

Many people from non-Western cultures would not agree with McLean's evaluative views on their popular music. In many parts of Polynesia, for example (to cite McLean's own field of expertise), both 'popular' and church music, both indebted to Western music styles, are proudly embraced as important representative contemporary forms of musical expression that reflect continuing Polynesian values. Some such genres have been operating as *traditions* for some time, for example, the popular form of *ute* in the Cook Islands, and older style Hawaiian ukulele music. When, after all, does a tradition become a tradition?

Pioneers of Ethnomusicology does have an obvious value as a compendium of information on the early ethnomusicologists, and a summary of some major issues and developments in the discipline. The book is certainly a courageous attempt to argue against fashionable ideas and unashamedly propose others, and will no doubt stimulate much debate, which is a good thing for the discipline. The book would have been significantly improved, however, by a more thorough critical appraisal prior to publication by peer readers in the discipline (including a reader more inclined and sympathetic to McLean's standpoint); this could have highlighted some of the glaring excesses of the manuscript, as well as focusing the reader's attention on the merit of some of McLean's arguments. His narrative is far too polemic, his preferences (and prejudices in some cases) far too clear, and, while it is quite acceptable to cite one's own research findings in such an argument, constant references to McLean's writings and approach demonstrate that he believes only he, Alan Merriam, and a few others have got it right.

Laurent Aubert, transl. Carla Ribeiro, *The Music of the Other: New Challenges in Ethnomusicology in a Global Age*. Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate, 2007
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Most ethnomusicologists will find the title of this book irresistible. 'Music of the other' remains central to the ethnomusicological enterprise, even though much of it is now more or less on our doorsteps, courtesy of globalisation and, amongst other things, the world music phenomenon. Yet, as the book's subtitle indicates, global movements and cultural flows have shifted the goal posts for ethnomusicologists. No longer is it sufficient to understand a particular musical tradition, practice or event within its local cultural and social context. Rather, we must now also take into account its engagement with the world beyond, in particular, its interaction with Western audiences, markets and musics.

This problem is the main concern of this book. Specifically, it considers the issues and processes that arise from the bringing together of the West and 'the other' or, as Aubert puts it, 'The great flood into our most immediate cultural environment of music of the world and of its agents' and 'the place now occupied in our experience by music from elsewhere.' What, he asks, is the impact of this situation on the music and its practitioners, as well as on our own cultural practices and perceptions?

The Music of the Other is broad in conception and coverage, comprising eleven short essays on different aspects of his theme, and its rather diffuse content and loose structure betrays the fact that it was compiled from pre-existing publications and writings. It is not a heavily analytical or theoretical book, although it refers to the thinking of a wide range of theorists and writers. While scholarly, it is written in a relaxed discursive style and its tone is both thoughtful and deeply personal. The book was first published in French and therefore has been mediated via translation, but a striking aspect is its highly expressive, evocative language. It is also refreshingly open-ended. Its author, Laurent Aubert (who is curator of the Ethnomusicology Department at the Ethnographic Museum of Geneva, Switzerland, and director of the Ateliers d'Ethnomusicologie), is an ethnomusicologist with specialist knowledge of Indian music and a participant in and close observer of the world music industry. It is perhaps this multi-faceted perspective that allows him to present a fairly balanced, even-handed picture of the positives and negatives of the various situations he describes—and this in a highly contentious field that tends to attract strong and divergent opinions and entrenched positions.

Underpinning many of the ideas in this book is the distinction that Aubert makes between three categories of music, which he labels traditional music, folkloric music and world music and which together comprise the subject of over half the book. Whereas musics in the former category are seen as 'expressions of identity,' the others are described as 'derivative products,' with folkloric music resulting from the intervention of 'external agents' and world music referring principally to intercultural fusions within the domain of popular music (p. 16). But Aubert also problematises these categories as much as he sets up criteria for them, asking for example, 'up to what stage of modernisation can a form of music still be considered traditional? And, inversely, what degree of seniority is required to suggest that a genre has become traditional?' (p. 21).

Two chapters deal specifically with issues arising from the concert stage presentation of traditional music for a world music audience, such as the need to meet audience expectations of authenticity and the modifications that are necessarily involved in a stage representation. These are discussed according to four types of performance: 'art genres,' 'ritual genres,' 'folk genres' and so-called 'ethnic genres' (indigenous or tribal musics). Included is a fascinating example of the processes required to transform a twenty-four-hour ritual event from Kerala into an under two-hour stage presentation. Aubert reminds us that interactions between traditional musics and their Western audiences always involve a two-way process 'like a game of mirrors in which each looks to the other for the reflection of his or her own ideal: on one hand, a need for prestige and wherewithal, on the other, a quest for authenticity and openness' (p. 32).

World music is also dealt with in two chapters, one on the phenomenon itself ('World Music: the Last Temptation of the West') and the other about the world music industry and market ('The Great Bazaar: From the Meeting of Cultures to the Appropriation of the Exotic'). Aubert perceives a division between 'on the one hand, defenders of the authentic ... and, on the other, adherents of the great church of musical ecumenism' (p. 54)—a revealing metaphor that reinforces his view of the irreconcilability of these two positions and which he extends when asking whether it is necessary to 'sacrifice signs of identity on the altar of integration' (p. 56). Given Aubert's background, it is perhaps to be expected that he places himself more in the former than the latter camp when he critiques world music as consensual, synthesised and subject to a 'dogma' of hybridisation that requires the specifics of a music tradition to

be abandoned in order to achieve convergence points. But it is in unsupported and overly generalised assertions such as this that Aubert's generally light touch strays into polemic.

Other chapters include 'The Invention of Folklore or the Nostalgia of Origins,' in which he cites Belmont's comment that 'folklore has been condemned "without trial",' and brings a European perspective to bear on the development of folkloric (as opposed to folk) genres; 'The Art of Hearing Well: a Sketch-Typology of the Listener,' which builds on the work of Adorno and others for a world music context; a chapter on the present-day role of ethnomusicology; and two chapters on learning to play the 'music of the other.' In the second of these—the final chapter in the book—Aubert draws on his specialist area, India, and his experience of learning the sarod. In seeming to move from the general to the specific, I expected to learn how the details of this immersion in another music culture informed the formation of his ideas and views. However, these final musings are disappointingly limited.

The scholarly literature on world music is expanding rapidly with diverse contributions both from popular music studies and ethnomusicology. The originality of this book for those familiar with the English-language portion of this literature lies not in the issues under discussion or even in many of the ideas it contains but in its particular perspective, the freshness with which ideas are assembled and expressed, and its specific Francophone scholarly and musical context. The book is proof of the barrier that language presents to global scholarship; I would undoubtedly not be reviewing it if it had not appeared in translation. The journal, *Cahiers de Musiques Traditionnelles*, which is cited eleven times in the bibliography (and which, incidentally, Aubert publishes) is not held by any Australian library and neither are any of Laurent's other listed publications. The examples that Aubert peppers through his book, including a profile of French record sales statistics, are also indicative of the distinctly different world music environment of which he is a part. While Aubert's perspective is his alone, it is nevertheless strongly informed by this environment and extends to some usages that would not be acceptable in, say, Australia, such as the many references to 'Eastern' musics or 'the East.'

Despite having been first published nearly ten years ago (and parts of it before that), *The Music of the Other* remains highly topical. It contains much that can be contested—terminology, definitions, opinions, analyses—and the absence of supporting evidence and argument at times makes it less persuasive and compelling than it might otherwise be. However, its accessibility, brevity and wide-ranging, challenging content—and even its weaknesses—will, as Anthony Seeger notes in his introduction to the book, make it ideal for discussion and debate in undergraduate ethnomusicology courses as well as posing interesting problems for those who run them. In the contemporary global musical landscape, the questions it asks, the ideas that it puts forward and the thoughts that it provokes will undoubtedly remain important for some time to come.