

have attempted to integrate and present them in a way that will be useful and accessible for anyone—hopefully with a beginner's mind. Armed now with ideas from Bateson, Csikszentmihalyi, and Peirce, let the arguments that I make symbolically in the following chapters be tested through each reader's own indexical experiences. I will be satisfied if something here triggers new ways to think about those experiences.

## 2 Participatory and Presentational Performance

Because we have the one word—*music*—it is a trick of the English language that we tend to think of music making as a single art form. Certainly we know that there are different kinds of music. We have a lot of words, ranging from rather broad ones—*folk*, *popular*, *classical*, *world music*—which are meant to encompass everything, to ever more specific labels—(*rock*) *roots*, *psychedelic*, *alternative*, *grunge*, *glam*, *punk*, (*metal*) *heavy metal*, *speed metal*, *death metal*. Musical categories are created by musicians, critics, fans, the music industry, and academics alike. These labels are used to distinguish styles and products, but they tell us little about how and why people make the particular music they do and the values that underpin the ways they make it.

Regardless of the category in question, when North Americans download a song or go out to buy a CD they believe that they are purchasing music. This belief points to a culturally specific conception of what music is. When people buy a photograph of a person, they understand that it is only a representation of that person, not the real thing. Older indigenous Aymara musicians with whom I worked in Peru during the 1980s treated the recordings that they made of their festival music as we might use photographs. After a festival was over, they often listened together to the recordings that they had made on their boom boxes, largely to remember and replay what had been happening in the festival at that point. That is, they used the recordings much as North Americans might use snapshots of a recent vacation—to show friends and remember the special times that were experienced. The recordings were a representation of a celebration and of social interactions realized in a special way through playing music

and dancing together. For them a recording is to 'music' what, for us, a photograph is to the person in the snapshot: a representation of something else, not the real thing. My Peruvian friends tended to think of music as being as much about the event and the people as about the sound itself. As often as not, when the next festival came they would record over the previous sonic snapshot, its use value—reminiscing with friends during the weeks following the festa—fulfilled.

In English the word *music* is a noun, and cosmopolitans more generally tend to think of music as a thing—an identifiable art object that can owned by its creators through copyrights and purchased by consumers. The strength and pervasiveness of the music industry and its mass-mediated products during the past century have helped to create this habit of thought. If we briefly consider the products of the music industry over time, we can glimpse cosmopolitans' gradual shift in thinking of *music making* as a social activity to *music* as an object. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the major forms of popular-music-industry product were sheet music (the 'software') and musical instruments such as pianos, guitars, banjos, accordions, and mandolins (the 'hardware'), often sold through catalogs to be played in the home after dinner or during times of leisure. These products required and were the basis of active participation in music making among average people. Recordings and the radio began to change people's conceptions, but not entirely. Radio broadcasts began by airing live performances, largely to be replaced by recordings later. By the mid-twentieth century the phrase *high fidelity* was used by the industry to refer to recordings. At that time the understanding of music as an activity involving live people performing with or for other live people was still predominant, and recordings were marketed as a faithful (high fidelity) representation of such performances. Even in the late twentieth century there was a commercial to sell cassette tapes that used the slogan "Is it live or is it Memorex?" suggesting that the sound recording was not the whole ball of wax but rather was capturing, representing, something else (e.g., see Mowitt 1987).

North Americans still attend live performances in the early twenty-first century, but in the popular music realm at least, such performances are often closely linked to recordings and other merchandise. Either we attend a concert because we have heard an artist's recordings, or once we are there the band wants to sell us their CDs. Many clubs in North America no longer even bother with live acts that sing or play musical instruments and instead hire DJs who use recordings and playback devices as their instruments for performance. One of the most popular nightclubs

in my town would sometimes feature live bands before the DJ, but the musicians, regardless of their international stature, had to vacate the stage promptly at 10:00 so the main entertainment—playing and manipulating recordings—could begin on time! For the club manager in question, no disrespect to the bands was intended. It was simply an economic reality that in 2006 more young people came for the scene DJs created than for live bands. Yet this illustrates a strange reversal among these young people in their very conception of what music is as compared to an era when recordings were considered a *representation* of live music and would have been considered a poor substitute to a live band.

The cultural conception of music has shifted toward recordings—the form in which most cosmopolitans experience music—as the 'real thing,' not as a representation of something else. In capitalist societies, 'real' or at least successful musicians and music are largely conceptualized in relation to professional presentations, recordings (both video and audio), or (usually) some combination of the two. Even for local bar bands it has become requisite to make CDs for promo and sale at gigs if they are to be taken, and are to take themselves, seriously.

Yet in the United States, as throughout the rest of the world, there are a multitude of music-dance activities that do not involve formal presentations, the star system, or recording and concert ticket sales. These other activities are more about the *doing* and social interaction than about creating an artistic product or commodity. Singing in church and playing music at home with friends "just for fun" are common examples of the latter type in North America, but there are many other pockets of participatory music making and dance ranging from contra, salsa, hip hop, and swing dancing to drum circles, garage rock bands, bluegrass or old-time jams, and community singing that take place in bars, coffeehouses, community centers, and private homes on a weekly basis. Regardless of how important these activities are to the participants, I have frequently heard such people say, "But I am not really a musician," because of the broader system of value that holds professionalism as the standard. In what follows I want to argue that these situations of participatory music making are not just informal or amateur, that is, lesser versions of the 'real music' made by the pros but that, in fact, they are something else—a different form of art and activity entirely—and that they should be conceptualized and valued as such.

Thus, rather than thinking about music as a single art form subdivided into various style and status categories, I have found it useful to conceptualize music making in relation to different realms or *fields* of artistic practice. Pierre Bourdieu's idea of *social field* (e.g., 1984; 1985) refers to a

specific domain of activity defined by the purpose and goals of the activity as well as the values, power relations, and types of \*capital\* (e.g., money, academic degrees, a hit song, athletic prowess, the ability to play a guitar) determining the role relationships, social positioning, and status of actors and activities within the field. Over the next two chapters I describe four musical fields in turn. In this chapter I discuss fields involving real time musical performance—*participatory* and *presentational* music making. In the following chapter I introduce the *high fidelity* field and *studio audio art*, both of which involve the making of recorded music.<sup>1</sup>

Briefly defined, *participatory performance* is a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role. *Presentational performance*, in contrast, refers to situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing. *High fidelity* refers to the making of recordings that are intended to index or be iconic of live performance. While high fidelity recordings are connected to live performance in a variety of ways, special recording techniques and practices are necessary to make this connection evident in the sound of the recording, and additional artistic roles—including the recordist, producers, and engineers—also help delineate high fidelity as

a separate field of practice. *Studio audio art* involves the creation and manipulation of sounds in a studio or on a computer to create a recorded art object (a “sound sculpture”) that is not intended to represent real-time performance. Whereas in high fidelity recordings studio techniques are masked or downplayed, in studio audio art processes of electronic sound generation and manipulation are often celebrated and are overtly represented in the ultimate recording or sound files.

Because this framework requires shifts in the very conception of what ‘music’ is, it is worth emphasizing that the four fields do not refer to musical genres or style categories such as jazz, rock, or classical, although issues of style will come into it. Rather, the four fields of practice and conceptualization often crosscut our received genre categories and even the work of single artists and bands. In their live performances, one jazz ensemble might largely pertain to the participatory field by emphasizing its role as a dance band (e.g., Duke Ellington during the swing era, Big Voodoo Daddy), while other jazz artists might primarily be geared toward formal concerts and club presentations (e.g., Coltrane, Monk). The same band might switch fields from one performance situation to another or at different points in its career. Ellington’s orchestra played for dancing and gave concerts. The Beatles began as a participatory club dance band in their Hamburg days, changed to a presentational and high fidelity approach in their early days of fame, and created studio audio art in their later period—their musical style, modes of practice, and conceptualization of themselves as artists changing as they shifted fields.

The focus here is on the types of activity, artistic roles, values, goals, and people involved in specific instances of music making and dance. Yet the goals, values, practices, and styles of actors within a given field are shaped by their conceptions of the *ideologies and contexts of reception* and the purposes of music within that field. Thus, the manner of preparing for and playing music or dancing in participatory events will vary in a number of predictable ways from presentational preparation and performance. When the goal is a high fidelity recording, new artistic roles in making the music are added (recordist, or producer and engineers), as are new sound-shaping processes such as microphone placement, mixing, and editing. The basic manner of performing is often distinct for high fidelity recordings made in a studio, and new concerns about reception, for example how the recording will sound on different types of playback equipment and how it will work for repeated hearings, shape the music-making processes in fundamental ways.

The recorded music produced by one artist on a computer in a studio

1. Although I believe I coined the term *studio audio art*, the symbols I have chosen for the other three fields are not new in scholarly literature. Most famously, ethnomusicologist Charles Keil developed a theory of “participatory discrepancies” in a body of work that was inspirational for the framework I am developing here (1987; 1995; also Progler 1995). Keil identified a series of textural, timbral, and timing features in music that enhance participation. His work was the point of departure for my thinking about participatory performance as a separate artistic field, which, in turn, led to conceptualizing the other three fields. James Bau Graves juxtaposed the concepts of participatory and presentational music in his discussion of folk festivals and ‘folk arts’ organizations (2005). I took the term *high fidelity* from the music industry, but it is used much as I do here by Edward Kealy in his discussion of the changing practices of recording engineers (1990). I briefly outlined the four fields in my book on Zimbabwean popular music (2000:47–51), and by now some of my students have begun to use these concepts as set forth below (e.g., Scales 2004; Livingston and Caracas Garcia 2005). Sparked by Keil, the development of this framework is the result of various collaborative efforts in classes and seminars at the University of Illinois since the mid-1990s and from comparing my own musical experiences in Peru, Zimbabwe, and at home with the work of other scholars and students.

will also differ in predictable ways if it is intended to be used in a disco or club dance scene as opposed to being heard at an electro-acoustic composers' forum or conference. In the first instance, the sound is shaped for its intended use for participatory dancing and thus represents a mixing of fields; the second instance is a "textbook case" of studio audio art. If the sounds produced on the computer for participatory dancing are intended to iconically represent what performers do live, then it is a mix of high fidelity + participatory; if the recording is not intended to represent a 'live music sound,' then it is a mix of studio audio art + participatory; if the recording combines a presentational style of singing with electronic sounds for participatory dancing, then it may be intended as a combination of high fidelity + studio audio art + participatory. In all these instances, the requirements for participatory club dance music (e.g., long, consistent, compelling musical grooves) will be evident as sonic signs. As these examples suggest, there are a variety of traditions such as karaoke, raves, disco, and DJing that combine aspects of the different fields. But these combinations, as well as historical shifts in the social emphasis on different fields, can be more clearly understood after the fields are delineated as separate types.

### **Participatory Performance as a Separate Art**

There are many forms of musical participation. Sitting in silent contemplation of sounds emanating from a concert stage is certainly a type of musical participation, as is walking in the woods or down a city street to the soundtrack of music coming through the headphones of an iPod. Here, however, I am using the idea of participation in the restricted sense of actively contributing to the sound and motion of a musical event through dancing, singing, clapping, and playing musical instruments when each of these activities is considered integral to the performance. In fully participatory occasions there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants. Attention is on the sonic and kinesic interaction among participants. Participatory performance is a particular field of activity in which stylized sound and motion are conceptualized most importantly as heightened social interaction. In participatory music making one's primary attention is on the activity, on the *doing*, and on the other participants, rather than on an end product that results from the activity.

Although the quality of sound and motion is very important for the

success of a participatory performance, it is important because it inspires greater participation among those present, and the quality of the performance is ultimately judged on the level of participation achieved. Quality is also gauged by how participants *feel* during the activity, with little thought to how the music and dance might sound or look apart from the act of doing and those involved. That is, the focus is primarily inward, among participants in the moment, in contrast to the presentational and recorded fields, where artists' attention involves varying degrees of concern with listeners not involved in the actual doing. The result is that participatory music making leads to a special kind of concentration on the other people one is interacting with through sound and motion and on the activity in itself and for itself. This heightened concentration on the other participants is one reason that participatory music-dance is such a strong force for social bonding. It also leads to diminished self-consciousness, because (ideally) everyone present is similarly engaged.

### *The Participatory Frame*

A primary distinguishing feature of participatory performance is that there are no artist-audience distinctions. Deeply participatory events are founded on an ethos that holds that everyone present can, and in fact should, participate in the sound and motion of the performance. Such events are framed as interactive social occasions; people attending know in advance that music and dance will be central activities and that they will be expected to join in if they attend. Most people go to participatory events because they want to make music and/or dance. This is like attending a party in the United States where people know in advance that conversation will be the central social activity and that if they attend they will be expected to chat. Most people go to parties because they want to socialize. In some societies, and in certain cultural cohorts within North American society, music making and dancing are the central activities during social gatherings, and in such places people grow up making music and dancing as a normal part of social life. For people in the capitalist-cosmopolitan formation where music and dance have become more specialized activities, it might be hard to imagine that music making and dancing are as basic to being social as the ability to take part in friendly conversation, but such is the case in places I have visited such as Zimbabwe and Peru.

During participatory music and dance occasions there is a subtle and sometimes not so subtle pressure to participate. While not everyone has to be playing or dancing all the time, a general sense is created that people

who do not participate at all are somehow shirking their social responsibility by not being sociable. Imagine attending a small party among close friends where everyone is playing charades with the exception of one friend who refuses to play and sits alone in the corner. A similar range of reactions to such a person might be experienced in a participatory music setting—everything from direct invitations to join in, to teasing and cajoling, to ignoring him, to worrying that something might be wrong. Typically people do not want to stand out in this way and so might join in, even if with token gestures, even when they don't really feel like taking part. As with any party, people attend participatory music occasions for a variety of reasons, and in a variety of moods, and engage with what is going on as suits them.

### *Performance Roles in Participatory Performance*

Typically, the members of ensembles specializing in presentational performance will be relatively similar in their level of musical competence. The responsibility of providing a good performance for an audience inspires presentational performers to seek out the best possible ensemble mates. Musical-dance skill is primary; other aspects such as personality, the ability to work together, and, depending on the tradition, features such as appearance and stage presence also become key criteria for selecting individuals for the ensemble. Participatory traditions differ fundamentally in that anyone and everyone is welcomed to perform. The inclusion of people with a wide range of musical investment and abilities within the same performance creates a unique dynamic as well as a series of constraints on what can or should be done musically.

There is a common idea in the United States that participatory music must be uniformly simple so that everyone can join in, as, for example, with the singing of campfire songs. In places where participatory music making is the mainstay this is not the case. If there were only simple roles, people who are deeply engaged with music and dance would likely become bored and not want to participate. If everyone is to be attracted, a participatory tradition will have a variety of roles that differ in difficulty and degrees of specialization required. This can be understood in relation to Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory, discussed in chapter 1. As was suggested, the most important condition for flow is that the activity must include the proper balance between inherent challenges and the skill level of the actor. If the challenges are too low, the activity becomes boring and the mind wanders elsewhere; if the challenges are too high, the activity leads to frustration

and the actor cannot engage fully. When the balance is just right, it enhances concentration and a sense of being "in the groove," at one with the activity and the other people involved. Participatory traditions usually include a variety of roles demanding different degrees of specialization, so that people can join in at a level that offers the right balance of challenge and acquired skills. Csikszentmihalyi has observed that because flow experiences are pleasurable, people return to the activities that provide them again and again. As they do so, their skills for the activity increase, requiring ever higher challenges. In places where participatory music and dance are at the center of social occasions, opportunities to improve one's skills are common.

The inclusion of people with a wide range of abilities within the same performance is important for inspiring participation. The presence of other people with similar abilities as oneself makes joining in comfortable. If only virtuosic performers were present, the gap between them and neophytes would be too great, and inexperienced performers would be discouraged. When rank beginners, people with some limited skill, intermediates, and experts all perform together, however, people at each level can realistically aspire to and practically follow the example of people at the next level above them. In participatory contexts, the full range of the learning curve is audibly and visually present and provides reachable goals for people at all skill levels.

To keep everyone engaged, participatory musical and dance roles must have an ever expanding ceiling of challenges, or a range of activities that can provide continuing challenges, while, at the same time, there must be an easy place for young people to begin and for others who, for whatever reason, do not become dedicated to performing but still want to participate at some level. Thus some roles are quite simple, such as clapping the basic beat or singing a chorus melody, while others may require a good deal of practice and specialization, such as playing core instrumental parts or improvising a lead vocal in relation to a chorus response. Some roles, such as dancing, singing, or playing elaboration percussion parts, may allow for a wide range of expertise where beginners and highly advanced performers alike can take part at their own level of ability.

I use the terms *core* and *elaboration* to refer to different musical roles in relation to their relative necessity to the overall event. In a rock 'n' roll dance, for instance, the rock band's rhythm section (drums, bass, rhythm guitar) provides core parts that allow the lead guitarist and singer to provide elaboration and that allow everyone else to dance. The rhythm section is core relative to the singer and lead guitarist, and the entire band

has a core role in relation to the dancers. Core and elaboration roles may or may not correspond with levels of expertise. While crucial core parts are typically taken or guided by experts, they may include less skilled performers (as in the singing of a basic chorus melody); elaboration parts typically encompass the full range of skill levels, e.g., from the most basic to the most advanced singers and dancers. There is more room in elaboration parts for the different skill levels because while skillful elaboration certainly enhances the spirit of a performance, the people who take these parts are not responsible for keeping the entire performance going, as is true for core players.

Some performance roles inherently offer an expanding ceiling of challenges (you can always become a better dancer, lead singer, or lead guitarist), whereas others are more restricted regarding what is appropriate to play in support of other roles and activities. For example, the core *hosho* (gourd shaker) part in Shona *mbira*<sup>2</sup> music (chapter 5; also figure 2.1) must be played in a straightforward and relatively simple manner if the rhythmic groove required for dancing and the other musical parts is to remain intact, and the same is true for a rhythm guitarist, bassist, or drummer in a rock, zydeco, or reggae band. Artistic freedom and experimentation in these core roles are restricted by the responsibility of providing the musical foundation that allows others to participate comfortably.

Within participatory traditions, however, there are a range of roles available to individuals in any given event. Sometimes people simply prefer one type of activity over others, such as playing a given instrument, singing, or dancing, much as individuals might prefer, and be better at, playing different positions on a softball team. But the range of roles also offers variety and the possibility for new challenges. The participatory contra-or square-dancing tradition in the United States is a case in point. Experts in this tradition might participate as musicians, dancers, and dance callers (a person who verbally teaches and directs each dance) within a given dance weekend (chapter 6). Often people enter this scene as beginning dancers, but those who master dancing might go on to take up an instrument used in contra dance bands or might learn dance calling so that they can participate in other ways and find new challenges that keep them engaged with the activity.

2. *Mbira* refers to an instrument with twenty-two metal keys attached to a sound board and usually played within a calabash resonator. The keys are played with the left thumb and right thumb and index finger. It is the type of instrument sometimes referred to as “thumb piano” in the United States.

### Participatory Musical Values

One key feature that differentiates participatory and presentational traditions involves issues of *value*. Participatory values are distinctive in that the success of a performance is more importantly judged by the degree and intensity of participation than by some abstracted assessment of the musical sound quality. My Zimbabwean *mbira* teacher, Chris Mhlanga, once told me that the best *mbira* players could offer their best performance at a ceremony but if no one joined in singing, clapping, and dancing, the performance would be considered a failure. Shona ceremonies for the ancestors are deeply participatory, and the quality of the ceremony is judged by the intensity of participation that inspires spirit possession. Although the drummers or *mbira* players perform the most specialized core musical roles in ceremonies, they are not considered the stars of the event with other contributions being secondary. Rather, they, along with *hosho* (shaker) players, are more like workmen with the special responsibility to provide a firm musical foundation that allows and in fact inspires others to participate.

This issue of responsibility will come up again later in regard to shaping the sound of participatory performance. Here I would simply say that regardless of core players' ability and desire to play flashy improvisations or to play faster than people find comfortable for dancing, they have the responsibility of performing their parts in a way that will not exclude others. Participatory values place a priority on performing in ways that invite participation, even if this might limit a given performer's desire for personal expression or experimentation. Each field has its own positive potentials and constraints. In presentational music there is much more room for personal innovation, and in fact innovation is often highly valued for the interest it provides for the audience. The distinctive values and responsibilities that underpin participatory and presentational music making are fundamental to understanding major differences between them.

In participatory events everyone's contribution to the performance is valued and in fact is considered essential for a performance to be deemed successful. But this doesn't mean that everyone in the event is necessarily happy about some people's inept or clumsy contributions to the music and dance. In a typical contra dance, newcomers and experienced dancers alike are encouraged to join in dancing. Newcomers are encouraged, partly because people in a local scene want it to grow and remain vibrant; they need “new blood.” More generally, contra dance scenes operate with a participatory ethos, and it is simply considered a Good—in the spirit of

the scene—to be welcoming and helpful to newcomers. Nonetheless, new dancers interrupt the flow of the dance when they become confused about what they should be doing, and it is the feeling of 'flow' (a word contra dancers use themselves) that draws many experienced dancers. If there are too many new dancers in a given event or scene, some experienced dancers may become inwardly exasperated, comment about this among themselves, or even, sometimes, show their impatience on the dance floor. Shows of impatience, however, are generally considered bad manners, because they conflict with the welcoming, communal ethos that contra dancers usually value about the scene and themselves.

Among indigenous Aymara people of Conima, Peru, music making is highly participatory.<sup>3</sup> Any male community member is welcome to perform panpipes or flutes with his community's ensemble, and any man or woman is welcome to dance. The values guiding musical performance are part of a more fundamental social style in which egalitarian relations and conflict avoidance are typical (Turino 1993). At one fiesta I participated in, two men showed up to perform with our ensemble with flutes tuned at a different pitch level from the instruments we were using. Nonetheless, they joined in and performed with us throughout the two-day fiesta. The result was that the overall sound was extremely out of tune. This drove me crazy; and I tried to stand as far away from these individuals as I could in my attempt to ignore the sounds they were making. I was surprised by the fact that none of the other players gave any indication that anything was wrong or suggested to these men that they might try to find flutes that were better in tune with the ensemble. No sign of any kind that might have discouraged their participation was given during the public performance. I returned home with Felberto, a deeply dedicated musician and the friend I was staying with. Once we were alone, he began to complain bitterly about how terrible the sound was. He had felt the same way I had about these musicians' contributions to the performance. But even he, an older and well-respected musician in the community, felt that he couldn't say anything to these men during the fiesta.

These stories point to a subtle but crucial point about the participatory ethos. It is not that people do not make qualitative judgments about

3. The term *Aymara* refers to a major native American language spoken in parts of southern Peru and Bolivia in the Andes Mountains. Conima is a rural Aymara-speaking district in the state of Puno in southern Peru. I conducted research with Aymara musicians from 1984 to 1986.

other participants' performance inwardly or that everyone is happy about problematic contributions to a performance—overall, people have a better time when the music and dance are going well. It is simply that in participatory traditions a priority is placed on encouraging people to join in regardless of the quality of their contributions. In highly participatory traditions, the etiquette and quality of *sociality* is granted priority over the quality of the sound *per se*. Put another way, participatory music and dance is more about the social relations being realized through the performance than about producing art that can somehow be abstracted from those social relations.

For those of us who hail from a society where presentational and recorded musics are the most valued forms and where music is conceptualized as Art, participatory values may be hard to grasp and accept in relation to music making. It might be helpful to think of participatory performance as being similar a pick-up softball game. When a group of good friends come together to play, even the guy or gal known to be a lousy player will be included. Like the core musicians in participatory performance, the better softball players keep the game going and make it fun for everyone. If no one can hit, catch, or pitch, the game goes nowhere and becomes boring, just as if no one can create a compelling rhythmic groove, no one will want to dance. Competitive or deeply invested softball players may groan inwardly when an inept teammate flubs an easy fly ball, but if they have any class, they will shout encouragement, make a joke of it, or say nothing. After all, it is only a game, for fun and to bring friends together. Participatory performance is like this—it is about the opportunity of connecting in special ways with others and experiencing flow.

What is important to understand is that for certain social groups throughout the world, participatory music, dance, games, sports, and festivals are not merely the informal sidelines to the "real" event—professional athletics, music, and entertainment—but rather they are at the center of social life. The values and practices that underpin participatory arts, sports, festivals, and other activities are important because they inspire more people to be involved with, and to develop skills in, these life-enriching activities. As compared with the other musical fields, participatory music making/dancing is the most democratic, the least formally competitive, and the least hierarchical. As such, participatory performance does not fit well with the broader cultural values of the capitalist-cosmopolitan formation, where competition and hierarchy are prominent and profit making is often a primary goal (who would buy tickets to watch a pick-up softball



game or a square dance?). For this reason, in places like the United States participatory traditions tend to be relegated to special cultural cohorts that stand in opposition to the broader cultural formation. Participatory activities exist beneath the radar of mainstream official and popular attention in staunchly capitalist societies, and yet they still exist—some people seek them out or create them because they offer special resources for individual and social integration and experience, flow, and fun.

### *Sounds and Practices of Participatory Performance*

It is not surprising that on the surface, indigenous Shona music of Zimbabwe, Peruvian Aymara music, and Midwestern contra dance music sound nothing alike. These three traditions are geographically distant and have not been directly influenced by common diffusion. What is surprising is that below the surface, these three types of music making share a variety of sound features, basic principles of organization, and performance practices. When I first started studying village music in Zimbabwe after having worked in Peru for many years, I was struck by the number of similarities and was at a loss to explain them. Moreover, I found that the list of sound features Charles Kiel discussed as participatory discrepancies correlated with the parallel features I found in the cases I knew. This inspired my students and me to undertake comparative research of the sounds and performance practices of traditions meant to inspire participation in different parts of the world.

As the result of this work, we compiled a list of sound features and performance practices that turned up more often than not in participatory traditions—the features summarized and discussed below. Our main conclusions were that these sound features (1) functioned to inspire or support participation; (2) functioned to enhance social bonding, a goal that often underlies participatory traditions; and/or (3) dialectically grew out of or were the result of participatory values and practices. I am not asserting that all of these sound features will always be present in traditions guided by participatory goals, but rather that many likely will be present in some form or other because they work to inspire and enhance participation. In his 1964 landmark study *The Anthropology of Music*, Alan P. Merriam suggested one of the most widely accepted ideas in ethnomusicology, that music is best understood in relation to its systemic components of *sound, behavior, and concept*. Given this premise, it should not be surprising that different musical traditions that are founded on similar values

and social goals (concepts) should exhibit similar practices (behavior) and style features (sound). This conclusion seems warranted for participatory music making.

**FORM AND REPETITION.** The forms of European classical music and most contemporary popular songs are fixed so that they typically begin, progress, and end in the same way every time the piece is played and are balanced in terms of repeated and contrasting sections.<sup>4</sup> For classical music, most aspects of the composition are notated in the score; dynamics, shifting emphasis on different instruments, key modulations, tempo, and meter changes among many other features are built into the piece to provide contrast between different sections and to provide interest for listeners. The details of a popular song may be fixed similarly in a score or by a recording. The majority of presentational music is in this type of *closed form* with predetermined formal contrasts and a set beginning, middle, and end. Since high fidelity music and pieces of studio audio art are, by definition, defined by the recording, they are the most markedly set musical items.

Participatory music differs fundamentally from the other three fields in that it tends to be in *open form*: further, since what happens musically depends on individual contributions and interactions in the moment, many of the sonic details of a performance are not, and cannot be, preplanned. *Open form* refers to music that is open ended and can be repeated for as long as the participants and situation requires. The forms used in participatory music are typically short (i.e., a single rendition of the entire piece may last a minute or less), but the entire form is repeated over and over. Cyclical (*\*ostinato*) forms, in which the same short repeated melodic-harmonic-rhythmic unit constitutes the basic piece, are common in participatory music, as are short sectional forms (e.g., AAB, AAB-

4. In music jargon, *form* refers to the overall 'architecture' or design of a piece of music as it unfolds through time. The three aspects that help us recognize musical form are *repetition, variation, and contrast*. The repetition of small melodic or rhythmic units (*motives*), a *musical phrase*, or a whole *section* (a larger, relatively complete unit) unifies a piece and makes it coherent through iconic relations; we recognize motives, phrases, or sections as units because we have heard them before in the piece. The opening four notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is a famous example of a motive that is repeated and structurally important elsewhere in the work. Units must also be distinguished from each other by some type of contrast or difference. Variations represent a midpoint between stark contrasts and exact repetition.



