increases, so does this kind of cross cultural quotation. Nonetheless, the practice has remained something noteworthy when it appears and is not used very often.

Mozart in his time was anxious to make wind band versions of his operas in order to sell them quickly before someone else arranged them before him. These popular versions served as another means of reaching a broader audience. In 19th century Europe and America it was a common practice to transcribe operas or works for large concert orchestra, for the piano or for some other medium, in order that the music could be enjoyed by more people than only those who could attend concerts. With today's easy access to recordings of virtually every kind of music, the need for transcriptions as a means of making music more widely available disappears. Instead, we find that transcriptions are used when one musician wishes to borrow from another and to make something of his own of it and something different from the original. Even so, such adaptations rarely cross over great cultural distances.

Collective attitudes about such borrowings change as well. When Georg Philip Telemann, was musician to the Elector of Silesia, he decided to appropriate the fascinating music of the Polish bagpipers he heard at court. He added adagio movements before and after the pipers' tunes and called them "Polish sonatas". But in his day it was not at all considered plagiarism.

In the late 19th century it became an increasingly frequent practice, first by the Russians beginning with Glinka and then by the French, to borrow exotic elements first from the music of Spain and to compose music in this foreign style. By the

early 20th century this practice of borrowing exotic musical elements had begun reaching across great cultural distances. We can have no idea today how successful Telemann may have been in his Polish experiments because the originals have long disappeared, although what survives in Telemann's music does bear a fascinating resemblance to the precious little Polish bagpipe music which survives today. But then from the High Baroque to the roots of European folk music was not such a great cultural leap.

Although the music of Spain was an exotic element in the culture of Western Europe, nonetheless, the development of Spanish music managed to remain intelligibly close enough to the music of the rest of Europe to allow this borrowing to succeed. The incorporation of more culturally distant musics, beginning with Gustav Mahler's use of pentatonic scales to suggest Chinese music in *Das Lied von der Erde* and on through the many adaptations of Asian music in particular in the 20th century suggests that the borrowings occurred with too little understanding of the principles which guided in the creation of the original musics. In fact, however, these were not intended to duplicate the musics of the rest of the world but rather to provide new colors by which to enrich the current tradition. Telemann could not improve on the Polish bagpipers short of playing the music on the bagpipe himself. In the process of attempting to incorporate new elements into the music for the enjoyment of his own audiences, what he and the others did was to create something new based on what must be regarded, from the cultural perspective of the originating culture, as an incomplete understanding of what they were borrowing.

Although this practice is something which occurs with more frequency in the West, it has also occurred in other places as well. The ancient orchestras of the Chinese courts regularly included stylized performances of regional folk music and of the music of the various nations which they regarded as under their sway. This practice continued in the courts of Korea and Japan. In 17th and 18th Century Japan although not with great frequency, in the koto music tradition, elements which imitated the style of other music current at the time, as well as of the court music were incorporated into some compositions. In the Japanese Kabuki theater, entire sections of the performance would be done in the music of other Japanese styles, even to having the musicians from those particular traditions right on the stage for the performance.

The rapidity of change depends on the intensity of overall cultural activity. Fifty years ago when Leopold Stokowski began to present his adaptations of the music of J. S. Bach, the concert going public in America was not yet very familiar with much of this music. To hear the music of Bach played by a large 20th Century orchestra was not considered unusual by many, and likewise Bach played on the piano was a much more frequently encountered medium of performance than the harpsichord. In that context, the music of Bach was somewhat more remote from the

population than it is today and therefore, re-orchestrated versions of this music for modern orchestra were greeted as quite logical and appropriate. Even a very few years later when some began to question the validity of such experiments, it was often replied that, "If Bach were alive today he would have written for the large orchestra, piano, etc.", an answer that was usually intended to settle the question then and there.

From today's vantage point the change in sophistication of concert goes in the past 50 years seems remarkable. Yet the pace of change in cultural attitudes is increasing ever more rapidly as the systems of communication improve in efficiency. During the mid 1970s it came as something of a shock to learn that a new generation was growing up in America and Europe that looked upon the Beatles as "old, dumb stuff". By the late 1970s the Beatles had become well established nostalgia and distinct changes in popular music trends were becoming clearly visible every three to four years, depending on how sharply one chooses to define it. Meanwhile there are many who, either because of deliberate choice or by simple virtue of having been born too long before the period of the Beatles and the intense changes which that development brought about in our popular culture, find it difficult to find their way about in that music. Their culture within the larger culture does not provide for the detailed imagery and verbal descriptive mechanisms to enable them to perceive the minute changes in style which are taking place in popular music even within any single year.

But culture, as a reflection of man's incessant need to communicate with his fellows, must, of necessity, be changing incessantly as well. When communication takes place, then some response must follow and from this response changes can then occur. We perceive cultures further away from us as more static to a degree that it is too simple just to say that cultures other than one's own are static and unchanging. Certain societies emphasize the age of their music traditions, but these traditions are also constantly changing. They are like matrices by which changes are guided and molded, but so long as communication takes place between people with different experiences, that is, any two people, changes inevitably take place.

At the same time it is clear that the rate of change in a culture can vary greatly in proportion to the degree of communication which takes place. After a long period of time during which the classical music of Western Europe could only be heard by those fortunate enough to be able to attend concerts, or who themselves had studied the music, radio was introduced followed by the production and distribution of records. The pace and scope by which the music was disseminated then increased greatly. Today there is a mass distribution system for making available the same well financed records available all over the world as well as a system for providing broadcasts televised globally by satellite. Audiences at live concerts hear the music transmitted to them from the performers at the speed of sound. Our rapid system of

dissemination is almost near to making it possible to cover the globe at the speed of sound.

Notes

- 1) Colin McPhee, *A House In Bali*. New York: John Day, 1946. p.117.



Fig.5 Ibaloy textile from Northern Luzon



Fig.6 Kalinga textile from Northern Luzon



Fig.7 Bontoc textile from Northern Luzon



Fig.8 Banana fiber cloth from the Bagobo, Mindanao



Fig.9 A detail of a textile from the Maranao people, Mindanao

Textiles from the Philippines

There are numerous cultures thriving in the thousands of islands which make up the Republic of the Philippines. In addition to the Hispanic cultures of the lowland areas of the Tagalog and Ilocano peoples of the Northern region and cultures of the central Visayas, there are numerous indigenous peoples living in communal societies throughout the islands and a large group of Muslim peoples living in the Southern Islands of the Sulus and on the island of Mindanao. Textiles, like music, serve as an identifying element of cultural expression. The three upper examples are from neighboring groups living close to each other in the Mountain Province of Northern Luzon. Although all use similar instruments for their gong ensembles, each group has its own unique gong patterns, and also a unique textile pattern. In the far South, the Bagobo people have a different style and pattern. Notice the contrast with the more highly stratified society of the Muslim Marano peoples of Mindanao.



Fig.10
Skat, traditional
German Playing
Cards



Fig.11
Karuta, or Hanafuda
Japanese game
cards



Fig.12
A richly decorated set of playing
cards of Mameluke origin, preserved
in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul,
Turkey



Fig.13
Naipes, Spanish
style playing cards
used in Spain and in
Latin America

Playing Cards

Cultural Continuity and Originality in Playing Card Design

Playing cards offer a fascinating look at how continuity and change interact in the process of transmission. Although the oldest origins of playing cards is unclear, there is a clear thread at least from ancient Persia and the Middle East to the West through the intermediate Tarot cards to the Modern playing cards. We can trace a continuous tradition from the Mameluke cards which exemplify some ancient Middle Eastern type introduced either into Italy or Spain. In Spain the naipes evolved from the Arabic, naibi, retaining the suits of cups, coins, clubs and swords. These eventually became the clubs, spades, hearts and diamonds of the French and later English style which are akin to modern playing cards. A distinctive variant of the European cards evolved in Germany with the skat cards using suits of acorns, hearts, leaves and bells. The Portuguese introduced playing cards into Japan which they evolved into the karuta, or hanafuda. In each case certain functional elements had to be retained, in order to play the established games, which themselves evolved as well. Matters of color, design, and ornamentation were left to the inspiration of local cultural tradition which they reflected. The Japanese set is, not surprisingly, the most different in structure for the others. All the others have four suits or some kind where as the Japanese set has 12 suits of four cards each. The development of card design shows both continuity and local cultural influence as well as some degree of anonymous individual creativity, a good parallel to what also happens in music.