

Gerd Grupe (Ed.)
Recent Trends and New Directions in Ethnomusicology:
A European Perspective on Ethnomusicology in the 21st Century

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Henry Stobart

***Potato Music Revisited and the Rise of a Worldly Music Studies:
Perspectives from the UK***

Soon after returning from extended fieldwork in a rural community of Quechua speaking agriculturalists and llama herders in the Bolivian Andes in the early 1990s, I wrote an article about how my hosts' music making activities intersected with the cultivation of their primary crop; potatoes. I had been told how certain instruments and genres attracted the rain and helped the potato plants to grow, while others 'blew away the clouds' bringing the sub-zero temperatures needed to freeze-dry potatoes; to make dehydrated *chuño* that can be stored for years. Even the cycles of 'new' melodies played to help crop growth were related to distinct generations of potatoes. The ways music was organised around potatoes seemed a good theme for an article, especially given their mundane associations in the UK. I called the article 'Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers: Music and Potatoes in Highland Bolivia', a playful reference to the horn and tuba duets I used to play with my eldest brother, a horn player, in our youth. As a very green PhD student, I was happy when, after a few revisions, this - my first article for a peer reviewed journal - was accepted for publication by the *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* (Stobart 1994). This was the third issue of this, then fledgling, journal (later renamed *Ethnomusicology Forum*) and my article appeared in 1994, two years before completing my PhD.

At this time ethnomusicology was small in the UK. There were established groupings at Queen's University in Belfast (under anthropology) and at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, and a handful of university music departments employed a single ethnomusicologist on its permanent academic staff. Similarly, popular music, jazz and film music scholars were rare in music departments; places that were dominated by the study of European heritage classical music – or so-called "Western Art Music". Yet, the early 1990s was also a time of great turbulence and internal debate within musicology; new currents were circulating which, at around this time, became labelled "New Musicology". Increasingly critical questions about established ways of doing music scholarship had begun to be posed a decade earlier, notably in Joseph Kerman's 1980 article 'How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out' and then in more depth in his 1985 book *Contemplating Music*. In his earlier article, he pointed to the 'ideology' underlying established analytical methods, and the ways these were employed to validate "a certain

body of works of art” (1980:315). Kerman saw the analysis-driven musicology then practiced in music departments (especially in the US) as having fallen out of touch with what was going on in the wider world around and, in turn, shutting out “our perspective on great bodies of other music, new and old” (1980:319).¹ In reality, he had no intention of abandoning analysis, his concern was about the hegemonic position occupied by “the great German tradition of instrumental music, which analysis supports”, which, in his view, “no longer enjoys the unique status it did for the generation of Schenker and Tovey and Schoenberg” (1980:319). Much has happened since Kerman wrote these words: New Musicology has come and gone, leaving deep furrows in some parts of music studies, while scarcely touching the surface of others (Cook and Everist 1999, Agawu 2004), and “a new, global order of digital connectivity” has radically transformed the ways we make, access, consume and even write about music (Clarke 2017:416). Kerman was probably using a typewriter.

It was not until the turn of the millennium that many UK music departments began to feel that it was no longer tenable *not* to employ either an ethnomusicologist, or a scholar of jazz or popular music. This led to a dramatic increase in the number of music department appointments in these areas, alongside growth in music psychology, film music, and folk music specialisms in certain departments. Various interdisciplinary conference panels and edited volumes probably helped along this process, for example Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist’s *Rethinking Music* (1999), Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh’s *Western Music and Its Others* (2000), and Linda Phyllis Austern’s *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality* (2002) among many others. The sense of convergence, where research undertaken under the umbrella of musicology or ethnomusicology, sometimes appeared almost identical, led Nicholas Cook to propose that “We are All Ethnomusicologists Now!” or alternatively “we are all musicologists now” (2008). The trajectory laid out above would seem to suggest that music scholars responded positively to Kerman’s 1980 critique and that over time they have come to embrace a more worldly music studies. Here, I use ‘worldly’ not only to mean ‘global’ (in its most inclusive sense) but also to refer to a kind of ‘open-minded’ approach to scholarship, which does not, for example, exclude certain popular, ubiquitous

¹ It should be noted that Kerman was not himself a great advocate for ethnomusicology, nor “very much interested in Non-Western music or popular music of the West” (1985:18).

and everyday music from serious music scholarship - as had often been the case when Kerman was writing in 1980.²

Given this seemingly emancipatory trajectory for music studies, it was a surprise when out of the blue (18 years after publication) my 1994 pre-PhD article on music and potatoes became the target of a bitter and seemingly random attack by J.P.E. Harper-Scott in his 2012 book *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton*. This five page assault – used to exemplify what is wrong with ethnomusicology - appears in a section entitled “Ethnomusicology and pop musicology as class enemies” (2012:186-192), and later in his book Harper-Scott accuses “ethnomusicology” of attempting to “to colonize the Western-music syllabuses of our universities” (2012:251).³ I originally decided against responding to Harper-Scott’s text, but its recent online recirculation and presentation as “impressive” now makes a contextualisation and appraisal of his assertions necessary.⁴

In this chapter I briefly revisit my 1994 article to contextualise it historically and consider what I might do differently today, before examining and responding to several sections from Harper-Scott’s text. Many issues emerge concerning matters of scholarly practice and etiquette, as well as assumed understandings within sub disciplines. Despite its condescending tone, ethnocentric assumptions, neglectful scholarship, and distorted claims, Harper-Scott’s text nonetheless reveals – albeit perhaps unintentionally – several issues of concern in the context of the rise of a more worldly music studies. In turn, this opens up questions surrounding European heritage classical music’s crisis in legitimation, as well as regarding what we might, or might not, consider priorities in a university music curriculum. It also highlights some of the dynamics surrounding the contemporary political conjuncture and the importance of scholarly unity in the face a range of unprecedented challenges to university level music study in the UK.

² I acknowledge Martin Stokes (2013) in my use of ‘worldly’ here, but also extend his use of the concept.

³ Harper-Scott implies that this type of work dominates ethnomusicology and gives the example of a text by Martin Stokes as “alternative” (2012:185). Stokes’ work on the Turkish *Arabesk* is superb, but appears ideologically acceptable to Harper-Scott only because this study focuses on alienated migrant musicians who critique Turkish nationalist ideology (Stokes 1992).

⁴ See Ian Pace, ‘Quilting Points and Ethnomusicology’ (uploaded 12 June 2016). <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2016/06/12/quilting-points-and-ethnomusicology/> Accessed 19.04.2017.

Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers

There are plenty of things for which I can criticise my 1994 article ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’ (Stobart 1994), and often do so if using it as a teaching text. Besides errors that slipped in, such as giving the altitude of the community where I undertook field research as 1,100m rather than 4,200m, there are a few analytical moments that are perhaps inadequately flagged as *my* analysis.⁵ On the one hand, focusing on the potato as a central locus for music helps challenge a common conceptual taxonomy: ‘music as arts/affect’, as distinct from ‘potato as dull /mundane’. For some readers, this play between such different sets of associations or worldviews – what scholars would later call ‘ontological distinction’ (De la Cadena 2010, Ries 2002) – seems to have been compelling, as was the way the article takes the potato seriously as an object of study. On the other hand, a danger of writing this kind of short piece, focused so closely on music and the potato with little reference to other contexts of music making or productive activities, is that music in this community could be interpreted by some readers as a purely ‘functional’ – its meaning, value and role restricted to potato cultivation.⁶ As my many subsequent publications stress, this is far from the case. Although young people – the principal musicians – are typically aware and respectful of the association of particular instruments and genres with attracting rain and crop growth, their immediate motivations and interests when performing are often more connected with courtship than with potato cultivation (see Solomon 1997:182; Turino 1993:105; Stobart 2006:103-129). This close focus on music and the potato also means that other contextual aspects and issues were not elaborated (although they are in subsequent publications). At the time I imagined that people would wish to read this article – in a music-focused journal - for what it tells us about understandings of music, rather than of, for example, politics, development, violence, kinship, or

⁵ For example, I remain slightly uncomfortable about the parallels I draw between (a) rainy/growing season flutes with finger holes and potatoes with eyes - from which they sprout - as “alive”, and (b) dry/cold season panpipes with *chuñu* (freeze-dried) potatoes – without finger holes or eyes – as “dead” (Stobart 1994:40-41). Even though this builds on a conversation with a local consultant, student readers sometimes fail to notice my insertion of “would appear to be”, signalling an analytical intervention, into the discussion and identify this connection as a kind of “fact” that would be common knowledge to every community member, which I doubt.

⁶ Incidentally, this text was originally written for a book in Spanish on anthropological approaches to the potato (Arnold and Yapita 1996). The chapter did not appear until two years later under the title: ‘Los wayñus que salen de las huertas: Música y papas en una comunidad campesina del Norte de Potosí’ (Stobart 1996).

linguistics – themes which Andean area study colleagues in other disciplinary areas were researching and writing about at the time. However, subsequent research has often led me to venture further outside the “music box” (Stobart 2008a:6-7, Bigenho 2011).

My writing in this early article was of its time: inflected and inspired by a tradition of Andean rural ethnography of the 1970s and 1980s based on extended immersive field research (e.g., Harris 1982, Turino 1983, Platt 1986, Sallnow 1987, Allen 1988, Rasnake 1988, Arnold 1988, Flores Ochoa 1986). As Olivia Harris has noted, such work was notable for its commitment to local processes and struggles, where primary loyalties were often with the region rather than the discipline, and its awareness that “struggles for basic rights are accompanied by and to some degree encompassed by a politics of identity” (1994:27). I shared these values, and a key aim of my work was to give visibility to my hosts’ culture as something that, although (at the time) deprecated in a national context, deserved serious study. However, in the early 1990s, and in the context of the Peruvian internal war, this current of scholarship came under critique for its tendency to stress ritual and symbolic analysis over explicit politics and for its perceived romanticism (Starn 1991). While many of these criticisms were fair and timely, others were misplaced or exaggerated; nonetheless the ensuing debate was in many respects productive and reinvigorating (see Ferreira and Isbell 2016 for a recent reappraisal). The subsequent revisionism and rethinking of the politics of Andean anthropology (Starn 1994, and responses) were to have a big impact on me, but not before writing ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’ as a PhD student fresh from fieldwork. Had I written this article a decade later, it would probably have included explicit references to (post)colonialism, modernity, class, race, politics, violence, gender issues, migration, or new technologies; themes, among many others, that I would go on to explore in subsequent work.

Even as a text from the early 1990s, this article has proved a useful teaching tool at an introductory level. It helps students – many of whom have little experience beyond playing standard Euro-American instruments and repertoires – to rethink musical ontologies, and to start to pose new questions about how music might fit into people’s lives. This is done in an accessible way. It should also be stressed that ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’ is very far from representative of the kinds of work to appear under the label ‘ethnomusicology’ over the subsequent decades, including my own. This article was of its time and, as with other older texts, it might be assumed that it would be read as such when critical points are to be elucidated from it.

It was with considerable surprise that I discovered that J.P.E. Harper-Scott dedicated over five pages of his book *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) to discrediting this 1994 pre-PhD work, 18 years after it had been published. To make such a savage and dismissive attack on the work of an academic colleague, working in the same music department and with whom there was no history of personal animosity, seemed odd. This is certainly not to say that colleagues in the same institution should not feel able to critique or enter into robust debate regarding one another's work; more at issue here is the spirit and manner in which this is undertaken. I did not become aware of Harper-Scott's text until well after his book had been published, when he briefly mentioned that he had "discussed" my work in it. It came as a shock to discover that his text simply aimed to discredit my paper, together with consigning to the rubbish tip most (but not quite all) scholarship in ethnomusicology and popular music studies.

It was hard to know how to respond and to understand what was *really* going on. Why had Harper-Scott focused on this particular article? He could have drawn on numerous subsequent publications, including a full-length book focused on the same indigenous community with numerous transcriptions and a CD (Stobart 2006). But he does not cite any of this later work. Maybe he targeted this piece because I sometimes set it as a reading for my first year 'Introduction to World Music' course, as students seem to find it accessible and thought provoking.

I considered writing a published response to Harper-Scott's piece soon after I read it, but decided that doing this might give more credence to it as a serious critique than it really deserved. I was also concerned about stirring things up. Life is complicated enough already. I like and respect Harper-Scott, and wanted – as I do now – to be able to work with him productively as a colleague. It was hard to know how to respond without turning this into an ugly dispute between music sub disciplines which would run entirely counter to my own views about how music scholarship should be conducted. Leaving this attack buried in his book, I reasoned was probably the best course of action. However, in June 2016 Ian Pace, republished this section from Harper-Scott's book on his blog, entitling it 'Quilting Points and Ethnomusicology'. As both Pace and Harper-Scott are influential figures, who students often hold in high esteem, it has now become necessary to respond to Harper-Scott's text; something I do with the greatest reluctance.

Pace characterizes Harper-Scott's text as "very impressive".⁷ I would agree with Pace that Harper-Scott's use of language and rhetorical style does come across as "very impressive", but as literary performance or sophistry rather than as good scholarship or penetrating analysis. Indeed, in many respects, the "impressive" outward aspect of this text is precisely the problem. It is written with a style and confidence which makes it sound as though it is authoritative. Pace's blog post featuring Harper-Scott's text is preceded by several pages of introduction. The following quote gives a flavour:

This book is one of the very few which includes a critique of ethnomusicology from an 'outsider's' position (i.e. one who does not identify as an ethnomusicologist), and I value it especially for that reason. For too long ethnomusicology has sought to present itself as a self-regulating enterprise (often, in my experience, in a jealously defensive fashion), and the lack of proper external scrutiny and critique has in my view enabled some very poor work to sail through PhD examination, peer review, and so on, when ratified by those with an obvious vested interest in so doing.

Scholars working under the umbrella of ethnomusicology often present their work, collaborate, and publish in disciplines outside music (for example, anthropology, area studies, sociology, development studies, cultural studies, media studies, psychology). PhD examiners are also commonly drawn from these other disciplines. Thus, despite Pace's libellous claims regarding PhD examination, peer review, and 'vested interests', work in this area comes under considerable external scrutiny. Similarly, the absence of outsider critique, he asserts, is hardly corroborated by the section 'Perspectives on Ethnomusicology' in the volume *The New (Ethno)musicologies* (Stobart 2008a) for which – as editor – I actively invited a critical angle from outsiders. A particularly robust critique was offered by the US anthropologist Michelle Bigenho, entitled 'Why I'm Not an Ethnomusicologist' (Bigenho 2008). Rather than shunning criticism or going on the defensive, I have since collaborated with Bigenho on several projects related to intellectual property issues and heritage making in Bolivia.

It is hard not to interpret Pace's claims in terms of an attempt to drive a wedge between musicology and ethnomusicology – as a narrowly conceived binary, which is in itself problematic within the wider context of music studies. Why this desire to deny or to put a halt to the mutual respect, friendships, sharing of ideas, and collaborations many of us have long enjoyed? But let us move on to Harper-Scott's text, which – as already noted – Pace characterizes as

⁷ See Ian Pace, 'Quilting Points and Ethnomusicology' (uploaded June 12, 2016). <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2016/06/12/quilting-points-and-ethnomusicology/> Accessed 19.04.2017.

“very impressive”, a claim which is worrying if he is suggesting that this is how the next generation of scholars should be undertaking research and engaging with one another. As a first simple point, Harper-Scott’s text is lazy scholarship. To pick on an article written by a PhD student and then criticise it (as if largely representative of a sub discipline) for things that are often addressed in that author’s more mature writings is a very poor example to set for students. You might ask: how was Harper-Scott to know this was pre-PhD work? Using the internet, and the most basic of research skills, he could have found out the status of this work in seconds. So what did Harper-Scott actually write?

On the attack: ‘Ethnomusicology and pop musicology as class enemies’

Although Harper-Scott does concede that the seasonal use of music discussed in ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’ is “unquestionably interesting” (2012:188), he makes no attempt to consider any intellectual work the article might be doing. For example, minimal research had looked closely at relationships between music and agricultural practices, even though they have dominated the lives of a vast proportion of the human population for millennia. For Harper-Scott, the article simply seems to serve as cannon fodder for his book’s ideological argument, which asserts that only modernist music, with its *emancipation of dissonance*, can usher in the communist truth needed for today’s political and economic life (e.g. 2012:164, 181).⁸ In this context, studying popular or other music from outside this tightly-drawn politically acceptable modernist (European heritage classical music) repertoire is equivalent to class treason. Hence, he entitles the section in which he attacks my article ‘Ethnomusicology and pop musicology as class enemies’.

There is much to say about Harper-Scott’s attack, but limitations of space restrict my discussion to a few extended sections. Quite near the beginning he claims:

⁸ A flavour of this argument is given on page 164: “Everything else is possible: going to the moon, changing your biological sex, a black man becoming President of the USA; but enacting legislation that would, for instance, nationalize all banks, take all private industry into public ownership, and so on, is unrealistic and impossible”. Elsewhere he makes a case for European classical music in this project. After charting the ‘emancipation of the dominant’ and of dissonance, via a series of a canonical composers, including Schubert, Schumann, Beethoven, Wagner and Schoenberg, he claims (with reference to these repertoires) that: “*music has always remained communist even in the intervals between communist sequences*. And this is one of the features of the artform that makes it prodigiously capable of aiding in a resurrection, in political and economic life, of the same communist truth today” (p. 181).

In Stobart's study, non-Western music is not only declared to be interesting, to a sympathetic and accustomed Western ear, but – and here a simplistic liberal move that is widespread but not wholly permeating in these disciplines shines through – also to evince an essential authenticity in its production and consumption that is lost, to our great discredit and disadvantage, in the West (this by way of a pseudo-critique of capitalism). The tacit contention is that we would all do rather better (morally, not intellectually) as musicologists if we turn away from our Eurocentric focus on Beethoven and so on. The fractured body of modernist works is therefore denied as a focus for study ($\neg c$) and the emancipatory truth claim of modernism is denied ($\neg \epsilon$) and replaced by a new 'emancipation' for the West's neglected Other (in this case, the potato farmers of Bolivia) (Harper-Scott 2012:187-88).⁹

This gives a taste of Harper-Scott's ideological motivations, condescending style ("simplistic liberal move"), and rhetorical bluster ("our great discredit and disadvantage"). His assertions revolve around a crude binary which he constructs (and which is not present in my article) that presupposes difference and lumps music into two categories: 'the West and rest' (Hall 1992, Agawu 2003, Brusila 2003, Stobart 2013). Quite where popular music, jazz, European folk music (that so inspired classical composers, including Beethoven), etc. all fit in his dualistic taxonomy remains unclear. The "tacit contention", he exclaims, is that musicologists should "turn away from our Eurocentric focus on Beethoven". However, in my article there is absolutely no "contention" – tacit or otherwise – that studying Beethoven, or any other music, should be abandoned. Surely most people are involved in multiple forms of 'musicking' in different contexts which feed off and intersect with one another (Kassabian 2013, De Nora 2000, Small 1998). Is Harper-Scott suggesting that by glancing beyond, what he calls, a "Eurocentric focus on Beethoven" and asking bigger questions, students' minds might somehow become contaminated?

Alternatively, is he worried about the legitimacy of what he studies and teaches, where we might interpret his attack as an attempt to shore up this music's value through negative assessment of others? If so, this is a commonplace discursive strategy that, whether consciously or not, can serve to make classical music appear complex, clever, and to have depth, as 'serious music' that feeds and sustains you. By contrast, popular music, film music or other genres – such as music connected with potato cultivation – are conjured to appear like fast food that has "no nutrition value" (Bull 2017:294, Green 2003, Becker 1986). The evidence for Harper-Scott's claim that the study of "modernist works" has in any way been "denied" is extremely thin.

⁹ The characters in brackets ($\neg c$ and $\neg \epsilon$) appear in Harper-Scott's book. They are part of his argument which has an algebraic aspect.

A particularly annoying feature of Harper-Scott's writing – and example of poor scholarship - is his habit of putting words into other people's mouths to impute a meaning he wishes to attack. For example, in the above quote he writes "non-Western music is [...] declared to be interesting". However, nowhere in the article is it "declared" that anything is "interesting"; any such judgement is, of course, up to the reader. In the next paragraph he goes further by inserting "[implicitly bad]" into a quotation: "music is not the universal language that many [implicitly bad] people have often claimed it to be", then dismissing this point as "banal". While debates have moved on since I wrote this sentence in 1994, I nonetheless maintain that it is not unusual to encounter undergraduate students invoking universal attributes to music. Does this make them morally 'bad'? No, why would it? Students are sure to arrive with 'common sense' expectancies; in other words, the universal modes of "everyday knowing and being-in-the-world" (Rapport and Overing 2000), about which, as teachers, we can encourage them to acquire critical awareness. Harper-Scott also makes claims regarding authenticity, which in the study of global music genres undoubtedly intersects in complex ways with world music marketing (Frith 2000, Bigenho 2002), just as it does in other branches of music studies. Nonetheless, the 'noble savage'-style "essential authenticity" Harper-Scott reads into the article is largely a product of his own imagination, rather than a feature of the article itself. Ironically, in this context, Andean people were often viewed by earlier generations of anthropologists as inadequately exotic/authentic – or too contaminated – to warrant study due to their long term contact with European culture (Harris 2000:1).

Missing the Misogynists and Pro-Natalists

So far, I have only mentioned relatively minor problems with Harper-Scott's text, but there are much more serious issues to address, as in the following section:

But a nastier failing is also present here: the consequences of a refusal to speak from a universal moral position. One of the dances the farmers perform while they think they are aiding the growth of the potatoes involves the circling and 'trapping' of the male flute players by a group of women. Stobart interprets the symbolism: 'it would seem that the dancers represent the soil or mother earth which protects, but also imprisons and ultimately destroys the parent seed potato when it has given birth to the next generation'. Considering this comment in the light of Stobart's final words reveals a rich subtext. 'For my hosts the potato is no mundane staple, but is an enchanting and magical being whose life is seen in many ways to parallel and enable

their own. Potatoes must be loved and cared for, just like human children. [...]’ (Harper-Scott 2012:189).

According to Harper-Scott, I should be berated for failing to condemn these Bolivian potato farmers for their misogyny and pro-natalist attitudes from a universal moral position. Quite how he manages to read the text, and interpret the symbolism of this dance, as evidence of these people’s misogyny is hard to fathom. Maybe this just demonstrates an unfamiliarity with – and/or reluctance to engage with – other worldviews and how these might intersect with gender; worldviews that do not neatly differentiate culture and nature and that confront us with radical ontological difference (Viveiros de Castro 2004, De la Cadena 2010). Harper-Scott’s obsession with searching for misogyny appears to divert him from the implications and politics of these worldviews (De la Cadena 2010), as well as making him impervious to the poetic homologies between the circle dance and the potato life cycle analysed in the paper.¹⁰ In turn, this denies the capability of Andean peasants to experience affect, engage in poetics, or construct aesthetic worlds – let alone have agency in their own lives. These people have had a long history of being stereotyped by outsiders as dirty, ignorant, drunken and misogynist brutes who should be ashamed of their language and culture. When I undertook this research, such forms of racism and discriminatory discourse were rife, and sadly are still alive (Gotkowitz 2011, Stobart 2019). One of the aims of this article was to counteract these kinds of discourses and to show something of the richness of my host’s culture, as well as to explore how affect operates (something often denied to the musical expressions of indigenous people). In this context, I would have been negligent as an ethnographer not to have documented how potatoes were approached as animate beings endowed with sentiment and in need of nurturing.

Harper-Scott goes on to break down his claims from the previous paragraph into a series of bullet points; which, according to him, list the components of my “ideological message”. Apparently these are “easy” to itemize, and such confidence in one’s analysis (based on negligible research) is enviable. Once again we find him distorting evidence and placing words into other people’s mouths to impute the imagined attitudes or ideologies he wishes to attack. This means that careful decoding is necessary. When we do this it becomes clear that these so-called ideological messages – albeit turned around for rhetorical effect – are Harper-Scott’s own, grossly simplified, dualistic and essentialist, constructions. Let’s consider each bullet point in turn:

¹⁰ This reference to ‘poetics’ goes beyond a narrower conceptualisation of ‘poetry’ and references the Ancient Greek notion of *poiesis* (Stobart 2006).

It is easy to itemize the components of this ideological message:

- subsistence farming is not a burden, a stressful hand-to-mouth existence, but a genuine spiritual wonder that rich Westerners might in some ways envy (Harper-Scott 2012:190);

Cultivating potatoes by hand is immensely hard work and surrounded by worry, as harvests are often precarious due to unreliable weather conditions, disease, pests, and poor soils. I would certainly never choose to deny or romanticise this, nor treat it as something which should be envied. The article does not do this either. Also, had Harper-Scott looked at my 2006 book, he would have known that his distorted caricature badly misrepresents my perspectives and subject position. For example, reflecting back on the times I helped my hosts harvest a pitiful crop of marble-sized potatoes I wrote:

Sometimes, overwhelmed by a sense of hopelessness, I would be astonished by my hosts' patience, resilience, and almost unquestioning acceptance of these meagre rewards for their huge efforts. At these times my mind would race back to my own childhood on a farm in Cornwall and my father's similar fortitude, but also humility, in the face of disastrous harvests (Stobart 2006:143).

My parents were tenant farmers, so these kinds of stresses, discomforts, and gruellingly hard physical work were familiar to me; bad harvests were also devastating for my family, just as good ones were reason for celebration. In other words, there were lots of continuities, but also differences (especially regarding music) with my own experience. However, Harper-Scott seems determined to construct cultivating potatoes as 'Other' and his loaded language (a "burden", a "hand-to-mouth existence"), not only oversimplifies the situation but has the danger of dehumanising my friends – who remain part of my life nearly 30 years on – as pathetic, incapable, and entirely lacking in agency. Harper-Scott seems to base his peasant imaginary on Marx's characterization of French peasants at the time of the French revolution:

[...] the poverty of the peasants. Their field of production, the small holding, permits no division of labor in its cultivation, no application of science, and therefore no multifariousness of development, no diversity of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient, directly produces most of its consumer needs, and thus acquires its means of life more through an exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. [...] the great mass of the French nation [constituting multiple peasant smallholdings] is formed by the simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. [...] They are [...] incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name (Marx 1852, Sect. VII).

This dated and ideological image differs in very significant ways from Andean peasant societies, their modes of organization/polities (Murra, Wachtel and Revel 1986), and their histories of insurgency and pact making in the face of state/colonial rule (McNeish 2008). While I have highlighted the stark and shocking contrasts between the material conditions and opportunities of our respective lives in various publications (e.g. Stobart 2002:98), living in this Bolivian community – for all its poverty and physical discomforts – taught me that these people were not only tough, resilient, energetic, resourceful and capable, but also fashion-conscious, imaginative, hospitable, funny, and proud – that is, until they travelled outside the community and came to face terrible discrimination. It is easy to project a kind of grinding and depressing poverty onto the harsh material realities of such places, but in this case – excepting specific misfortunes, illnesses or conflicts – Harper-Scott’s ‘hand-to-mouth’ image is poorly informed, dehumanising, and exaggerated. A glance at the photos of musicians and dancers in my 1994 article quickly dispels this idea.

Distortion is again in evidence when Harper-Scott reduces the animated worldview of my Andean hosts, where “all matter [is] in some sense potentially alive and imbued with agency” (Allen 1988 and 2015:24, Sillar 2009), to some kind of ideological message that their potato cultivation is “genuine spiritual wonder that rich Westerners might in some ways envy”. Of course, there is nothing to stop urbanites projecting nostalgic Arcadian imaginaries onto rural ways of life, as they have been doing since at least early Byzantine times (della Dora 2016:89). Indeed, it is almost impossible to control the assumptions readers will bring to bear on the texts they read, but surely scholars are subject to a different set of standards, based on gathering and analysing evidence. In his next bullet point Harper-Scott writes:

- potatoes are like children, and (implicitly) children are one of the greatest things on earth, and the procreation of them is or should be the generic pursuit of all humankind (Harper-Scott 2012:190);

This pro-natalist accusation – with its incredible insensitivity to poetic illusion – leaps to various ethnocentric assumptions. As is well documented in the literature, human fertility in this part of the Andes is often connected with excess – children are too easily conceived, whereas the fertility of the fields is often lacking and reason for concern. This is encapsulated in the title of Olivia Harris’ collection of anthropological essays focused on this same area of Bolivia, *To Make the Earth Bear Fruit* (2000). Sometimes, through the ritual language of song, this abundant human fertility is projected onto the land to enhance its productivity, or fields connected with female personages are married to male mountains, to the accompaniment of wedding songs (Stobart 2006:118).

Although the children I encountered in this community were well cared for and loved, Harper-Scott's "the greatest things on earth" claim is hugely exaggerated and a further example of ethnocentrism. For example, Tristan Platt's discussion of the 'aggressive fetus' (2002), based on research into childbirth practices in this part of the rural Andes, highlights a striking ambivalence to human procreation. Indeed, new-born children are connected with wild, dangerous and ambiguous realms and several scholars have documented the efforts deemed necessary for integrating them into human society (Harris 1980, Canessa 1998, Stobart 2006:103).

For his final bullet point and summing up of the section, Harper-Scott turns to what he calls an "anti-feminist" ideological message and again rebukes me for failing to take a universal moral position:

- women, whose role is clarified symbolically in the Bolivian dance, are meant to cultivate and destroy: they should as surely be rearing children as the earth produces the potatoes.

This message of the musical and farming practices of these Bolivians is clearly both anti-feminist and pro-natalist in its focus on the reproductive duty of women. And yet, in line with the democratic-materialist refusal to acknowledge a universal moral position, this is never once questioned in Stobart's essay (Harper-Scott 2012:190).

Once again, Harper-Scott's assertions are poorly informed, essentialist and ethnocentric; he could have easily consulted my article on gender and fertility, which reveals a much more complex picture (Stobart 2008b). There is also plenty of literature on feminism's 'awkward' relationship with anthropology (Strathern 1987) and 'indigenous feminism' has been busily reclaiming "indigenous cosmovisions or indigenous epistemologies" and confronting "ethnocentric universalism" (Hernández Castillo 2010). Indeed, indigenous feminists have called for states to recognise the Pachamama ('earth mother') as a living being with rights; demands that articulate their "ontological difference and their challenge to modernity-coloniality's frame" (Radcliffe 2015:277). Bolivia even passed a Law of Rights for the Mother Earth (Law 071) in 2010.¹¹ For Harper-Scott, this ontological difference - where connections with "earth beings" (de la Cadena 2010) are seen as fundamental to people's well-being and the production of their crops - is reduced to nasty accusations of misogyny, anti-

¹¹ See *Ley de derechos de la madre tierra* ('Law of rights of the mother earth') (2010) <https://bolivia.infoleyes.com/norma/2689/ley-de-derechos-de-la-madre-tierra-071> Accessed 10.10.2018. Nonetheless, the state's scaling up of the mother earth and other indigenous practices or modes of organization in this way is not without problems (see Fabricant 2013, Bigenho and Stobart 2018).

feminism and pro-natalism. Finally, as regards my “refusal” to question my hosts’ practices from a so-called “universal moral position” (a phrase that space does not permit me to deconstruct here), it is clear that Harper-Scott cannot have done much homework. If he had consulted some of my other publications he would have found plenty of examples where I express concerns about particular practices, attitudes or behaviours (e.g. Stobart 2000:39, 45, fn. 33; Stobart 2006, etc.).

Proper Scientific Understanding

Harper-Scott’s assault goes on:

But his message in the study of the potato farmers is also profoundly, and I am sure unintentionally, neoliberal in an economic sense, which concerns me even more. Where Stobart romanticizes his hosts’ relation to their ‘enchanted and magical’ potatoes, the materialist-dialectical response is to ask fundamental questions:

- Must we tolerate a global economic order in which it is possible that people can live in this subsistence manner?
- Can nothing be done to improve the education of these people, to give them proper scientific understanding of agriculture, so that they can take proper steps to ensure the success of the potato crop on which their entire life depends instead of just playing music and hoping for the best (Harper-Scott 2012:191)?

Here, Harper-Scott goes on to accuse this study of being profoundly neoliberal. Based on other arguments in his book, this is because I do not call for a communist revolution, which would bring potato growing under state or union control. This objective has obvious resonances with the radical communist views of the Peruvian philosophy professor Abimael Guzmán. In 1980, Guzmán spearheaded an uprising by the Shining Path guerrillas through the Peruvian highlands, which turned into a major internal war in which an estimated 70,000 people died – mainly indigenous farmers like my potato growing hosts (see Starn 1991, Isbell 1994, Ritter 2002, Isbell 2009). By contrast, giving agency to indigenous people and enabling them to feel pride - rather than shame - for their culture, has been a key aspect of Bolivia’s more recent democratically propelled “social and cultural revolution”, which brought the country’s first ‘indigenous’ president, Evo Morales, to power in 2006 following a landslide election

victory.¹² Despite many improvements to people's lives in the countryside, huge challenges have surrounded – and continue to surround – this explicitly anti-neoliberal government (Farthing and Kohl 2014, Postero 2013, Postero 2017, Stobart 2019). If Harper-Scott was serious about confronting neoliberalism or about how assets might be brought under state control (Harper-Scott 2012:164), he would have done well to have engaged with the abundant scholarship on Morales' social and cultural revolution (e.g. Postero 2007, Dunkerley 2007, Crabtree and Whitehead 2008, Kohl and Bresnahan 2010). A more scholarly approach to critiquing and contextualising 'Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers' would, inevitably, have led him to some of this material.

Of course, a global economic order which enables certain populations to live in poverty is immensely troubling. As Harper-Scott would know if he read my 2006 book, I am painfully aware that the musical expressions I have documented in this rural community have been maintained in large part because of the precariousness of people's lives. However, it is hard not to be annoyed by the dismissive way in which Harper-Scott seems to propose that, rather than listening to these people and trying to understand their values and way of life, I heroically barge in with scientific knowledge to miraculously bring them out of poverty. I have no idea whether playing flutes contributes to bringing rain and potato growth, as people told me, nor in the article do I suggest that this works (despite Harper-Scott's contention that I imply it does). Harper-Scott's juxtaposition between "proper scientific understanding of agriculture" and "just playing music and hoping for the best", reveals an astonishingly uncritical approach to the social construction of knowledge. Again, if he'd done a little research, he would know that outsiders have been trying to impose these kinds of "proper" knowledge and values over rural Andeans for a very long time, often while constructing the kinds of knowledge I have carefully tried to document as "ignorance" (see Stobart & Howard 2002, Hobart 1993).

¹² Incidentally, the *pinkillu* (or *pinkillada*) music described in 'Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers', for which there was negligible national level interest in the 1990s, was officially declared Bolivian intangible cultural heritage in 2016. Aspects of my research were incorporated into the dossier required by the Chamber of Deputies and Senate – a turn of events about which I have mixed feelings (see Bigenho and Stobart, 2019). More generally, under Morales, there has sometimes been a problematic tendency to essentialize and romanticise indigenous culture and identity in attempts to legitimate particular claims and rights (Fabricant 2013:167, Stobart 2019).

Does Harper-Scott imagine that people growing potatoes in this environment over millennia have not picked up a few tricks on the way?¹³ There's a whole literature about the ways Andean people have adapted their agricultural practices to their environment. For example, indigenous people developed a multiplicity of potato varieties, ensuring genetic diversity, and resistance to particular climatic conditions and disease (Altieri 1996). This, in turn, is linked to the common practice of sowing multiple potato varieties in a single field, to ensure production in the face of unpredictable environmental conditions from year to year (Brush et al. 1981, Harrison 1989).¹⁴ It is worth remembering, in this context, that a key cause of the Irish potato famine in the 1840s was the use of a single variety or monoculture (Harrison 1989:182, Fraser 2003, Lohr 2013); Andean knowledge might have saved many thousands of lives. There is another literature about the impact of development work in trying to bring rural Andean farmers out of poverty. The early top-down – “proper scientific understanding” – approach was often disastrous, sometimes leading to a full scale rejection of ‘Western’ notions of development (Altieri 1996, Apffel-Marglin 1998) or to stress “a mutually beneficial relationship with the living earth, Pachamama” over outsider prescribed chemical inputs (Radcliffe 2015:83). Other scholarship has explored how ‘outside’ agricultural knowledge has been appropriated, or combined with indigenous knowledge, sometimes resulting in hybrid practices that often reflect local creativity and agency (Bebbington 1990, Bourque 2002, Godtland et al. 2004, Shepherd 2010). In short, the topic is immensely complex and the results of outside interventions and ‘education’ have been very mixed. When Harper Scott asks “Can nothing be done to improve the education of these people, to give them proper scientific understanding of agriculture [...]?” (2012:191), the answer is that a great deal has - and continues to - be done. But these experiences stress the importance of careful engagement and dialogue with local practices and worldviews.

Playing the Class Card

One of Harper-Scott's explanations for why ethnomusicologists and popular music scholars cannot see the error of their ways is due to their class position:

¹³ Such patronising assumptions threaten to revive the spectre of 19th century craniologist Samuel George Morton, who made claims about the small size, and thus intellectual inferiority, of Andean brains (Gould 1981:57).

¹⁴ This is in combination with locally developed fallowing systems (Pestalozzi 2000).

The cause of this purblindness, I suggest, may be the class experience of the scholars in question. It appears to some members of the congenital middle classes that what the less fortunate majority in their own country or the rest of the world requires is respect and tolerance, rather than a means of escape (Harper-Scott 2012:191-92).

Harper-Scott's contention here is that people born into the middle classes cannot understand that the key priority for people like my Bolivian potato farming hosts is to "escape" the material conditions of their lives. We are back in the land of binaries again, but I will put aside the thorny question of who belongs, or does not belong, to his "congenital middle classes" category. As I have just outlined, for the case of developing Andean farming practices, I entirely agree that majority voices and agency *must* be a part of improving ways of life. Nonetheless, experience shows that success usually depends on communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing between people with different forms of expertise and experience. As I have shown, this is impossible without a great deal of mutual "respect and tolerance", which Harper-Scott implies should be jettisoned.

His inference that "the less fortunate majority" – such as Andean potato farmers - *only* want "a means of escape", opens up a whole range of questions. Where do they escape to? What alternative lives await them? Does such escape necessarily involve abandoning their cultural practices and identity? What is certainly true is that a large proportion of the Andean rural population has been migrating – permanently or temporarily – to the cities, especially since the second half of the 20th century (Andersen 2002, Escobar and Beall 1982).¹⁵ Incidentally, if distances are not too great, many land-holding migrants regularly return to their communities to plant and harvest potatoes. Key reasons given for urban migration include land shortage, better health services, and improved education, alongside ideological factors; especially the widely promulgated idea that "an urban Western way of life is superior to the Andean" (Turino 1993:29-30, Leinaweaver 2008).¹⁶ As services, such as electricity, piped water and sanitation, may be more easily supplied in cities than dispersed rural locations (Andersen 2002:5), there is certainly good reason to connect urban life with better amenities. But this flow towards the city may also sometimes lead to an 'urbanization of poverty', where improvements in people's economic situation and quality of life are limited (O'Hare and Rivas 2007), leading some to move

¹⁵ According to Andersen (2002:3), between 1950 and 2001 Bolivia's seven main cities grew eightfold in size.

¹⁶ Parents' desire for their children to receive education has often been articulated to me in terms of avoiding the discrimination they had suffered themselves.

back to the countryside (Yarnall and Price 2010). Indeed, one of the main research consultants in my 1994 article, with whom I planted, ridged, weeded and harvested potatoes over many months, had done just this. After living in a town for several years, he moved back to his home community (Stobart 2006:19). By “escape”, is Harper-Scott suggesting that all Andean potato farmers want to – and indeed *should* – move to the city and cease growing this crop? In my experience, and that documented by other scholars, the situation is much more complex than this. Also, let us not forget that the surplus crop from good years is important for feeding the cities, as well as a useful source of cash locally. Harper-Scott goes on:

I speak from a radically different experiential position from virtually any academic I know. I used intellect and a set of cultural interests as a means of escape from the doom of living out my life in one of the greatest centres of unemployment and poverty in the country, the colliery-dominated east coast of County Durham, and from the myriad limitations inbred in a family whose education never (before me) progressed beyond the age of 16. I can therefore personally corroborate one of Žižek’s more pertinent observations about the tension between (a) the liberal bourgeoisie’s essentializing conjoining of the poor with their culture and (b) the equal and opposite non-identification of the poor with the material limitations of their existence (Harper-Scott 2012:192).

Harper-Scott’s invocation of his background in County Durham to claim authenticity and moral superiority in relation to other academics is far from helpful, and seems to deny the undoubted privilege, high income, and power that he now enjoys. Although this use of Žižek is self-justifyingly instrumental to attack other scholars, it nonetheless alerts us to a significant point. Namely, what Harper-Scott calls the essentialist conjoining of the poor (or indigenous) with their culture, while – at the same time – not identifying with the material limitations of these people’s lives. A related idea has been discussed by a range of scholars – perhaps most saliently Charles Hale (building on a comment by Silvia Rivera¹⁷) - in terms of the “authorised Indian” (or *indio permitido*) of neoliberal multiculturalism, where racism is often masked behind the celebration of culture.¹⁸ The “authorised Indian” passes the test of modernity – substituting

¹⁷ This was originally an oral comment, but for Silvia Rivera’s own discussion of the concept see Farthing 2007.

¹⁸ An earlier body of scholarship, critiquing the Latin American *indigenismo* movement of the first half of the twentieth-century, touches on this same disjunction. In this case, elite and mestizo classes celebrated and adopted aspects of indigenous culture, often for regionalist or nationalistic purposes, while largely ignoring the material conditions of the culture bearers (e.g. Turino 1993, Poole 1997, Mendoza 2008, Bigenho 2005).

“protest” for “proposal” – and receives rewards in return, while accepting subordination. The “dysfunctional” Indian Other, by contrast, – who is belligerent and demands equal rights – is constructed as “vindictive, unruly and conflict prone” (Hale 2004:17-18). In other words, the belligerent Indian who fights for rights and improved material conditions is dismissed as dysfunctional.

However, in practice this is not a neat dichotomy. Those who fight for rights – in the face of deep-seated prejudice – may, and often do, employ their culture as a very effective weapon (Romero 2001, Stobart 2017:148), even if this can sometimes take strategically essentialized forms (Spivak 1988, Conklin 1997).¹⁹ Equally, it would be a mistake to view culture – such as indigenous music and dance – as a panacea for social ills, as it has sometimes been presented (Yúdice 2003, Stobart 2019). There are very complex issues at play here, which – I would be the first to admit – had not adequately registered in my consciousness back in 1994 when I wrote ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’. One positive aspect of the way that Harper-Scott draws attention to this juxtaposition between people’s cultural expressions and the material conditions of their lives, is that it has provided me the opportunity to inflect future readings of my 1994 article. However, it is a pity that the Žižek-based assemblage he constructs, to bolster his claim to former marginality, is ultimately exploited to drive an ideological wedge between music scholars rather than to seriously engage with how to improve the lives of the people of County Durham or the rural Andes.

Similarly, it is disappointing that Harper-Scott’s engagement with my work is limited to a hostile attack on my first ever journal article, when so many continuities exist between our respective music research interests. For example, the concept of the *emancipation of dissonance*, a key and fascinating theme in his book, takes on a range of productive and critical new angles if viewed from a more global perspective. There are some potentially very interesting conversations to be had about how notions of musical consonance and dissonance are socially constructed (Stobart 2006:214-217), as well as how these might be manifested across time and culture, both in terms of performance practice and perception.

¹⁹ From a more global perspective and especially since the 1990s – grounded engagement with culture has been identified as a more effective paradigm for bringing material improvements to people’s lives than ignoring, dismissing or actively repressing their culture (Radcliffe 2006, Radcliffe and Laurie 2006). Indeed, in many parts of the World, culture – in the form of language, music, dance and dress – has proved to be an expedient and often key means for achieving (indigenous) empowerment and political agency (Yúdice 2003).

Lions, Cheetahs, and Hierarchies of Value

So, what is going on? Why would Harper-Scott make this seemingly random attack on such a dated article? A few clues appear elsewhere in his book. For example, immediately before the section ‘Ethnomusicology and pop musicology as class enemies’ (2012:186), he dedicates space to deriding the tastes of the middle classes and to discussing what might be a shock for them (2012:184-86). The “only true shock”, he argues, for the middle classes would be if European heritage art music – including works dating back to the middle ages – “became the core of academic training and discourse in musicology once again” – music that represents what he calls “faithful and reactive modernism” (2012:186). This shock would, he goes on:

[...] challenge the liberal presumption [...] that pop musicology and ethnomusicology are somehow dealing with issues of greater moral value than those in the Western canon (and that its practitioners are nobler, better people too: they are certainly more uniformly of the Left) (Harper-Scott 2012:186).

A similarly polarising statement regarding university level music teaching, this time aimed specifically at ethnomusicology, also appears towards the end of his book. As we read it we might wonder whether “according to ethnomusicology” simply reflects a crude characterization of a sub-discipline’s voice, invoked for rhetorical (rather than scholarly) effect, or the aberrant and ridiculous assertion of an actual ‘ethnomusicologist’:

According to ethnomusicology, the cultures of the non-western world should take intellectual precedence, and those of us who spend our time focusing on Western music should feel ashamed of ourselves (there is quite an irony in the fact that ethnomusicology, in the UK at least, increasingly attempts to colonize the Western-music syllabuses of our universities) (Harper-Scott 2012:251).

The way that in both these examples Harper-Scott differentiates music scholars according to sub-disciplinary areas and ascribes hierarchies of moral value and intellectual precedence to them is deeply divisive. It also bears little relationship to the more fluid and open ways that most music scholars – in my experience at least – choose to identify themselves and interact. Indeed, many scholars resist self-identifying with any single or fixed sub disciplinary identity.²⁰ The over-

²⁰ For example, it has become increasingly difficult to define ethnomusicology in theoretical terms (Stokes 2013:826) or for practitioners to fully embrace identity as an ‘ethnomusicologist’ without some qualification. Discomfort principally arises when unfamiliar outsiders, or intentionally backward-looking critics, interpret the ‘ethno-’ prefix of this unquestionably ugly word blend to mean ‘ethnic’. Incidentally, the equally uncomfortable pretensions of the ‘-ology’

emphasis of sub-disciplinary identity has been of concern to me for some time and in the conclusion of my introduction to the edited volume *The New (Ethno)musicologies* (2008a), I questioned Bruno Nettl's characterization of musicologists as lions and ethnomusicologists as cheetahs (Nettl 2005:446-47). Based on the television programme 'Cheetah among the Lions' (c. 1998), he describes:

A rather sad situation in an African valley in which a small group of cheetahs were constantly being pursued and persecuted by a larger group of more powerful lions. They could only survive on account of their wits and exceptional speed. The zoologist-narrator suggested that the lions feared that allowing the cheetahs to multiply would cut dangerously into the food and water resources of the lions. A strange and unsympathetic association, I admit (Nettl 2005:446-47).

However, I argued that it is deeply problematic to relate these disciplinary distinctions to identity, as if distinct species. Instead, I stressed the need to overcome this kind of emotive connection between discipline and individual identity, encapsulated in phrases like "we ethnomusicologists", which communicates a sense of exclusivity and scholarly parochialism. As an alternative to Nettl's 'lions and cheetahs' metaphor, but retaining his African valley context, I suggested conceiving of music's sub-disciplinary specialities (or methods) as:

[...] gathering points – waterholes, shady bowers, mud baths, dust bowls, forest clearings, hilltops – each providing distinct views, experiences and foods for thought, which attract some creatures more than others. A range of wildlife visits or hangs around any discipline's gathering points, enjoying the conviviality, searching for tasty scraps, drinking deeply, getting into disagreements or scuffles [...] (Stobart 2008a:19).

In other words, anybody can potentially visit these various gathering points to share and contribute to the creation of specialised knowledge. Indeed, fortunately this kind of interdisciplinary collaboration and movement between areas of interest, as our research interests shift and develop, seems quite standard and expected. For example, of the many conferences I have attended over the past few years, only a small minority have focused on ethnomusicology. While insisting on the importance of downplaying identity politics, it is nonetheless important to take seriously how the rise of a more worldly music studies might

suffix are generally passed over without comment (Nooshin 2008). While ethnomusicology might appear to have become a neat descriptor of method ('music ethnography') – rather than object of study – we should not forget that this excludes people who might wish to stress historical, analytical or other approaches.

be perceived to have impacted on scholars who focus primarily or exclusively on European heritage classical music. And here I am very sympathetic; this is a world that I also inhabit, as do many other scholars whose primary research focuses on more globally-orientated genres or popular music.

Firstly, and despite Harper-Scott's claims to the contrary, European heritage art music remains the core repertoire and focus for study in most of the UK's more academically-orientated universities; often also dominating the areas of composition and performance. Nonetheless, it is perfectly true that courses that focus on other repertoires (popular music, jazz, film music, video game music, global perspectives, etc.) have increasingly found their way onto the curricula of music departments over the past few decades, and are often eagerly embraced by students. For example, most music departments around the country now employ at least one lecturer with research expertise in global, popular, jazz and/or folk repertoires. Inevitably, the exponential growth of these sub disciplinary areas has reduced the relative space afforded to classical repertoires on music degree programmes. Nonetheless, the option-based nature of course selection in many music degrees often enables students to almost entirely avoid studying other genres, should they so wish.

Resources, Status, and Classical Music Matters

Harper-Scott writes that ethnomusicology "increasingly attempts to colonize the Western-music syllabuses of our universities".²¹ His indignation is understandable in the context of ethnomusicology's rapid expansion into such a vibrant area of UK scholarship, which punches well above its weight in terms of the international impact of its scholarly output.²² This sense of becoming established as 'mainstream' is also evidenced in the number of professors identified (primarily) as ethnomusicologists passing double figures, or from the growing number serving as the heads of music departments. In reality there are very few instances where such expansion has threatened to create an imbalance within music departments, although it would be surprising for such growth not

²¹ I am sure Harper-Scott's use of "colonize" was entirely intentional, despite – or because of – the obvious ironies.

²² The British Forum for Ethnomusicology's journal, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, expanded from two to three issues annually in 2011, and its popular conferences attract many international participants and a strong contingent of PhD students. Within the UK university context, ethnomusicology remains associated with, but is by no means limited to, research and course delivery with a global remit or that draws on ethnographic methods (Stobart 2008a).

to provoke concerns.²³ There is nothing new here; Bruno Nettl describes the anxieties expressed by US musicologists well over half a century ago:

[...] as a student in the school of music in the early 1950s, I was readily accepted as one of them... But when it came to sharing resources, as in looking for a teaching job, it was another story. [...]

Indeed, at that time there were very few jobs, and later, when jobs did come along – for myself, and for some colleagues – the historical musicologists sometimes got worried. Do we really need someone to teach only courses on non-Western and folk traditions? Later on yet, if one spoke of a second ethnomusicologist to balance the five music historians, one might hear a fearful “the ethnos are taking over” (Nettl 2005:447, and 2010:95).

This might suggest that, in reality, Harper-Scott’s attack on ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’ reflects anxieties over resource sharing and curricular allocation, or in other words, the ceding of presumed rightful territory. Nonetheless, according to evolutionary anthropologist Joan Silk (2003), “random acts of aggression and senseless acts of intimidation”, tend to be more about assertions of status than uncertainty over resources. Anxieties over maintaining status are certainly evident in the above quoted and immensely divisive references to hierarchies of moral value and intellectual precedence. In short, these attacks – and the language of colonization – seem to reveal deep-seated concerns about control over territory, status, and legitimacy, which are hard to entirely disentangle from contemporary anti-multiculturalist political tendencies of both the extreme right and extreme left (Keegan-Phipps 2017). While such attacks are entirely unwarranted and damaging for music studies as a whole, I am nonetheless sympathetic with the situation facing scholars who focus exclusively on the ‘Western canon’. It is easy to see how one might come to feel wrong-footed, as if finding yourself on the wrong side of the emancipatory-progressive argument. Also, as elder siblings inevitably discover, it is not easy to cede previously exclusive space and privilege to perceived newcomers; this requires a radical and often painful rethinking of the world and your place in it. Even after managing this transition, and some find it harder than others, a few nagging resentments and a desire to maintain superior status may remain. Fortunately, I think this kind of defensive and resentful response to a more worldly music studies is rare, but it is understandable how it might arise.

²³ Nonetheless, I accept that a small number of the new voices entering the arena may have been excessively harsh and have made unwarranted claims based on their former marginality.

In addition to challenges to its study within the academy, classical music has been facing a crisis of legitimation more widely. Not only are potential audiences sometimes deterred by its elitist associations, but the sense has grown that it is something that cultured people can manage without. These concerns about sustainability are evident in books like Julian Johnson's *Who Needs Classical Music?* (2002) and Laurence Kramer's *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (2007), as well as in calls – as voiced in Germany – for safeguarding classical music by placing it on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Kolbe 2014). In Harper-Scott's *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism* he makes a strong case for “modernist music” – actually conceived as European heritage classical music dating back to the middle ages – enabling us to “escape the horrors of the present by imagining the transformation of a coming society” (2012:xiv). While this revolutionary-nostalgia-fuelled utopian image, with its blind allegiance to Alain Badiou (Kramer 2016:4), often comes across as contradictory, dogmatic, and politically naïve, I am nonetheless very supportive of his defence for European heritage classical music. The value of such music is, for me at least, beyond doubt – although I admit that as a practitioner of such music it is hard to be entirely objective. But how can such music be decolonised and gain greater legitimacy without, in the process, becoming middlebrow or losing essential aspects of its ontological potency? Is superiority (moral, intellectual, class) simply hardwired into its genetic make-up, or can this music coexist with other types of music without having to assert its eldest sibling status? My hope and understanding was that this was increasingly happening and being made possible in part thanks to a more worldly (music studies) environment, which was less obsessed with constructing hierarchies of musical value and superiority.

Conclusions

I certainly accept that my 1994 pre-PhD article ‘Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers’, although empirically rich and ground-breaking, was in certain respects naïve. It was, after all, early work and of its time. J.P.E. Harper-Scott's bitter, divisive, and ill-informed attack on this article 18 years later – presenting it as if somehow representative of ethnomusicology – sets a poor example for scholarly behaviour and practice. I hope that he now looks back on this particular intervention as a moment of poor judgement; we all make these from time to time. My aim in this chapter has not been to discredit Harper-Scott, but simply to contextualise his text and respond to his claims. I have tried to do

this both fairly and robustly, while being sympathetic to some of the challenges faced by scholars and practitioners of European heritage classical music; a sphere in which I also have experience.

Responding to this text has led me to reflect critically on the rise and impact of a more worldly music studies. Such reflection brings to mind a class I taught as part of a course on ‘Western music notation’ well over a decade ago. A bright student – and superb cellist – put up her hand to offer a contribution to the class discussion. Before offering a very astute intervention, she innocently asked “is it okay to use an example from popular music?” Personally, I am delighted that students today no longer seem to fear reproach if their intellectual and musical engagements stray outside the so-called ‘Western canon’. Indeed, many of today’s students seem to be very competent performers in a range of different genres (classical, jazz, popular, folk) and very open to exploring unfamiliar musical territories and ideas. While this situation may amount to the “horrors of the present” for some, I see it as key to the sustainability and future potential of classical (‘modernist’) music, something I also care about intensely and wish to see flourish alongside other types of music. In short, if classical music continues to be identified with superiority and elitism, audiences and student enthusiasm – in the global north at least – may well continue to dwindle.²⁴ Similarly, asserting its place through delegitimising the study of other music is, if anything, likely to threaten its sustainability. People are sure to ask; can’t scholars of such music find more worthwhile things do?

If by the “horrors of the present”, Harper-Scott really means the current political situation in which music is facing major threats from the narrowing of the school curriculum, the widespread reduction or closure of local authority-funded youth music services, the dwindling numbers of students choosing to study GCSE and A-level music, the marketization of universities, and the reduction of humanities research funding, then I entirely agree. But, I strongly contest his suggestion that the challenges facing university level study of European heritage classical music can simply be blamed on ethnomusicology and pop musicology, due to their purported connections with Adorno-style “commodity music”. According to this “late capitalist vision”, which Harper-Scott relates to hegemonic control over the discipline, “the greater the variety of

²⁴ Paradoxically, this European cultural heritage, which is partially shunned at home as elitist, is often warmly embraced and consumed elsewhere for its aspirational bourgeois or elite associations (Yang 2007). Estimates of the number of children learning to play the piano in China range from 40 to 60 million, according to Norman Lebrecht (2017) who also predicts that in a few years’ time “the new intake in our orchestras will consist mostly of Chinese graduates, winning places on merit, ambition and meticulous preparation”.

pop, rock, and subcategories of world music we can produce, the better for business” (2012:184). Clearly, this sweeping characterization of such genres and their study as *only* about commerce (while implying that classical/modernist music is somehow immune) is deeply, or just wilfully, naïve and inaccurate. Nonetheless, we should most certainly be wary of politically cynical uses of popular and global music – but also, for that matter, classical music. In this context, I certainly do not discount the possibility that ethnomusicology’s rapid expansion – especially since the turn of the millennium – might partially be attributed to more cynical political expediencies. For example, “as multicultural window dressing in deeply conservative institutions” or “as token interdisciplinary to preserve disciplinary retrenchment in other areas of music studies” (Stokes 2013:833). But whilst remaining attuned to such dangers, let us not forget that the rise of a more worldly music studies – as I mentioned in the introduction – can largely be traced back to internal dynamics within music scholarship itself. In other words, an awareness among scholars that research and teaching in university music departments were out of touch with what was going on in the wider world.

Overall, I believe that most music scholars are committed to this ongoing project for a more emancipated, progressive and worldly music studies. This does not mean that we all will, or ultimately even can, agree about how this might be achieved. Thus, keeping up the conversation – rather than resorting to partisan and vindictive attacks – is critical. For example, I would want to ensure that training in key technical music skills remains a core aspect of the undergraduate music degree – after all this is partly what differentiates music scholars from other social scientists and humanities scholars. But, precisely the form that these technical and analytical skills should take—if they are to be valuable and relevant to the future musical lives and scholarly endeavours of our students—will need very careful consideration, informed by expertise and experience from different areas of music studies.²⁵ Given the unprecedented political and practical challenges currently faced by music studies, working together – and putting aside the temptation for internecine attacks – has perhaps never been so essential. *pax tibi*

²⁵ Here I allude to, and take seriously, concerns about the “de-skilling of the musicological profession” expressed in the call for papers for the conference “Can Musical Conservatism be Progressive?”, which took place in January 2018. This was convened by PhD students of the Critical Theory for Musicology Study Group. See <https://criticaltheoryformusicology.wordpress.com/> Accessed 19.11.2018.

Postlude

In the spirit of openness and to allow him the opportunity to comment, I sent Harper-Scott a draft of this chapter. A brief flurry of courteous email exchanges followed in response to which I made some minor changes to the text. It would be an exaggeration to say that Harper-Scott views his 2012 text as “poor judgement”, but he does accept that some of his claims were “very pointed”. He also insists that the primary target for criticism in his book was not ethnomusicology but “Western art music scholarship”, and there is indeed evidence for this – especially in his merciless assaults on Richard Taruskin. For Harper-Scott, the justification for his assaults relates to what he perceives to be a commitment to ‘truth’, an approach that builds on a theoretical assemblage (borrowed from Alain Badiou’s *Logics of Worlds*) where subjective responses to “the emergence of a truth” may be faithful, reactive or obscure. Albeit a philosophically fascinating theory, the self-referential rules of this particular truth game, and the logical certainty with which Harper-Scott applies them, inevitably clash with the lived human experiences of conducting ethnographic research. My sense is that there has been, and remains, a good deal of mutual misunderstanding at play here. I hope that this essay will be a springboard to fruitful conversations, and maybe better understanding.

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