



# Intercultural Understanding through World Music Pedagogy

Students who hear and perform music from various cultures can become more broad-minded people.

BY PATRICIA SHEHAN CAMPBELL



From many years of research in places across the globe, ethnomusicologists have come to recognize that people make music meaningful and useful in their lives (Wade and Campbell, 2021). Whether adults or children, professionals or amateurs, they are enriched through their engagement as singers, players, listeners, dancers, and creators. People make music alone or in community, joining their voices, their instruments, and their dancing bodies in expressions of their identity, their sense of belonging to a cultural community, and their commitment to music as artistic and socio-cultural expression. Across the world, music reflects the cultural preferences of the people who make it and value it.

Music educators direct their efforts to students in their development of multiple musical skills and understandings, even as they are also keen to recognize the bridge that music creates for knowing a wide range of peoples and cultures. Along with ethnomusicologists, music educators are well aware of the social power of music and its capacity to connect students to people and cultures different from their own and to develop human empathy. Through music that is initially culturally unfamiliar to their students, music educators can support their

journey down a learning pathway to the attainment of musical knowledge and skills and development of intercultural understanding. This musical journey leads students to becoming more human, more compassionate, and more sensitive to one another's feelings.

In an era of unprecedented global disruption, young learners need connectivity that is both local and global. They benefit greatly from opportunities to grow relationships with others, including those who live across the world. Their intercultural understanding is shaped by the experiences they have in music, in all the arts, in literature, and in study of the humanities and the social sciences. Through their experiences in the music of diverse cultures, students learn to value the beauty of commonalities and differences across cultures, which leads to the cultivation of mutual respect and a deepening connectivity of themselves with others. As they listen to and learn to perform (at some level) the music Mexican-style *son jarocho*, Chinese *logo*, Spanish-flavored flamenco, Nigerian *juju*, Brazilian *samba*, Korean *samulnori*, and African American gospel song, students soon discover the logic and beauty that is present in music across cultures.

## World Music Pedagogy

Almost 20 years ago, following decades of experimentation and discovery at the nexus of ethnomusicology and music education, World Music Pedagogy was coined as a phrase and a phenomenon directed toward the realization of both musical and intercultural understanding (Campbell, 2004). Soon after the Tanglewood Symposium, where educators were questioning the exclusive use of Western European music in classrooms, music educators were in search of the means of teaching the music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures. They came upon the work of ethnomusicologists, and in particular the recordings that were becoming available from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) and UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund). They began to feature a wide range of songs, polyrhythmic percussion ensembles, folk dances, and listening experiences that were part analysis and part participation (Campbell, 2018). Music education inched forward toward becoming both global and multicultural in the content of lessons and public performances, and curricular programs were increasingly inclusive of an array of musical expressions from a variety of the world's cultures.

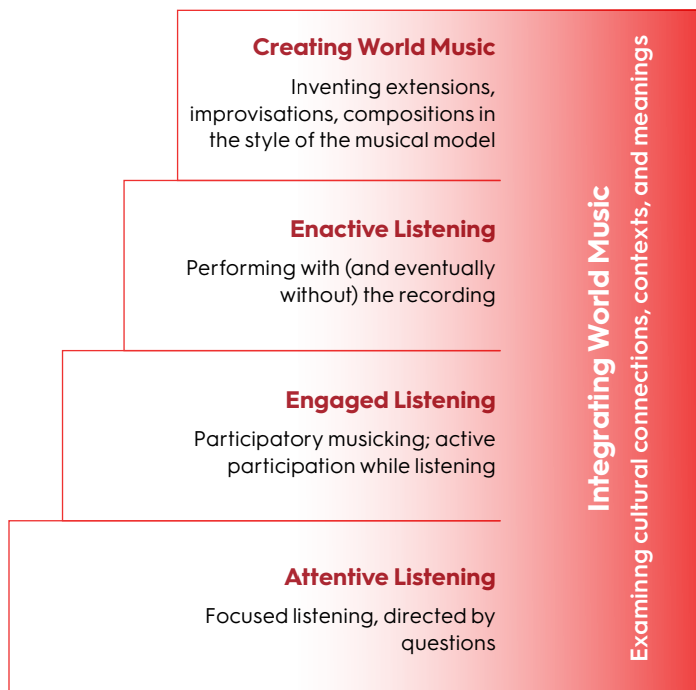
As World Music Pedagogy (WMP) evolved in the hands of ethnomusicologically tuned educators, it also claimed its trademark emphasis on listening as the launch to musical and intercultural understanding. WMP is not “just” listening, by any means, but listening is underscored as core to music learning across the world of oral cultures — in Africa, Asia,

the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific region. Through repeated listening opportunities, students are drawn into the music so that they become familiar with its elemental features, even as their curiosity grows as to why the music sounds the way it does, who the musicians are, and how the music functions in a given cultural community. Listening is the foundational base of other experiences that include musical participation, performance, and creative activities, and the integration of language, stories, and cultural meanings wrap the musical experiences into a more wholistic understanding of music's cultural significance (Coppola, Hebert, and Campbell, 2021). All the components of World Music Pedagogy come together to offer students a full slate of musical involvement, comprising learning that is both musical and intercultural in process and outcome.

While music of the world's cultures has been variously taught in schools over time, World Music Pedagogy is systematic and substantive in its approach. It suggests that all learners, regardless of age and experience, can learn not only children's songs but also the “big music” of a culture, that is, the sophisticated trademark music of a culture as performed by skilled adult musicians. After all, students are not prevented from experiencing Mozart or Beethoven just because they may not be fully “tooled” to play in a top-rank school orchestra. Thus, they should not be shut out of opportunities to experience works of great musical brilliance from the world's cultures. Elementary and secondary school students are all capable of knowing Puerto Rican salsa, Japanese *nagauta* (of the kabuki theatre), *mizrahi* music of Israel, South African *isicathamiya*, and



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Bolivian *huayno*. The key is in the selection by teachers of the music from a particular culture or genre, such that it is (1) of moderate redundancy, that is, embedded with a reasonable extent of repetition by way of rhythm, pitch, and/or text, and (2) short — often about 30–45 seconds (and most likely an excerpt from a lengthier piece). Given the limited class time that music educators have with their students, it makes sense that the musical selections, if they are to be fully experienced, should be brief yet culturally valid.

### WMP's Five Dimensions

There are five dimensions of World Music Pedagogy that can be applied as learning pathways to any selection of music from anywhere on the planet (Campbell, 2018). WMP musical selections are more typically recorded than live and can be delivered as audio-only or by way of video recordings. Three listen-to-learn dimensions are central to the WMP process:

- 1 Attentive listening** — directed and focused through a teacher's questions on musical elements and guided by specific points of attention.
- 2 Engaged Listening** — participatory listening, or the active participation by a listener in some extent of music-making (by singing a melody, tapping a rhythm, playing a percussion part, moving to a dance pattern).
- 3 Enactive Listening** — the performance of a work such that through intensive listening, the music is re-created in as stylistically accurate a way as possible.

These three listening dimensions flow in a sequence, and each of the dimensions require many repetitions. It's likely that 10 or more opportunities are necessary for students to listen with attention for the elemental features of a selection, with another 10 or 20 listenings leading to the contribution by listeners of one or more vocal or instrumental parts, and with at least another 20 listenings necessary for enabling learners to perform the music close to how it sounds on the source recording (Campbell and Lum, 2019). These listenings can be bundled into a single class, or might be spread out across many class sessions, with students becoming increasingly familiar with the music across time.

Imagine students learning by listening to a Cuban *son*, a Vietnamese narrative song, a Spanish flamenco *cante* (song), a Dagaaba *gyil* xylophone piece out of Ghana, a *di-tze* (flute) melody from China. They can listen analytically, vocalize the melody or rhythm, dance the form in a culturally relevant style, and play some or all parts on available instruments. They can perform with the recording, and as they become altogether familiar with the music, they can perform it on their own without the recording.

For some students, or for some selections, the fourth dimension can come into play:

**4 Creating World Music** — whereby students invent new music in the style of the musical model through variation, extension, composition, or improvisation. To be sure, creative work offers students a chance to honor the source music while also opening themselves up to the making of a musical experience that recognizes their innovative selves.

**5** Of the five dimensions, **Integrating World Music** can happen at any time, and many times over, through the course of a lesson, when occasions arise for students to learn something of the cultural meaning of the music. Students are, not surprisingly, curious about where the music comes from and what the music's language, history, and social function might be, and they are drawn to the backstories beyond the music, the motivations of the musicians, and the purposes of the music in a culture or community. Their questions may come at any time, and the information students can receive offers insights that lead to their cultural (and intercultural) understanding. Of course, teachers also initiate some of the cultural integration, using videos and visits by culture bearers and artist musicians who appear in person or virtually to offer meaningful cultural context and a personal touch.

Linked to the other dimensions, the music-culture integration feature is critical to the development of global citizenship, in that it honors the power of music to reflect cultural thought and behavior. It reminds music educators to guide student understandings of what the music means to the people of

given places. This WMP dimension is nonsequential and can be used first, last, and/or concomitantly with other listening, participating, performing, and creative work (Campbell, 2018). For illustrations of the five-dimension WMP learning pathways, see the *World Music Pedagogy Series*, volumes 1–7.

### Sampling World Music Pedagogy

The beauty of cultural diversity comes shining through a teacher’s playlist of diverse musical selections for application in general music settings, middle or high school bands, choirs, and orchestras, and secondary school offerings such as keyboard, guitar, song-writing, and AP theory. Music of the world’s cultures can fit into any music-educational circumstance, filling out one or several class sessions, or spreading in short stints across many days and weeks. World Music Pedagogy is a unique and timely teaching-learning practice in that it serves the dual purpose of musically educating students while also shaping their intercultural understanding. The repeated listening experiences, along with fuller musicking experiences, build students’ familiarity and even preference for the music, moving them to a deeper understanding of the common and distinctive features of our musical humanity across the globe.

For examples of the big music of selected cultures that fit well into the scheme of the World Music Pedagogy dimensions, see the recording sources in the following list, each of which adds its own luster to the overall brilliance of the world’s musical cultures.

- **Afghanistan:** “Kataghani” by Homayoun Sakhi, (SFW 40522\_103), Smithsonian Folkways; <https://folkways.si.edu/homayun-sakhi/music-of-central-asia-vol-3-the-art-of-the-afghan-rubab/islami-ca-world/album/smithsonian>



The integration of language, stories, and cultural meanings wrap the musical experiences into a more wholistic understanding of music’s cultural significance.

- **African-America:** “Oree” by Ed and Lonnie Young, from the Association for Cultural Equity/Lomax collection. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hd-dzCkbzbwU> [Lesson: <https://www.culturalequity.org/resources/lesson-plans/fife-and-drum-mississippi-hill-country>]
- **Bulgaria:** “Lenorije Chaje” by Ivo Papasov and Yuri Yunakov, on *Together Again* (ASIN B01KB1999RK); <https://open.spotify.com/track/6KctFN4QtuHd4Af-FoJESiW>
- **Ghana:** “Gyil Duet, Bewaa #2,” by Rallio Kpampul and Sambaa Sopele, on *Beware: They Aare Coming: Dagaare Songs from Nandom* (PAN 2052 CD), Pan Records; <https://open.spotify.com/track/oyAo5SIVtH-ado8GR1hKDDo>
- **India:** “Tarana” by Asha Bhosle, AMMP CDF 9601; <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Tarana+Asha+Bhosle&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:52bfff03,vid:-mboLoeKw9o> [Begin 0’14”]
- **Indigenous Native America:** “Straight Inter-tribal” by Black Lodge Singers, from *Pow-Wow Songs, Recorded Live at White Swan* (CR-6273), Phoenix, AZ, Canyon Records; <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Straight+Intertribal&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:e5064c51,vid:C9vjVRFzGwg>
- **Mexican-America:** “El pitayero” by Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles (CFV11079), Smithsonian Folkways; <https://folkways.si.edu/mariachi-reyna-de-los-angeles/el-pitayero/the-pitaya-cutter> [Video: <https://folkways.si.edu/video/el-pitayero-the-pitaya-cutter-by-mariachi-reyna-de-los-angeles>]
- **Turkey:** “Bu Duya Bir Pencere” performed by Seval Sam, arranged by Aytekin Gazi Atas from *Kalan* (CD 454); <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Bu+Duya+Bir+Pencere&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:f924e6be,vid:nnL3ZBnWpFw> [Begin 0’35”]

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