

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES ON HISTORY AND GLOBALIZATION

The Globalization of Music in History

Richard D. Wetzel



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Preface

In 1873, Jules Verne's novel *Around the World in 80 Days* (*Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-Vingts Jours*) was published. Set in England in 1872, its central character, Phileas Fogg, an inscrutable master of whist, bets members of his gentlemen's club that he can circle the globe in eighty days. They accept the wager, believing the journey impossible in spite of recent developments in steamship and railroad transportation, although one member of the club concedes its possibility in principle "now that the section between Rothal and Allahabad, on the Great India Peninsula Railway, has been opened."¹

The same member then gives a possible itinerary "as it appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*": London to Suez via Mont Cenis and Brindisi; Suez to Bombay; Bombay to Calcutta; Calcutta to Hong Kong; Hong Kong to Yokohama; Yokohama to San Francisco; San Francisco to New York; and New York to London. Phileas Fogg, accompanied by his servant, embarks immediately. The journey provides the settings for adventures that challenge Fogg's endurance, among them a battle with Plains Indians who attack his train on the recently completed US Transcontinental Railroad.

References to music in *Around the World in 80 Days* are brief and reinforce the prevailing view that non-Western music is merely accompaniment to "pagan rituals." The following are typical: In Bombay there are "Persians with pointed caps, Banyans with round turbans, Sindes with square bonnets, Parsees with black mitres, and long-robed Armenians. . . . These descendants of the sect of Zoroaster . . . celebrating a sort of religious carnival, with processions and shows, in the midst of which Indian dancing girls, clothed in rose-coloured gauze, looped up with gold and silver, danced airily, but with perfect modesty, to the sound of viols and the clanging of tambourines."² A Brahmin funeral procession in India included human voices "accompanied by brass instruments,"³ Elsewhere Verne notes that "the Japanese . . . must be lovers of music, since they were forever pounding on their cymbals, tam-tams, and tambourines, and could not but appreciate European talent."⁴

Verne was a master of science fiction, and some of his novels proved to be remarkably prophetic, but as Jack Sullivan notes in his afterword of a popular English edition, *Around the World in 80 Days* is largely about

the Western turn-of-the-century obsession with faster travel by steam and rail and reveals a new perception of “the force of time,” a perception that focuses on the present and future but minimizes the past and all cultures but its own.⁵

Verne was not musically illiterate. He was a member of a bachelor society of writers, artists, musicians, and journalists in Paris, *les onze sans femmes*, and friend of fellow member, Ernest Boulanger (1815–1900), the noted pianist and composer and father of Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979), internationally known teacher at the American school at Fontainebleau.⁶ He appears, however, to have been unaware of the scholarship in the music of Egypt, China, and India, among other early civilizations, that had been ongoing since the eighteenth century, a consequence of England’s colonization policies. And even Britain’s noted scholars, among them Sir John Hawkins (1719–1789), author of the *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776), expressed negative views of non-Western music: “The best music of barbarians is said to be hideous and astonishing sounds. Of what importance then can it be to inquire into a practice that has not its foundation in science or system, or to know what are the sounds that most delight a Hottentot, a wild American, or even a more refined Chinese?”⁷

Hawkins was acquainted with Handel, possibly the most international (*i.e.*, European) musician of his time, and other composers and performers in England, but he was not a traveler, and his remarkable “science-based” history was the result of sixteen years of study in libraries in Oxford, Cambridge, and the British Museum. Nevertheless, he did seem to modify his views; the second volume of his history contains some discourse on music of the “ancients” as well as several pages of drawings of musical instruments, including an early flute “made of an oaten reed,” and an “Ossea tibia, a pipe made of the leg-bone of a crane.”⁸

Hawkins’s fellow Englishman and rival author, Charles Burney (1726–1814), published the first volume of four of *A General History of Music* (London: 1776) seven months before Hawkins’s history. Burney was a prolific composer, organist, and traveler, visiting Switzerland, France, and numerous places in Italy to gather first-hand information from composers and performers. The first volume includes a “Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients,” much of it based upon the *Storia della Musica* (Bologna, Vol. 1, 1761, ii, 1770, iii, 1781) by the Italian historian, composer, and bibliographer, Padre Martini (1706–1784).

Despite containing few references to music, Jules Verne’s story provides a point of reference for *The Globalization of Music in History*. The closing decades of the nineteenth century marked the end of the pre-electronic age. Verne mentions the telegraph, but makes no reference to recorded sound, which two decades later would initiate a dramatic leap into a new sonic, social, and political world. In the past, music moved only so fast and far as humans themselves could travel; its movement would soon become limitless and instantaneous.

The Globalization of Music in History is not a compendium of the world's musical genres, forms, and styles, although it describes many in a variety of geographical, chronological, and cultural contexts and draws upon the research of musicologists, historians, and ethnomusicologists. Nor does it presume to address all cultures, but rather a representation of peoples in history, their movements and migrations to lands distant from their places of origin, and the music that moved with them. There is no one route that is followed, but many, and the subjects, locations, and figures cited and described are examples of an infinitely greater number in each case. Within a modest scope, *The Globalization of Music in History* attempts to synthesize and contextualize how the music of people on the move assimilated or was assimilated by music in its path, and how this process brought into being new musical styles and affected the relationships among and between races, cultures, and nations.

As we survey the progression from pictographs to cuneiform writing on clay tablets, to papyrus and vellum scroll, bound folio and codex, printing with engraved wood and metal blocks, moveable type and subsequent refinements in printing, and still onward to electronic books and journals, we can assume that the dissemination of information about everything, including music, will continue. That is exciting, but fraught with consequences that evoke anxiety in authors who cannot but wonder if there is need for yet another book, and in readers fearful that information in hard copy will disappear forever.

Robert Darnton, in *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future* (2009), affirms the purpose of libraries and public access to their holdings, but cautions against their commercialization.⁹ “When businesses like Google look at libraries, they do not merely see temples of learning. They see potential assets or what they call ‘content,’ ready to be mined.”¹⁰ He alerts us to the potential for increased “democratization of knowledge” as well as the “danger of commercialization” inherent in technology.¹¹ He is referring to prose, but the potential and danger are equally relevant to the creation, performance, and preservation of music. The following chapters include numerous references to artifacts, paintings, photographs, and musical examples available online. Google’s efforts to document the holdings and content of museums, libraries, and collections around the world, among them the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad,¹² are enormously useful in contextualizing, analyzing, comparing, and synthesizing information about the journeys music has taken in history.

But technology itself does not assure cultural exchange or recognition of the benefits that can accompany it. New modes of transportation enabled Verne’s hero, Phileas Fogg, to circle the globe but he remained oblivious to the cultures through which he had traveled and arrived home basically unchanged. A similar attitude toward non-Western music prevailed until well into the twentieth century. The music of China, Japan, and Korea, for example, was studied for its “exotic” character, but only in recent decades

has it been appreciated for its own inherent value. Musical influences now move from East to West, and that movement brings with it the recognition that music of all cultures has the potential to touch, inform, and unite people at the deepest intellectual, moral, and spiritual levels.

Will a global Classical music emerge as the globalization process continues and intensifies and as musical traditions of the entire world continue to converge? Two eras in Western history, the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Classicism of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, saw the development of international styles largely as the consequence of the increased movement of musicians and the development of new technologies. Both have also characterized music in the twentieth century, and a similar global result is conceivable.

Some challenge the desirability of such a development. Many feel that increasing musical fusion through technology threatens the existence of the music of indigenous cultures. For example, in a recent paper, co-authors Mohd. Fadzil Abdul Rahman, and Connie Lim Keh Nie of the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak express what is becoming a common concern among non-Western scholars: “[W]e musicians . . . should ensure our traditional and ethnic music is intact and it continues to survive. . . . [W]e must not yield and let it vanish in the process of globalization.”¹³ Two authorities on the music of India share that view: “The wider the variety of birds in a garden the more varied the song.”¹⁴

Nevertheless, the increasing number of international concerts, the greater spirit of cooperation in international scholarship, and the ongoing global movement of students are all contributing toward a deeper understanding and appreciation of the music of the world’s societies.

The reader is alerted to several issues addressed in detail in the following chapters. First, the concept of music as a “universal language” is a cliché not supported in fact. There are as many “musical languages” as there are cultures and they have as many differences as they do similarities. Second, there are many who continue to believe that global progress in music is achieved largely by the movement of Western music to non-Western regions. This view, consciously or subconsciously, suggests that Western music is superior to all others. It is a bias and prejudice best dealt with honestly and dispelled at the outset.

Additionally, there are no qualitative distinctions made between popular and Classic, secular and religious. As conductor, composer, and lexicographer Nicolas Slonimsky remarked after meeting and ultimately performing with Rock musician Frank Zappa (at the latter’s invitation), “Music is one, with a capital O.”¹⁵

Finally, while the benefits that music has brought to the human condition are emphasized, the author does not suggest that it has the power to transform a nation’s political views or ambitions. For example, the visit of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra to North Korea, described in Chapter 1, was not made with the intent of imposing Western music on North

Korea nor of magically resolving a tense political impasse. It was a gesture of good will and subsequent events proved that it was of little political effect. It is commonplace for a tyrant or dictator and his subjects or victims to admire the same music.

It is the author's hope, nonetheless, that this book will contribute toward a world perspective in which the term *Classic* has a universal rather than monocultural connotation, toward the recognition that all musical styles have purpose and legitimacy, and that it will provide support for ongoing efforts to discover, preserve, and share the meaning and emotion in the rich musical traditions of all the peoples of the world.

I extend thanks to those who provided information and guidance during the writing of this book, especially Mohd. Fadzil Abdul Rahman of Malaysia, Tala Al-Jarjour, from Syria, and my numerous students from Korea, China, and Japan who shared knowledge about the music of their homelands. Hamed Alfara of Kuwait contributed much useful information about popular music in twentieth-century Egypt and the Middle East. Numerous librarians, those great keepers of our musical legacies, especially Gregory Sigman at Ohio University, generously made resources available for my use. I am especially grateful to Alfred Eckes, whose encouragement led to the writing of this book and its publication by Routledge. Special thanks are extended to the staff of Routledge for the careful editing of my manuscript and their efforts to make it as accurate as possible. All errors that remain are mine alone.

1 Introduction

That music was a traveling companion to nonmusical movements—tribal migrations, military campaigns, religious missions, explorations, political conferences, and similar ventures—suggests its importance in human history. As the twentieth-century musicologist Charles van den Borren noted, “musical creation owes much of its richness and infinite variety to the fact that the great masters traveled widely.”¹ The lesser masters traveled as well.

Music was a powerful force in shaping tribal and community life, religious ritual, and modes of human behavior for thousands—possibly millions—of years. Some believe its influence in the development of civilizations has been equal to that of spoken language, and should be treated with greater seriousness.² Psychologists and music therapists maintain that music has the power to do more than entertain and engage us intellectually. This is not a new assertion. The ancient Greeks (early Western civilization reaching its apex *c.* 500 B.C.) ascribed special powers to music, the power to heal and influence character among them.³ Did this so-called *doctrine of ethos* originate with the Greeks or was it widely accepted in the ancient world? If the Greeks acquired it from some other source, by what routes or directions did it reach them? Equally provocative are questions regarding when music first appeared. What were its earliest sounds? Did song precede speech?

After the disintegration of the Greco-Roman world (*c.* 476), Europe’s first large repertory of music was that of the early Christian Church. *Gregorian Chant*, named in recognition of Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590–604), during whose Papacy it was codified, was formed through a globalization process over centuries of Hebrew, Greek, Byzantine, and Roman acculturation. The desire to perpetuate chant, or *Plainsong*, as it is also known, and to expand it into the first manifestations of polyphony (*organum*) brought into being a technology—music notation—making possible more complex polyphony that reached its apex in the sixteenth century, the most remarkable era of globalization of early modern times.

The sixteenth century saw the printing of music with moveable type and the creation of new musical genres and styles, largely by musicians who spent their lives traveling about Europe. Typical was the composer-singer Pierre de la Rue (*c.* 1460–1518). Born and trained in the Netherlands, he

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was attached to the Holy Roman Emperor's Burgundian Hofkapelle. He traveled twice to Spain with the court retinue of Philip the Fair of France, husband of Juana, known as "The Mad Queen," then returned to the Netherlands and became a singer in the court of Marguerite of Austria. He was present at some of the most significant political events of his time, and his name is found in no fewer than eight different spellings that reflect the languages and dialects of the regions through which he traveled. La Rue, and his numerous fellow Netherlander composers, beginning with Dufay (c.1397–1474) and including Obrecht (c.1457–1505), Isaac (c.1450–1517), and Josquin (c.1450–1521), contributed to an international musical language as they and their music moved through France, Spain, Italy, and ultimately Germany.

The influence of technology on the globalization of music has been continuous and especially evident in the modifications and improvements in musical instruments. Almost all instruments used in the West have their prototypes in the Middle East, and modifications made to them over the centuries generally reflect the desire for increased volume potential, wider range, and more varied tone color. Technology employed by the Amati, Guarneri, and Stradivari families, makers of string instruments in Cremona, Italy, in the seventeenth century, has never been fully understood or replicated and will probably remain forever a mystery. Later inventions and discoveries made possible the manufacturing of instruments of uniform design, and ongoing refinements in music printing, and especially the invention of recording at the close of the nineteenth century, brought about worldwide dissemination of Western music as well as the preservation and study of the music of non-Western peoples. The impact of the computer and accompanying technology is profound, moving at such a pace that any assessment becomes immediately obsolete. Our attempts to do so in a later chapter must be viewed in that reality.

Music is not essential to physical survival but artifacts from prehistoric times suggest its presence among human species in their most primal phases. Until recent times it was not usually sold or traded like cloth, metal, fuel, and other tangible commodities, and historic records of the earliest civilizations indicate that its production required some form of patronage: temple, church, court, tribe, community, university, or wealthy individuals. Consequently, music was often a symbol of spiritual or political power, affluence, and rank.

Illustrative was the court opera *L'Euridice*, by Jacopo Peri (1561–1633) and an impressive group of collaborators. Produced in October 1600 for a wedding with international political implications—Maria de' Medici, niece of the grand duke, married King Henry IV of France—the libretto reflected the passion for all things Greek at that time. The allegorical libretto suggested parallels between the patrons being honored and gods and goddesses of mythology, and the extravagance of the production conveyed a political message. The musical significance of the piece was enormous as

well, employing a musical style reflecting the tastes of both nations—Italy and France—and a new and more dramatic approach to interpreting a text—*monody*.

In more recent times patrons include individuals, religious organizations, businesses and industries, and government agencies (e.g., the National Endowment for the Arts). Universally, the motivation underlying patronage has remained much the same: the desire to demonstrate cultural and social elitism, political power, and wealth, and in varying degrees to benefit the broader community or society.

The appearance of public theaters and opera houses in Italy—the first opera house open to the public appears to have been Venice’s Teatro San Cassiano in 1637—did not eliminate the traditional system of patronage, but in them performers began to operate as free agents. The practice spread throughout Europe, and by the end of the eighteenth century many musicians were operating independent of, or in addition to, court or royal patronage. While allowing greater freedom of musical style and repertory, this practice also required extensive and almost constant travel by the performer.

Some music moved about with little or no effort from the composer. The music of Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), who for most of his life served the Esterházy Princes in a remote part of Czechoslovakia, became enormously popular in spite of his isolation. His two trips to London were made late and after he was already recognized as the greatest living composer. Years earlier, his music had been published in Paris, Amsterdam, and London—one wonders how publishers acquired the scores—and his style came to epitomize the musical language of the late eighteenth century. Even compositions by lesser-known composers were sometimes printed under his name.⁴

Haydn’s younger contemporary, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), perhaps the greatest composer in Western history, made his first international tour at age five, playing concerts in London and Amsterdam, among other places. In his early years he made regular trips to Italy and Paris—on a visit to the latter his mother and traveling companion died in his arms—and the mature Mozart style is a profound fusion of multinational musical influences.

There are compositions that by sheer emotional power touch all, and passing time increases rather than diminishes their relevance. Beethoven’s *Choral Symphony* (No. 9), perhaps more than any other composition, reaches out to all humanity, moves about on its own spiritual force, and is known in every major society and culture in the world.

The nineteenth century was an age of traveling pianists. Clara Schumann (1819–1896), wife of composer Robert Schumann, was perhaps excelled on the instrument only by Franz Liszt. During her long career she played hundreds of concerts throughout Europe, including several tours to Russia. She did this in addition to bearing and rearing eight children and making a home for a man who, to put it kindly, could be extremely moody.

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In the late 1830s, a Swedish soprano named Jenny Lind made her debut with the Swedish Opera Company. She moved to Paris in 1841 to study with the noted teacher Manuel Garcia and was soon recognized as the most brilliant coloratura of her time. Her career subsequently took her to Germany, Denmark, Vienna, and England. A world-renowned figure by 1850, she came to America at the invitation of P. T. Barnum, best known as the owner and promoter of circuses. Under Barnum's management she became the object of what is today associated with Rock Star marketing—autograph merchandise. Her name appeared on dolls, sewing machines, pianos, and cigars, among other things. The craze was described in a popular song titled *Jenny Lind Mania*.⁵

Also remarkable have been single concerts that changed or shaped musical styles, tastes, social, and even moral standards. In 1909, Igor Stravinsky left Russia to compose for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, then in Paris. His *Le Sacre du Printemps* was given its premiere in 1913. Its compelling rhythms, accents that made the barline irrelevant, and dissonant harmonies combined with the primal subject matter of the ballet (ancient Russian fertility and sacrificial rites) created a riot in the theater. Propelling the composer to international fame, it revolutionized the meaning of ballet, shifting the dance from toe to flat-foot to portray the action. Stravinsky, forced by revolution and war to move first to Switzerland and then to the US, subsequently influenced musical styles on three continents and in no small way initiated the interest in primitive and folk subjects in the Americas that followed in the 1930s and 1940s (e.g., Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid* and *Appalachian Spring* and Silvestre Revueltas's *Sensemaya*). With the possible exception of Jazz, Stravinsky's music moved faster and farther than any other music of the twentieth century.

Chicago-born clarinetist Benny Goodman, called "The King of Swing," struggled to survive the Depression era as he toured the Midwest as a sideman in various orchestras. He took his own band to California before giving his historic Carnegie Hall concert in New York in 1938. It was the first time Jazz was played in that revered bastion of Classical music. (James Reese Europe's New York Clef Club played there in 1912, but the repertory was Ragtime.) Goodman's arrangements, many created by Fletcher Henderson, an African American pianist and bandleader who had migrated to New York from Georgia, showcased his own virtuosity as well as the polished section-work of the band.

The appearance of the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show February 9, 1964, profoundly influenced Western popular music. A group formed in England, their sound was grounded in British popular music but energized by the Blues performed earlier in London by African Americans. Their arrival at JFK Airport created an international sensation and gave impetus to Rock and Roll. The only comparable event, and one that operated in reverse, was the appearance of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in London in 1919. Five musicians from New Orleans, the ODJB had

arrived in New York in 1917 by way of Chicago. Their engagement at Reisenweber's Restaurant in January 1917 generated an offer to record for Victor, and their *Livery Stable Blues* and *Dixie Jass Band One-Step* were the first examples of recorded Jazz. DeVeaux and Giddins maintain that the ODJB was so popular that "it established the word 'jazz' as part of the international vocabulary."⁶

Throughout history music has contributed toward a conciliatory atmosphere by awakening commonly held human values and sentiments when political treaties, agreements, and compacts of nations were under consideration, or when relationships between nations became strained. An illustrative case of the latter, and arguably one with unprecedented global exposure, was the performance by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in Pyongyang, North Korea, on February 26, 2007. Made up of some three hundred musicians, supporting staff, and journalists, it comprised the largest Western (US) presence in North Korea in over half a century. Under the baton of conductor Lorin Maazel, the orchestra performed Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, an arrangement of the Korean folk song *Arirang*, and the national anthems of both countries. The concert, especially the Korean folk song, was received warmly and emotionally. Millions around the world shared the wonder of the occasion through the technology of television.

While the New York Philharmonic was on the second day of its visit to North Korea, the *New York Times* reported that the North Korean Embassy in London had invited Rock-Blues guitarist Eric Clapton to perform there. The article notes that "Mr. Clapton . . . is said to have at least one key fan in North Korea: Kim Jong-chol, a son of and possible successor to the nation's leader Kim Jong-il."⁷ The concert did not materialize, but that Clapton, who is internationally famous as a musician, and somewhat infamous for political statements about race and immigration, might be considered for such a visit surprised many.

The process of globalization has been accelerated by the scholarship of ethnomusicologists who for more than a century have been conducting research in the music of indigenous peoples of the Americas, China, India, Africa, Japan, and Central and Eastern Europe, among others places. They travel to remote areas of the globe to study and assist in preserving the music of non-Western societies. As a consequence, the music of many non-Western peoples is no longer viewed as primitive exoticism but as classic art. Performers on the Chinese *erhu*, for example, are becoming famous in the West.

Music in many non-Western regions, however, is being westernized by technology that has brought about changes in the production and reproduction of sound and has enabled the development of new musical instruments. Technology has contributed to the fusion of indigenous music with Western Classical music, Jazz, and Rock and Roll throughout the world. These fusions and their rapid diffusion via recordings and online distribution has

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revolutionized the Western music industry. Copyright laws designed in the West that once defined the rights and limitations of the composer, lyricist, performer, publisher, and recording company, are now ambiguous or obscured and sometimes rendered meaningless because of differing views of ownership and fair use of intellectual property in the West and Asian countries. In the latter, what is considered fair use may constitute piracy in the West. This conflict of ideas has roots in prerecorded history, as we shall see. It will be some time before the complex legal issues, raised largely by technology, are resolved and before a global consensus about copyright is developed and adopted.

The Globalization of Music in History contains no photographs or maps, but makes frequent references to websites that contain them. The book is written in narrative style, and analytical terminology is used sparingly. Words may prove inadequate for conveying the theoretical meaning of music, and superfluous when they are excessively fanciful and anecdotal, but numbers—essential to the discussion of intervals, pitch collections, tone rows, and chord structures—by themselves do not explain our emotional responses to music. As Leonard Meyer observed, music has “emotion and meaning.”⁸ Our goal is to address both.

2 The Origins of Music

Evidence of early musical activity is found in poetry, myths, and legends, as well as in artifacts and primitive paintings that portray instruments and performers. Informative, but more difficult to assess, are “living history” sources. These include tribal rituals and religious liturgies still practiced in remote regions, among them Tibet, India, the Americas, and Africa. Some may have remained unchanged for centuries, possibly millennia. Others have been modified through acculturation, much of it brought about in recent years through technology.¹

The study of non-Western music by ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and paleoanthropologists has been extensive, but consensus on many issues is lacking. It is generally maintained that music—along with everything else that distinguishes “civilization”—first evolved in the East and subsequently moved westward. The early twentieth-century historian Will Durant, in *The Story of Civilization* (1934), presented a litany of Eastern achievements and Western adoptions, adaptations, and usurpations: “[In the East] . . . were developed . . . the alphabet and writing, the paper and ink, the books and libraries and schools, the literature and music. . . . The ‘Aryans’ did not begin civilization—they took it from Babylonia and Egypt. Greece did not begin civilization—it inherited far more civilization than it began.”²

Curt Sachs, musicologist and prolific author (*World History of the Dance*, 1937; *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*, 1943; *The History of Musical Instruments*, 1940), was among the first to suggest a broad approach to the study of music in history. He emphasized the importance of recognizing “the limited scope of the time in which we live,” and cautioned against viewing music as “a development from stages immature, preparatory, and therefore negligible, to unprecedented climaxes.”³ Sachs notes “primitives or—what amounts to the same—prehistoric races planted the seeds from which all higher music sprang in the East and the West.”⁴ He does not specify the races that “planted the seeds” or where they planted them, but he acknowledges the importance of music in oral tradition—prerecorded history—in the development of world civilizations.

Recent scholarship suggests that music was created not only for its acoustic properties but to suit the brain. “One might well associate it with the origins

of language and communication, and this could go back as far as the end of the Middle Paleolithic period, some 50,000 or 60,000 years. . . . A ‘homo musicus’ emerged little by little as their consciousness developed.”⁵ Specific directions to our point of departure come from anthropological sources.

AFRICA

Enter Lucy: She belongs to the hominid species called *Australopithecus afarensis*, believed to be the earliest of no fewer than seven species of *Hominidae* that preceded *Homo sapiens*—us. She lived some 3.5 million years ago in Africa—Hadar, Ethiopia, to be precise. She now comprises forty-seven bones, enough to determine that she was not very tall, little more than one meter, and possessed features that evolved in subsequent species: *Homo ergaster* (1.6 million years ago); *Homo erectus* (0.9 million years ago); *Homo antecessor* (0.7 million years ago); *Homo heidelbergensis* (0.6 million years ago); *Homo neanderthalensis* (0.5 million years ago); *Homo floresiensis* (0.3 million years ago); and *Homo sapiens* (two hundred thousand years ago). Lucy’s bones have recently been supplemented with those of thirteen additional individuals from the same area, now called the “first family.”⁶

There are variants of the above classifications, disagreements about dates, and challenges and counter-challenges to archeological findings and hypotheses. How and where these species came into being, when and where they migrated, and why they eventually disappeared or were replaced, absorbed, or eliminated by subsequent species, ultimately leaving only *Homo sapiens*, are debated. However, with the discovery of more hominid remains the thesis of one common ancestor for all modern humans and Africa as the place of origin—approximately four million years ago—is gaining broad acceptance.⁷

MUSIC AND THE BRAIN

Steven Mithen, in his book *The Singing Neanderthals* suggests Africa as the place where music first began and whence it subsequently moved. More provocative is his hypothesis that early hominids, due to their mouth, teeth, and tongue structures, as well as their smaller brains, were unable to create cognitive language. However, they would have been able to sing, or make musical sounds, perhaps hundreds of thousands of years before language as *symbolic thought* was possible. Consequently, until comparatively recent times—perhaps as late as 20,000 years ago, a single note in the symphony of time—the various hominid species communicated by singing, in what musicologist Stephen Brown calls “musilanguage.”⁸ Brown maintains that at some point music and language became separate systems.⁹

Mithen believes there was a “single precursor for music and language,” an idea proposed earlier by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) in his *Essai*

sur l'Origine des Langues.¹⁰ Mithen maintains that language and music originate in separate spheres within the brain.¹¹ To prove that language and musical skills can exist independently he describes three medical conditions: *aphasia* (the loss of language ability while retaining musical ability); *amusia* (the loss of musical ability while retaining language ability); and *agraphia* (the ability to conceive music in one's mind despite having lost the ability to write it down). These conditions suggest that early hominids could have possessed uncommon musical skills because as the brain grew in size, the part of it that controls music developed more rapidly than the part that controls language.¹² Among Mithen's case studies are gifted musicians: Vissarion Yakovlevich Shebalin (1902–1964), blind pianist Tom Wiggins (Greene) Bethune (1849–1908), and Maurice Ravel (1875–1937).

APHASIA

Shebalin graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1928. He dedicated his first symphony to his professor Nikolai Myaskovsky, and his fifth and last to Myaskovsky's memory. He was one of the founders and chairman of the board (1941–1942) of the Moscow Union of Composers and was appointed director of the Moscow Conservatory in 1942. He fell out of favor during the purge of artists in 1948, was removed from the conservatory, and lived the rest of his life in relative obscurity. He suffered a series of strokes, the first in 1953, after which he lost all linguistic ability. He could neither speak nor understand what was said to him. He was in a state of *aphasia* from October 1959 until his death on May 29, 1963, during which time he completed a symphony that was praised by Dimitri Shostakovich, who dedicated his second string quartet to Shebalin.¹³

AUTISTIC SAVANTISM

Thomas Wiggins Bethune was born a slave on a plantation in Columbus, Georgia, May 25, 1849. He is presumed to be the earliest documented musical *savant*, a condition that combines the highest form of musical talent with little or no social awareness or ability in other intellectual areas. Notices and reviews of his concerts often describe him as “Blind Tom, the musical genius and idiot.” Mark Twain mentioned him in his lectures and he became the subject of essays in music journals and scholarly monographs.¹⁴ The details of his life—much of it spent traveling as a concert artist—touch on politics, race relations, psychology, and to some, because of his seemingly superhuman musical gift, spirituality and mysticism. The medical profession has adopted the term *autistic savant* to describe the condition and recent reports indicate that about one hundred cases have been recorded in medical history.¹⁵

Tom's father, Domingo Wiggins, was a field slave, who with his wife Charity Greene was purchased at auction in 1850 by James N. Bethune,