

**Applied Ethnomusicology:
Historical and Contemporary**

Approaches. Klisala Harrison,
Elizabeth Mackinlay, Svanibor Pettan,
eds. 2010. Newcastle upon Tyne:
Cambridge Scholars Press. x, 245pp,
index and illustrations.

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Different understandings of applied ethnomusicology in Europe and the Americas have clouded the influence of this sub-discipline within ethnomusicology in general. In 2011, Jeff Todd Titon reflected on these different understandings of applied ethnomusicology and the various “types” of applied work (applied ethnomusicology), noting the broader and more inclusive understanding of applied ethnomusicology in Europe. This volume is grounded in this broad and inclusive understanding of applied ethnomusicology, and it is girded with a sense of mission that resonates with Pettan’s challenge to scholars to “break away from a position of contemplative self-sufficiency, the so-called ivory tower of academia, and efficiently employ their knowledge and understanding of music in the broadest sense for the betterment of humanity” (2010: 90).

The volume comprises papers that were presented at the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM)’s inaugural Applied Ethnomusicology Study Group meeting held in Ljubljana, Slovenia in July 2008. Its introduction includes the mandate for applied ethnomusicology that was created at this Study Group meeting, which informs the anthology’s contents:

APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY is the approach guided by principles of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening the knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts.

The ICTM STUDY GROUP ON APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY advocates the use of ethnomusicological knowledge in influencing social interaction and course of cultural change. It serves as a forum for continuous cooperation through scholarly meeting, projects, publication and correspondence. (1, 3)

Co-edited by Klisala Harrison (Canada/Finland), Elizabeth Mackinlay (Australia), and Svanibor Pettan (Slovenia), the international nature of this anthology is evident in the sites where the authors conducted research, including South Africa, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, Austria, Germany, Serbia, Slovenia, and the United States. The collection is especially valuable due to its varying approaches to issues in, and definitions of, applied ethnomusicology. Topics range from ethical considerations in ethnomusicology to social justice and music, advocacy, educational reform, researcher positionality, and the role of NGOs in supporting musical recovery.

The anthology’s authors engage with critical questions about the variety of roles that ethnomusicologists have – as preservationists, activists, educators, and social leaders – and they ask readers to

contemplate the impact of their presence, research, and activism on musical communities, individual participants, and the larger societies of which they are part. Readers are encouraged to consider their positionality, as well as the nature of the relationships that are developed and fostered through their research, and what those relationships mean. Furthermore, several authors challenge post-secondary educators and institutions to revise their teaching styles and the objectives of their curricula to empower students as researchers, learners, and socially responsible citizens who are engaged with the local music community.

After Stephen Wild's preface, in which he contextualizes ICTM study groups and the Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology in particular, the introduction, co-written by Klisala Harrison and Svanibor Pettan (respectively Co-chairperson and Chairperson of the Study Group), is presented in two large sections: the origins of the Study Group and the anthology; and an overview of the contents of the anthology. After highlighting various meetings within the ICTM and publications pertaining to applied ethnomusicology, Harrison and Pettan recount the thematically focused talking circles at the conference, highlighting the wide-ranging concerns of ethnomusicologists about their research and relationships in the field. Readers of this anthology will notice the strong connections between applied ethnomusicology and special interest groups or study groups within professional organisations such as the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities and SEM's special interest groups for archiving (related to sustainability),

ecomusicology, and music and violence. Similarly, the emergent area of medical ethnomusicology is referenced in two of the articles (Bleibinger, Reigersberg), demonstrating that the parallels between applied ethnomusicology and medical ethnomusicology are many – and, most notably, in this anthology, appear around the theme of music therapy and music and healing. Similarly, the considerations of researchers' positions as musicians and in music communities resonate strongly with publications such as Cooley and Barz's *Shadows in the Field* (2008). Grouping these topics into three talking circle themes reflects the anthology authors' roles as advocates, activists and organizers, and sets the stage for the individual chapters that follow.

The anthology chapters are grouped into four parts, according to broad themes. The first part, titled "Historical and Contemporary Understandings of Applied Ethnomusicology in International Perspective," consists of three chapters. Ana Hofman's, "Maintaining the Distance, Othering the Subaltern: Rethinking Ethnomusicologists' Engagement in Advocacy and Social Justice," argues that applied ethnomusicology and its goals resonate beyond the academy and involve more than musicians. Stressing some of the important ethical and relational considerations in ethnomusicological research, Hofman's chapter sets the stage nicely for readers' considerations of what applied ethnomusicology is and the impact that such work can have on shaping public policy and discourse.

In "Solving Conflicts: Applied Ethnomusicology at the Music Department of the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, and in the Context of

IMOHP,” Bernhard Bleibinger highlights faculty efforts at the University of Fort Hare to empower black students through curricular design incorporating local traditional music practices. He also argues that educators and students have a responsibility to foster mutual understanding and positive relations between different ethnic groups, and he stresses the roles that music can play in community development and outreach and the health and well-being of local people and students (notably with respect to HIV/AIDS education).

The next essay makes important links between music therapy, applied ethnomusicology, and choral education, with music serving as a cultural tool to empower, educate, and heal individuals and communities. In her article “Applied Ethnomusicology, Music Therapy and Ethnographically Informed Choral Education: The Merging of Disciplines during a Case Study in Hopevale, Northern Queensland,” Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg recounts her negotiations in conducting research while directing an Aboriginal choir in Australia, and she stresses the therapeutic impact, personal empowerment, and educational opportunities that participation in the choir had on its members.

The second part of the anthology, “Teaching Pedagogies and Research Practices of Applied Ethnomusicology,” challenges readers to consider their own position as educators and researchers. In “United States Ethnomusicology and the Engaged University,” Eric Martin Usner calls for post-secondary education in the United States to develop socially minded people who want to make a difference in their communities, instead of amassing

“knowledge” for its own sake.

Elizabeth Mackinlay’s “Big Women from Burrulula: An Approach to Advocacy and Applied Ethnomusicology with the Yanyuwa Aboriginal Community in the Northern Territory, Australia” blends poetry, images, interview, and video diary excerpts to engage in critical self-reflection while challenging readers to likewise consider adopting different styles of expression. A white Australian woman married to an Aboriginal man, Mackinlay highlights the boundaries and relationships that many ethnomusicologists often have to negotiate as members of a privileged culture.

In “‘Singing from the Dark’: Applied Ethnomusicology and the Study of Lullabies,” Katarina Juvančič highlights the importance of studying undervalued or “private” repertoires within a society, notably lullabies, as a means to empower musicians, to afford them and their repertoire respect and to give the musicians an opportunity to celebrate music that may otherwise be marginalized. Meanwhile, Vojko Veršnik uses two case studies of music taught and performed cross-culturally and cross-generationally to demonstrate the power of music to build awareness of other cultures and its power to transform and emotionally affect people.

The third part of the anthology, “Building Sustainable Music Cultures,” comprises two articles that engage directly with notions of music sustainability and the role that ethnomusicologists can play in this process. Huib Schippers’s “Three Journeys, Five Recollections, Seven Voices: Operationalising Sustainability in Music” outlines common tasks in which applied ethnomusicologists engage

(e.g., concert organizing, reviews, etc.), and he advocates for discussion with – and an enabling of musicians and music communities in – sustaining and developing their ever-changing music cultures. In “Questioning the Possibility of Revitalising Traditional Rural Songs in Topola, Serbia,” Jelena Jovanović likewise questions music preservation vis-à-vis applied ethnomusicology. She reflects on her role in finding ways to promote, revitalize, and celebrate threatened traditional music of Serbia, instilling a shared sense of cultural pride in musicians and audiences alike.

The final section of the anthology, “Music’s Roles in Conflict Situations,” includes three chapters examining how music can shape attitudes in times of conflict. Ursula Hemetek’s chapter, “The Music of Minorities in Austria: Conflict and Intercultural Strategies,” uses two contrasting case studies of the ways in which music performance can be used as a means for minority groups to have their culture publicly celebrated, allowing for cross-cultural interest and understanding while fostering pride. Margaret Kartomi’s chapter, “The Musical Arts in Aceh after the Tsunami and the Conflict,” provides a case study of the role of NGOs in revitalizing musical and cultural practices that had been suppressed in Indonesia, which were allowed to be performed after the tsunami of 2004. This chapter offers valuable insight into the role that artistic performance can play in the healing and renewal of people affected by natural disasters and government politics.

The final chapter, “Polyphony of Cultures: Conceptualization and Consequences of an Applied Media Project” by Britta Sweers, outlines the

main issues and challenges in creating a CD and CD-ROM that celebrate diversity in Rostock, Germany, responding to neo-Nazism and anti-immigrant sentiments. Sweers encourages researchers to engage with various media as a means to realize activist goals and to create materials for use by a wide variety of consumers (students of all levels of education, the general public, researchers, community members, etc.).

The contributions by the individual authors reflect diverse understandings and definitions of applied ethnomusicology, which is a strength of the anthology. Despite its broad scope, it is aimed at researchers in ethnomusicology and cognate disciplines. The scholarly community needs such a volume since the field and methodologies of applied ethnomusicology are shaping individual teaching styles, curricular designs, and institutional mandates, as well as individual ethnomusicologists’ research agendas.

One area of exploration that would have strengthened the volume and placed it within the context of existing literature on applied ethnomusicology would be a chapter on the development of applied ethnomusicology as an area of interest to scholars throughout the discipline’s history. A survey of historical and more recent materials and projects that engage specifically with defining applied ethnomusicology and applying its philosophical underpinnings would provide readers with important contextual information that would reflect the anthology’s title (e.g., the 1992 special issue [36: 3] of *Ethnomusicology* devoted to music and the public interest; the 2003 Applied Ethnomusicology conference at

Brown University; and, more recently, Jeff Todd Titon's blog on sustainable music). Such a survey would also assist those interested in learning more about applied ethnomusicology as the anthology lacks a comprehensive bibliography, providing instead the references for individual chapters. It would also be exciting if there were a volume on applied ethnomusicology aimed at both the scholarly and broader communities, engaging musicians and community members by including community members' writings or reflections, perhaps offering their perspectives on applied ethnomusicology or the impact of the research and researcher. Although I anticipate future dialogic writings within the field of applied ethnomusicology, this anthology offers an insightful sampling of the issues, challenges, and considerations in which ethnomusicologists around the world are engaged. 🍁

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The Guitar in America: Victorian Era to Jazz Age. Jeffrey J. Noonan. 2008. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press. viii, 239pp, black and white illustrations, bibliography, index.

The New Guitarscape in Critical Theory, Cultural Practice and Musical Performance. Kevin Dawe. 2010. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate. xx, 227pp, black and white illustrations, tables, bibliography, index.

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Through the twentieth century, the guitar held a very important place in North American music across many genres, including blues, country, pop, rhythm and blues, folk revivalism, and rock. Studies such as Steve Waksman's *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* or Andy Bennett's and Kevin Dawe's collection *Guitar Cultures* (both 2001) give the guitar a great deal of analysis in this context. This is a history with which most of us who study popular music or New World vernacular forms have at least some familiarity. But what about the guitar in North America before the age of recording? And what can be said about where the guitar is going in the twenty-first century, as globalizing trends expand and deepen further?