

Launching a New Scholarly Journal on Music and Minorities

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The study of music in relation to minority communities has grown into a substantial field of research in ethnomusicology and adjacent disciplines in the social sciences and humanities over the past decades. Indeed, the roots of music and minorities research could be traced back to the very beginnings of what can be called academic music studies in the second half of the 19th century. For one thing, the advanced colonialist/imperialist world system and its corresponding ideological superstructure enabled and encouraged European and North American scholars to study the musics of various indigenous groups from around the world, groups that due to colonial supremacy turned into minorities. Another historical precursor of music and minorities studies can be found in European folk music research and is related to the development of nation-states during the 19th century. Musical folklorists researched minorities outside the political boundaries of the respective nation-state to which the scholars felt obligated if these minorities were understood to belong to the idealized nation. I would characterize these two main tendencies of dealing with minorities in the past as either “exoticism” or “extension of the nation,” the latter being especially characteristic for Europe.

Of course, scholarship in the field of music and minorities has since made enormous progress, not only with regards to scope, purpose, theories, and methods but also ethics and critical awareness of researchers’ implication in global and local power dynamics. The emergence of urban ethnomusicology in the 1970s, the abandonment of assumed “homogeneity” of communities in ethnomusicology, as well as the emergence of diaspora studies have paved the way. The foundation of the Study Group on Music and Minorities within the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) in 1999 with its regular symposia marks an important milestone in the sustained establishment of the field, indicating the existence of a critical mass of researchers with shared interests, providing recurrent opportunities for sustained in-person exchange.

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Despite these developments, there has so far not been a journal dedicated exclusively to this field of research. Even though research on music and minorities topics finds an outlet in a variety of periodicals, proceeding volumes, edited collections, and monographs, the present quantity and quality of research justifies the creation of a thematically focused and persistent publication forum. Edited at the Music and Minorities Research Center (MMRC) at mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and published by mdwPress, *Music & Minorities* (M&M) sets out to provide such a forum for the dissemination of research results and for theoretical and methodological debate.

The Emergence of the Journal

The creation of M&M is inextricably linked with the founding of MMRC, which was made possible by the prize money I received from the Austrian science fund FWF as part of the Wittgenstein Award 2018. MMRC is dedicated to the advancement of music and minorities research, and from the center's earliest planning stage onward, there was the idea that this aim should also be pursued with a journal, among other things. This idea was well-received by MMRC's Advisory Board, whose members serve as strategic counsellors in the center's development. In turn, I entrusted MMRC's research coordinator Malik Sharif with planning and managing the development of this new periodical in close collaboration with mdw's newly founded publishing platform mdwPress. Statutes for M&M were drawn up and signed by the Rector of mdw (as owner of mdwPress) and me on 17 December 2020, thus marking the official establishment of the journal.

With the organizational framework in place, some members of MMRC's Advisory Board kindly agreed to also serve on M&M's supervisory Editorial Board, namely Naila Ceribašić (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia), Beverley Diamond (Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, Canada), Svanibor Pettan (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia), Mayco Santaella (Sunway University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia), Stephen Wild (Australian National University, Canberra), and Deborah Wong (University of California, Riverside, USA). As Director of MMRC and in accordance with the journal statutes, I took over the role of Editor-in-Chief. Marko Kölbl (mdw), who was appointed Review Editor, and Malik Sharif, Managing Editor, ensured the steady progress of the journal development during unsteady pandemic times and will continue to handle the administrative duties of M&M's day-to-day operation.

Scope and Aim

M&M is dedicated to the scholarly exploration of the multi-dimensional field introduced by the concepts of "music" and "minorities." The journal is meant to be inclusive of music, dance, and other sound-based social phenomena. The term "minority" refers to communities, groups, and/or individuals that are at risk of discrimination on grounds

of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, displacement, social or economic deprivation, and their intersections.

Contributions to M&M may address all aspects of music and/or dance in the context of minorities. This may encompass aspects like forms of music and/or dance of certain minorities, societal discourses thereon, relationships between hegemonic and marginalized groups, depictions of minorities and/or their musical expressions in other contexts, or the meanings and values that are attributed to musical and other performing practices. M&M encourages a diversity of approaches and methods, such as ethnography, theoretical reflection, historiography, or other forms of cultural criticism and social analysis. M&M is a forum for both foundational and engaged/applied research. The journal also welcomes interdisciplinary approaches.

As a non-profit academy-owned journal, M&M is guided by the established standards of 21st century academic publishing, as defined, for example, by the Directory of Open Access Journals and the Committee on Publication Ethics, and seeks to promote the free and responsible circulation of scholarly knowledge and understanding for the common social good. Feeling equally committed to the scholarly community and the individuals and communities written about in M&M, the journal endorses rigorous standards of research ethics and research integrity and has implemented state-of-the-art quality assurance measures, including, but not limited to, double-blind peer review of article manuscripts. M&M being an online-only journal, contributions can be published as soon as they have passed the quality assurance process, thus eliminating unnecessary delays for both authors and readership. The journal is published as a “diamond open access” journal, charging neither readers nor authors any fees. Contributions to M&M are made widely available under a [Creative Commons \(CC\) BY-NC 4.0](#) license, thereby allowing unhindered distribution and adaptation of the journal contents within – and beyond – the scholarly community under the condition of a non-commercial purpose and as long as there is appropriate author attribution. With regards to copyrights and publishing rights, M&M’s policy is to require authors to grant no more than the absolutely necessary, non-exclusive license rights and to leave authors’ rights otherwise unaffected.

M&M is an international academic journal and as such it is published in the lingua franca of 21st century scholarship, i.e., English. But M&M is also committed to the right of communities and individuals to know what is published about them and seeks to promote circulation of its content beyond academic audiences. In this regard, English can prove to be an obstacle. While the publication of additional non-English versions of complete articles would not be feasible for practical reasons, M&M, however, encourages authors to provide additional non-English abstracts in languages that are relevant to a given article’s topic.

The Inaugural Collection of Articles – Music and Forced Migration

Some research areas seem to be of highest priority, due to contemporary political developments. Millions of displaced persons and refugees worldwide have been a sad reality for many decades, but forced migration has gained special attention in Europe after 2015, when refugees from the Syrian war reached Europe. There were political reactions to this fact, and mass media coverage was mostly xenophobic and racist (and still is). I am convinced that academia should respond in a situation like this, with the means we have as scholars: research including engagement. There are diverse approaches to the topic of forced migration from different academic disciplines, but music is often neglected in these works. Ethnomusicology, however, uses music as an inroad to study and engage with precisely those groups of people who are portrayed as undesirables by certain political movements, especially in “fortress Europe,” but also elsewhere in the world. There is evidence that ethnomusicology can have influence on current social issues, and Angela Impey argues “for ethnography as a vital form of intervention” (2019: 289). She explains what she means by that: “As scholars and activists we have what most public agencies seldom have, which is the privilege of protracted exposure and the purpose to listen. Through the intimacies afforded by ethnography, we have the capacity to draw attention to the resourcefulness and agency of displaced individuals” (ibid.). All case studies in this collection share this “purpose to listen,” each in its own way with regards to a geographically and historically specific topic.

Evrin Hikmet Ögüt studies the development of Syrian street music in Istanbul in the wake of the Syrian civil war, describing the experiences of different individual street musicians who fled from Syria to Turkey, analyzing street musicians’ interaction with other actors in public spaces, and considering larger socio-economic implications of the practice. Marko Kölbl discusses different aspects of recent Afghan musical practice in Vienna, especially Afghan pop music, and embeds this discussion in a reflexive critique of concepts and methods current in ethnomusicological research in refugee contexts. Drawing on recent oral history interviews and ethnographic field research conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Toni Shapiro-Phim uses a case study of the Cambodian classical dancer Voan Savay to illuminate the role played by performing arts in the lives of displaced persons who had fled from the Khmer Rouge and the conflicts following their fall and who in turn spent years in displaced persons’ camps at the Thai-Cambodian border. Finally, Ioannis Christidis addresses an important aspect in the history of ethnomusicological research on music and forced migration. His article reviews the pioneering work of Adelaida Reyes who played a key role in the emergence of this specific field of research around 1990 with her work on Vietnamese refugees in the USA and the Philippines, later enhanced by studies of Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Christidis traces and contextualizes the theoretical and methodical development of Reyes’ work and critically examines its impact in the field as well as its relation to current research on music and forced migration.

The aim in curating the inaugural collection of articles was as much to cover cases from different places and times as it was to exemplify the editorial principles outlined

above, covering different kinds of sound-based social phenomena and a diversity of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. Likewise, the articles by Ögüt, Kölbl, and Shapiro-Phim illustrate in different ways how a set of principles that MMRC considers essential for the field of music and minorities studies are put into action in actual research. These principles are dialogic knowledge production, engaged ethnomusicology, and a critical attitude towards power imbalances (see MMRC n.d.).

The principle of dialogic knowledge production – understood as an approach to “fieldwork as a process that involves different knowledges, those of the research partners as well as those of the researchers” (ibid.) – inherently informs the articles by Ögüt and Shapiro-Phim. The authors have worked intensively and over extended periods of time with the main figures featured in their articles and provide ample space for their viewpoints in the texts. Kölbl’s research is also grounded in long-term relationships with Afghan musicians in Vienna. But additionally, he subjects the dynamics between researcher and those researched in ethnographic research on forced migration to epistemological, methodological, and political critique, arguing in his article for a mode of ethnographic research informed by friendship and affection as a basis of shared ownership of knowledge.

A commitment to engaged ethnomusicology, i.e. to research that accepts “social responsibility and social justice as guiding principles” and attempts “to act in the broader social sphere” (ibid.), materializes in different forms in the contributions to this inaugural collection. While Ögüt’s present article clearly addresses an academic audience, it complements other work by her on the same topic that seeks to reach wider audiences with the intention to enhance understanding for Syrian refugees in Turkey and to counter exclusionary and homogenizing discourses. Likewise, Shapiro-Phim writes from the perspective of a scholar who is not only concerned with descriptively studying the performing arts in relation to human rights, social justice, and peacebuilding but also with practically promoting artistic expression as a means of social transformation. Kölbl, in contrast, addresses the issue of social responsibility and social justice in ethnomusicological research from a different perspective, addressing not so much the positive, but rather the potential negative effects of such work. Arguing that conventional modes of ethnographic research in refugee contexts unwittingly reproduce and reinforce neocolonial power relations and racialized subjectivities, the turn toward friendship and affection in ethnography is proposed to ameliorate such undesirable effects.

This concern by Kölbl is immediately related to the third principle of countering “structures that produce and maintain power imbalances and hegemony,” also by rethinking “ethnomusicological theories and methods in order to expose and avoid approaches that reinforce such structures” (ibid.). To be effective, such a process depends on “close collaboration with activists and communities” (ibid.) so as to make hegemonic biases visible. Thus, this principle also relates back to the principle of dialogic knowledge production. Accordingly, Ögüt’s analysis is informed by an empirically grounded critical stance towards homogenizing and discriminatory discourse that the musicians she works with have to face. Similarly, Shapiro-Phim’s argument counters

potentially dehumanizing preconceptions about inhabitants of displaced persons' camps being unable to exercise any agency of their own.

Finally, a sad coincidence gives this inaugural collection a not fully intended significance. Adelaida Reyes passed away on 24 August 2021 at the age of 91, at the time when we were editing Christidis' article. She was a member of MMRC's Advisory Board, played a leading role in the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities, and was highly supportive in the founding of this journal. She actually planned to participate digitally in the launch event of M&M, as she wrote to me on 16 August: "I am humbled and honored by the article you mention and would be happy to join you via Zoom God willing. Your success with MMRC gives me great joy; I truly believe there is so much to know and understand about minorities in general and the contribution that the study of their musical life can make that remains untapped and that MMRC can bring to light." Christidis' article was originally invited on the occasion of Reyes' retirement from her official functions at MMRC and on the board of the Study Group in spring of 2021. He writes: "While I was editing the final version of this article, I received the sad news of Adelaida Reyes' passing away. A few months earlier, when I started writing, I had hoped that at some point this text would reach her. As this hope was not fulfilled, my aim remains to inform and inspire younger generations and new researchers, but also to keep alive the memory of an inquiring mind and committed ethnomusicologist." By placing a historical review of Reyes' research on music and forced migration among current work in this field by scholars of later generations, this inaugural collection of articles may serve as a modest tribute to her manifold accomplishments.¹

Review Section

Apart from publishing research articles, M&M will regularly invite reviews of publications pertinent to the field of music and minorities research. M&M understands reviews as a serious means of furthering scholarly discourse and thus provides authors with copious space to present their critical analyses and argue their judgments. The review section will cover a variety of media, not only scholarly books. The first set of reviews is not related to the topic of music and forced migration or held together by a different shared theme, it rather exemplifies the desired rigor and extent of analysis and the intended range of different types of media by including reviews of an edited collection, a special issue of a journal, a documentary film, and an audio CD. Future reviews may discuss also other types of publications.

¹ Further information on Adelaida Reyes and her work can be found on MMRC's website, including an obituary (Hemetek 2021), a short biography, a list of her selected publications on the topic as well as a link to her video message at the inauguration of MMRC.

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Numerous people and institutions deserve gratitude for the work with which they contributed to the creation and launch of M&M. My thanks go first of all to all the authors of articles and reviews for their highly inspiring contributions, likewise to the anonymous peer reviewers for their extremely helpful comments on the article submissions. Equally essential was and is Malik Sharif's work as Managing Editor, Marko Kölbl's as Review Editor, and Julia Fent's as administrative officer of MMRC and thus also of M&M. The role of the members of MMRC's Advisory Board as well as M&M's Editorial Board was crucial for establishing this journal and I am glad to be able to keep relying on their wise guidance. I am also grateful to our publisher mdwPress, especially to both its chairs Therese Kaufmann and Michael Staudinger and its coordinator Nora Schmidt, for providing the necessary infrastructure and expert advice on digital academic publishing. But I would also like to thank mdw as a whole for the invaluable institutional support of all of MMRC's enterprises, including M&M. Last but not least, FWF needs to be thanked for the Wittgenstein Award 2018, without which MMRC and thus also M&M would never have been possible. Everyone involved deserves special thanks for their unshakeable and sustained commitment although the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly disrupted our work and private lives throughout the process of developing and launching this journal.

Contemplating the amount of energy and expertise that has so far been invested into M&M fills me with hope that our journal will flourish steadily and that it will make a significant contribution to the advancement of music and minorities research.

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Author Biography

Ursula Hemetek is Editor-in-Chief of M&M and Director of both the Music and Minorities Research Center and the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. She served as Chair of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities from 1999 to 2017, as ICTM Secretary General from 2017 to 2021, and received the Wittgenstein Award in 2018.