

Bruno Nettl – O Estudo de Etnomusicologia

Cap. 12 – In The Beginning

1. Mythology Is Wrong
 - 1.1. “Mithology is wrong, music is not the merciful gift of benevolent god or heroes... And, so far, are all the many theories presented on a more less scientific basis...” (Curt Sachs, 1948)
 - 1.2. It is somehow anomalous to find that ethnomusicologists often present themselves as students of the present and yet are almost automatically the recipients of questions about the most distant past.
 - 1.3. While it has long been recognized that animals (including anthropoids) communicate, sometimes with the use of sound, it is nevertheless possible to separate human speech from the rest and to come to a definition that applies to all human languages.
 - 1.4. Three questions:
 - 1.4.1. Why did music originates?
 - 1.4.2. What was the actual process by which music was first put into existence?
 - 1.4.3. What was the nature of the original or first or earliest musical products?
 - 1.5. “When innovation takes place, there is a intimate linkage or fusion of two or more elements that have not been previously joined in just this fashion” (Barnett, 1953)
 - 1.6. Music, the classic writers on the subject assert, grew out of materials already present: animal cries, speech, rhythmic activity.
 - 1.7. ...we may imagine... a kind of communication that embodied certain characteristics of what we now regard as music. But in the view of the society that used it, it wasn't....
 - 1.8. Why?
 - 1.8.1. Blackfoot – Music was given to humans by the culture hero in order to help them with their problems.
 - 1.8.2. South American Indians – Music was given by supernatural beings in order to establish an orderly society.
 - 1.8.3. Association between music and religion – a need to establishing a particular way of communicating with the supernatural (Nadel, 1930)
 - 1.9. How?
 - 1.9.1. Sustained pitches – communication – long distances (Carl Stumpf, 1911)
 - 1.9.2. Efficiency of rhythmic labor – dance and music - rhythm and movement (Carl Buecher, 1902)

2. The Moment Of Invention
 - 2.1. We can use the traditional method of looking at change through a series of successive, static frames. If we don't know how music changes, we can perhaps describe the waystations of change.
 - 2.2. "The origins of music that concern me are those which are to be found in the psychology and in the cultural and social environment of its creators, in the assembly of process that generate the pattern of sound" (John Blacking, 1973)
 - 2.3. Sachs proposes two ways that music has come about, from speech and from emotion, calling the resulting styles logogenic and pathogenic, and later referring to tumbling strains and the one step melodies as to strands of the oldest music. (1962)
3. The First Music
 - 3.1. Recent research has uncovered what seems to be the oldest extant musical notation, a Babylonian (more specifically Hurrian) clay tablet from circa 1400 B.C.... While this may indeed be the oldest known piece, it is almost surely not the oldest kind of music extant.
 - 3.2. ...an extractable oldest stratum present in the music of the twentieth century.
 - 3.2.1. It is a style of music that comprises most of the repertory of certain technologically simple and relatively isolated tribal societies...
 - 3.2.2. It is characteristically associated with particular social context.
 - 3.2.3. The sounds of this music are short.
 - 3.2.4. Its scales are comprised of two to four tones.
 - 3.2.5. It is prevailingly or exclusively vocal.
 - 3.3. These cultures are not greatly different from others; they are not "primitive" except in the technical sense of nonliteracy... Their languages are as complex structurally as the average, in so also are their social and religious systems. Can it really be that they got stuck in an early stage of musical development and were unable to go beyond it?