

## Bruno Nettl – The Study of Ethnomusicology

### Cap. 11 – Music Hath Charms

1. Bend A Knotted Oak
  - 1.1. Uses and Functions of Music
  - 1.2. The early literature of ethnomusicology often dwells on the presumption that in simple prehistoric, folk, or tribal cultures people use music to accomplish certain ends, and therefore this music is *functional*.
    - 1.2.1. “Folk song is often said to be more functional in its use or application than cultivated poetry or music” (George Herzog, “Song”, in M. Leach, ed., *Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, (New York) Vol. 2, 1950, 1032-50).
    - 1.2.2. “To a much greater extent than art music, [primitive music] is bound up with everyday life and with many special factors: psychological, sociological, religious, symbolic, and linguistic” (Marius Schineider, “Primitive Music”, In Egon Wellesz, ed., *Ancient and Oriental Music*, (London) Oxford University Press, 1957, Pp. 1-82).
  - 1.3. ...and ethnomusicology, gradually discarding the distinction between “folk” and “art”, has come to admit that the concept of function is applicable to all music.
  - 1.4. Indeed, if we teach our children to go to concerts..., we are doing what the technologically much simpler people of the Yrkalla and the Plain Indians did with their music: use it to teach people the important things about their own culture.
2. Response to APM
  - 2.1. “When we speak of the uses of music, we are referring to the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice or customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities. (...) [Function means the] specific effectiveness of [music] whereby it fulfills the requirement of the situation, that is, answers a purpose objectively defined; this is the equation of function with purpose” (Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*, (Evanston) Northwestern University Press, 1964).
  - 2.2. Ten “major and over-all” functions, as opposed to uses, of music (by Merriam)
    - 2.2.1. Emotional expression
    - 2.2.2. Aesthetic enjoyment
    - 2.2.3. Entertainment
    - 2.2.4. Communication
    - 2.2.5. Symbolic representation
    - 2.2.6. Physical response
    - 2.2.7. Enforcing conformity to social norms

- 2.2.8. Validation of social institutions and religious rituals
- 2.2.9. Contribution to the continuity and stability of culture
- 2.2.10. Contribution to the integration of society
- 2.3. Music is different from the other arts... It is the most distant from nature... It is likewise the most distant from the rest of culture.
- 2.4. [Music as an] “unconsummated symbol, a significant form without conventional significance” (Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, (New York) Mentor, 1942).
- 2.5. Several authors seem to converge in their belief that music has one principal function.
  - 2.5.1. “...there ought to be a relationship between patterns of human organization and the patterns of sound produced as a result of human interaction” (John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man*, (Seattle) University of Washington Press, 1973).
  - 2.5.2. “...a culture’s favorite song style reflects and reinforces the kind of behavior essential to its main subsistence effort and to its central and controlling social institutions” (Alan Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture*, (Washington) American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1968).
- 3. The Coin
  - 3.1. Differences between emic and etic
  - 3.2. Ethnomusicologists, claiming to be empirical scholars, always use the culture’s own analysis or evaluation at least to a degree.
  - 3.3. “Etic” is the down-to-earth, the detailed description of specific events observed; “emic” is the generalization and structuring of the “etic”.
  - 3.4. Analysis of the uses and function of music in urban Western society.
  - 3.5. Merriam’s analysis of the Flathead Indians.
- 4. The Pyramid
  - 4.1. Avoids confronting the “emic” and “etic” interpretations... Uses and functions are presented not as contrasting halves of a dichotomy but, rather, as the opposite ends of a continuum that moves from the absolutely down-to-earth and factual to the most vitally interpretive and thus perhaps unprovable.
  - 4.2. Analysis of the Teheran culture
    - 4.2.1. Overt uses
      - 4.2.1.1. Listening and entertainment
      - 4.2.1.2. Accompaniment
    - 4.2.2. Abstracted uses (Merriam’s ten functions)
      - 4.2.2.1. Entertainment
      - 4.2.2.2. Symbolic representation
      - 4.2.2.3. Contributions to religious ritual
      - 4.2.2.4. Continuity and stability of culture
      - 4.2.2.5. Integration of society
    - 4.2.3. Top of the pyramid (the major function of music in human society)
      - 4.2.3.1. Control humanity’s relationship to the supernatural
      - 4.2.3.2. Support the integrity of individual social groups
  - 4.3. Music can abstract and distil the relatively unclear and obscure character of a culture.
  - 4.4. Analysis of the two major functions in Teheran