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Research-Based Curriculum Design for Multicultural School Music: Reflections on a National Project in Guyana

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Research-Based Curriculum Design for Multicultural School Music: Reflections on a National Project in Guyana

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Abstract

This article reports on an applied ethnomusicological and historical study that guided the development of a new music curriculum for schools in Guyana, a multi-ethnic and postcolonial nation in Latin America. We establish our rationale with an introduction to Guyana and the status quo of its school music education, then embark on examining the socio-historical background: from Indigenous Peoples and the European settlement of colonial Guyana, to the arrival of Africans as slaves, and indentured servants from Portugal, China and East India. The diverse heritage of post-colonial Guyana, including distinctive creolization, is reviewed as a prelude to discussion of local music traditions and their representation in schools. The curriculum's framework envisages diverse performances that re-connect choir and audience with local, national, and global cultural heritage. Our outcomes arguably engender improvements to music education within Guyana, and potentially offer insights relevant to music curriculum development in other postcolonial nations.

Keywords: *Creolization, cultural heritage, diversity, historical ethnomusicology, multicultural music education, social cohesion, social harmony, UNESCO*

In this article, we critically reflect on both theoretical and practical issues raised in the development of a new music curriculum for schools in the South American nation of Guyana. The proposed music curriculum was informed by historical and ethnographic research, and designed to enable the fostering of social inclusion by utilizing exemplary traditional, folk and contemporary Guyanese songs. The selected songs were determined to be optimally representative of both

intercultural and culturally distinctive values. The curriculum responds to concerns regarding hemorrhaging of musical heritage(s), and potentially facilitates a re-tooling of musical practices within both national and communal spaces. The objectives of this curriculum are: (1) To expose students from the Primary and Secondary school levels, particularly those within the Arts and Social Studies, to the multi-ethnic musics of Guyana, (2) To provide such students with knowledge of music theory and practice, and (3) To devise a balanced historical, social and cultural synthesis within a curriculum of diverse musics with emphasis on inclusion of often marginalized communities. The curriculum was largely designed by the first author—a music specialist affiliated with a music foundation, a charter school, and the national Ministry of Education in Guyana—in consultation with the second author, who served as his academic mentor via a distance education postgraduate program based in the United States.

Music education policies and curriculum can be planned with an array of possible objectives, which may range from such values as promotion of social harmony, sustenance of cultural heritage, or development of creativity, to name but a few examples. On the other hand, an array of potentially negative forces may hinder the development of effective music education, including such factors as the common perception that math and science related studies (“STEM subjects”) are of inherently greater value in schooling than arts and humanities, the assumption that musical practices of minorities do not fit in school curriculum (Heimonen and Hebert 2009), and even the broader influence of such widespread social forces as nationalism (Kallio and Partti 2013), militarism (Hebert 2015), and corporatization (Prest 2013). For such reasons, it is critically important that curriculum be designed on philosophically sound foundations and constructed using strategies that are contextually appropriate, and it is our hope that this article will demonstrate one possible way of approaching this challenge in the field of music.

We begin by describing the multi-ethnic nation of Guyana, including an overview of musical practices and education encountered there at the start of this project. Our discussion requires some exploration of its historical context, retrieved through the strategies of historical ethnomusicology (McCollum and Hebert 2014), and interpreted primarily in relation to postcolonial theory, particularly the notions of de-canonization and decolonizing methodologies (Kurkela and Vakeva 2009;

Smith 2012). Later, we will explain the issues and reasoning behind particular choices made during the course of field research that ultimately led to development of Guyana's new music curriculum. It is our hope that the lessons learned from this project may prove relevant to music specialists in other diverse contexts who similarly embark on the task of curriculum development, particularly in postcolonial contexts. Based on a thorough review of literature, it is our understanding that this is most likely the first scholarly study of music education in Guyana, although as will be discussed, there have been previous ethnomusicological studies of musical practices among some of Guyana's indigenous cultures.

Guyana's Diverse Cultural Heritage

A Multicultural Context

Located on the northern tip of the South American continent, Guyana is bordered by Brazil to its south, Venezuela to the west and Surinam to the east. The Atlantic Ocean lies off the northern coast of Guyana. Its original name, spelled Guiana, means 'land of many waters' from the tribal language of the Arawak/Lokono indigenous peoples. In 1498 Christopher Columbus sighted the shores of South America where the present boundaries of Venezuela and Guyana converged. At the time of the Columbus exploration, the northern Guyana coastline and some Caribbean islands were inhabited by the Arawaks, Warraus and Caribs (Colson 1998). In the 16th century, Dutch explorers claimed and settled the land east of the Courantyne River, now a nation known as the Republic of Surinam, and eventually travelled west, where they encountered Arawak settlements in the Berbice-Demerara regions, claiming the territory now known as Guyana (Colson 1998). Although situated on the South American mainland, Guyana is very much a part of the British Caribbean nations, with which it largely shares a common heritage. Contemporary Guyana has a population approaching 736,000, and is home to six major ethnic groups: Indigenous peoples (Arawaks, Warraus and Caribs: their sub-tribes and descendants), Northwestern Europeans (Dutch, British, and French), Africans, Portuguese, Chinese, and East Indians. In terms of proportions, according to a recent census, Guyana's major ethnic groups may be categorized as "East Indian 43.5%, black (African) 30.2%, mixed 16.7%, Amerindian 9.1%, other 0.5%," while the nation's religious profile also reveals remarkable diversity: "Protestant 30.5%

(Pentecostal 16.9%, Anglican 6.9%, Seventh Day Adventist 5%, Methodist 1.7%), Hindu 28.4%, Roman Catholic 8.1%, Muslim 7.2%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.1%, other Christian 17.7%, other 1.9%, none 4.3%, unspecified 0.9%” (World Factbook 2013–2014). Such ethnic and religious diversity poses some inherent challenges. As Walter Rodney observed nearly 35 years ago, it is a remarkable fact that in a competitive semi-feudal society such as British Guiana (Guyana) with restricted social and economic opportunities and fewer jobs than potential workers, “very few serious physical inter-racial conflicts arose between the ethnic groups constituting the population” (Rodney 1981, 189; c.f. Sue-A Quan 2007).

Music in Guyana's Schools

The primary rationale for this project lies in the regrettable fact that although Guyana boasts a rich and unique musical heritage, its current system of school music education is sorely inadequate, even impoverished by international standards. According to the UN-affiliated International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), “Guyana is one of the poorest countries in Latin America” and ranks “117th out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index” (Rural Poverty Portal, n.d.). Ethnomusicologists have demonstrated how poverty profoundly impacts musical life around the world in various ways (Harrison 2013). In Guyana, poverty impacts such factors as the themes of songs, and availability of certain instruments, and it also deeply affects schooling in general. Such economic disadvantages are particularly distressing long-term challenges for music educators in Guyana. Nevertheless, we concur with economists who note that Guyana has great potential for sustainable and equitable economic development in the future. In the current environment, most school teachers receive little training in music, but do what they can under circumstances in which many local traditions are dwindling due to the impact of cultural importation, deficiency in cultural preservation, as well as poverty and global market forces. A typical example of how music is taught includes basic and rudimentary approaches, such as singing a cappella or using a CD player to demonstrate a pre-recorded piece. In the case of notated music, sheet music is rarely if ever used except to follow the lyrics, and depending on the capacity of the educator, choirs may either be encouraged to sing in parts or perform entirely in unison (irrespective of how the song was actually composed). Such techniques potentially discourage any avid music

student when performances are hindered by the teacher's inability to read music or sing and accompany students with competence. One mitigating factor is that almost all of Guyana's folk songs (Oh Melda, Mawnin Neighba, etc.) are written for solo voice, yet this is not the case with the country's national songs. Students are commonly asked to perform songs without sufficient comprehension of context and conditions, and appropriate interpretation is rare due to inadequate research on the diverse music traditions of Guyana.

Scholars have written of "ethnomusicology's responses and responsibilities to threatened and endangered musics" (Harrison and Pettan 2010, 12) and noted "aspects of music and its contexts that might influence 'sustainability'," which include most notably, "Availability of and accessibility to effective systems of transmission (formal or informal) [and] Creation of appropriate support structures (and/or the opening of existing ones) for education, performance, production, funding and organisational support" (Harrison and Pettan 2010, 6). We therefore see the present project as aiding in the sustaining of music traditions that may be understood as increasingly threatened forms of cultural heritage due to both extreme poverty and the exploitative impact of global corporate capitalism on educational and cultural policy. We are not suggesting here that there is a universal parallel between material poverty and musical poverty. Rather, the concerns driving this research have been not only that school education is underdeveloped in Guyana (largely due to a long history of poverty and geographic isolation), but also that it has typically offered little room for music, and that when available the music curriculum has tended to be Eurocentric despite the cultural diversity of the nation's population. Our project has sought to improve this situation in terms of providing space for a curriculum that is more fully developed, approachable for teachers, and relevant to the population to be served.

In terms of the broader context, primary schools in Guyana offer 6 years of education, and typically music is allotted one hour per week. Secondary schools are 4-year institutions, and students are able to graduate at age 16. Most secondary schools provide little or no music studies. Even in most indigenous communities—deep in the jungles, for example, there are schools—but usually with just a few teachers (sometimes only one) and poor access to both technology and curriculum due to poverty and isolation. The nation has one university (University of Guyana),

which does not offer music education, but some music studies are available via Guyana's one teacher education institution, Cyril Potter College of Education. There are also a few private schools with music and a new National School of Music was opened in 2012, which includes some folk and popular music, but generally emphasizes performance of European art music.

Research Design and Methodology

This was an applied research project in the sense that we systematically surveyed Guyana's cultural history and diverse musical heritage for the purpose of informing the design of a new music curriculum. We therefore regard this new curriculum as "research-based," since it was deliberately developed according to scholarly examination of its targeted context and prospective stakeholders. In addition to historical research—primarily oral history informed by the methods of historical ethnomusicology (McCollum and Hebert 2014)—several focus group discussions among elders in each representative community explored how cherished songs were identified, and sought to conceptually map areas of similarity and difference: What did each group understand to be the role of traditional and folk music, and was each group able to select songs expressing empowerment, ethnic identity, cultural independence and social cohesion. Groups were asked to relate what specific narratives were associated with each song regarded as significant. Later, both as individuals and as a collective, they were asked whether songs could be identified that expressed synergies across ethnic and racial lines. Finally, each group was asked to discuss the extent to which a curriculum whose foci expands beyond the parameters of current practices would be applicable in their local schools. The central question informing this inquiry was 'Do shared music traditions and societal values employ an integrated cultural synthesis that can be used through formal and community education and performances to promote social cohesion and relieve the inter-ethnic tensions commonly associated with post-1962 Guyana?' We therefore sought to explore this question, and ultimately harness the results via an innovative curriculum design. In order to better understand the aforementioned challenges faced by Guyanese music teachers in the present, we therefore now embark on carefully considering their antecedents in the historical past.

Historical Overview of Guyana's Major Ethnic Groups

Some understanding of the historical background of each of the major ethnic groups in Guyana is necessary in order to recognize the challenges faced in development of an innovative music curriculum that seeks to represent this diverse heritage in a balanced way.

Indigenous Community

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, indigenous peoples inhabited mainly the coastal plains of Guyana (Colson 1998, 9; Sue-A-Quan 2007, 174). Known as the Arawaks, Caribs and Warrau tribes, they settled on the riverbanks, and generally practiced subsistence agriculture. Skilled hunters in the dark brown waters of creeks and rivers, these indigenous people were also nomadic, relocating when food crops (and fish) began to diminish. Early European observers noted a structured family and community unit, for indigenous families were either nuclear or extended, and in both types males were the heads of households. Activities related to food gathering such as harvesting and fishing, served as a unifying function for familial and social cohesion, and song traditions played an important role in such contexts.

Communities were led by a leader called a Touseaou, who in turn was assisted by a team of advisors. Matters of importance were decided through collective consultation and consensus. The Indigenous People maintained a complex cosmology expressed through their songs, folklore, legends, and from the rituals associated with births, weddings and funeral ceremonies. Although Indigenous life was believed by Europeans to lack religious thought, their concept of religion and cosmic ideas merely differed from Western philosophies. Ultimately, congruencies were identified through understanding indigenous possession of moral codes not dissimilar to monotheistic religions. The Amerindians also possessed musical instruments and they were very specific about the function and purpose of each instrument and similar stringencies were applied to voices in song traditions.

Western European Community

Between the 17th and mid-19th centuries, ownership of Guyana alternated between the Dutch, French and British. These three colonial powers bequeathed many aspects of their cultural heritage to Guyana, including languages, religion, cuisine,

garments styles of dress, and other social habits. Social classes were defined by material wealth, which included propertied slaves; in some instances slaves provided a visible indication of a family's wealth and status. Some slaves were assigned to business and commercial entities, others who were owned by the colony performed various duties within the official sector. Social life as practiced by Europeans was determined largely by class, with the elite and upper middle class representing one group. There were also Europeans who did not meet these criteria but who, whilst resident in the colony nevertheless enjoyed a form of "white privilege" out of purely nationalistic empathy.

Education, being a major vehicle of Guyana's developmental process, was from the beginning very much patterned after the British system. Prominent social institutions included the church where it was quite normal for concerts, theatre productions and dances to be hosted. Musical contributions by the Europeans included classical art music as well as sacred hymns of the Moravians (Dutch), Anglicans (British) and Catholics (Portuguese). European folk music, if imported into British Guiana, was inadequately documented. Additionally, Vibert Cambridge (2015) notes in *Musical Life of Guyana: History and Politics of Controlling Creativity* that the British colonial authorities employed 'few concerts' but rather imported artists who 'reinforced the Victorian culture of respectability'. The music of the Anglican Church, the official church of the British Empire, was taught to freed slaves as part of the Manumission Project. Eurocentric music thus became an interwoven feature of the musical fabric within villages.

African Community

West Africans were brought to Guyana as slaves and placed on sugar and cotton plantations in inhumane conditions. These Africans were mostly from the Akan tribe (also found predominantly in Haiti), and later the Gha, Ashanti and Yoruba tribes (who are found in the English, French and Spanish speaking Caribbean territories). On the plantations, slaves were divided into three groups: (a) House Slaves, who worked within the slave master's home, (b) Yard Slaves, who worked in the immediate surroundings of the slave master's home, and (c) Field Slaves, who worked on the actual plantations. Plantations were established along the entire coast in the counties of Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo (Menezes 1992, 32). Although

living in bondage, slaves were allowed to practice some essential elements of life-sustaining social activities. For example, they were allowed to have a family and maintain kitchen gardens. Children were denied formal education, and as soon as physically able, were assigned tasks as part of the House and Yard Slave groups. What they learned was approved by their masters and sufficient only for their most immediate needs as well as what was required to complete their assigned tasks.

The pressure of horrific bondage provided impetus for slaves to give expression to their dehumanizing experiences of living in a strange land under even stranger conditions. These expressions ultimately found form in their legends and music. Some slaves actually built instruments from the wallaba tree, which they called “stave drums.” Music on the plantations was more a matter of survival and necessity—consisting in part of communicable aural signs, uses of idioms to transmit key messages to fellow slaves. Concerned about the viability of the colony’s plantation economy, in 1861 the Colonial authorities experimented with another model of African labor—indentureship—to replenish the depleting work force (Warner-Lewis 2003, 43). An estimated 14,060 Africans came to the West Indies post-Emancipation (1880) as indentured immigrants (Rodney 1981, 241). This importation of newer Africans was culturally beneficial to the preexisting African communities in the colonies as they were able to reintroduce African values and traditional African music to a population that had lost so much to the evils of the slave trade (Warner-Lewis 2003, 244–59).

Portuguese Community

The Portuguese, in 1835, were subjects of the second experimentation at indentureship by the plantation colony in Guyana. Their indentureship prescribed similar labor-intensive activities as did slavery, the difference being that laborers were remunerated financially and provided with the option of repatriation after completion of their contracts. The Portuguese originated from the island of Madeira, off the coast of Northwest Africa, an island that was experiencing famine during this period (Menezes 1992). Upon arrival the Portuguese were settled on specific plantations, across all three of the colony’s counties: Berbice, Demerara and Essequibo.

The Portuguese migrated with entire families, and were free to practice their religion and other social customs, thus the Portuguese were able to retain many of their customs and preserve their ethnic identity and cultural heritage in Guyana. The primary music of the Portuguese was Catholic hymns as well as classical music, for there appears to be relatively little evidence of folk music among this population in Guyana (Menezes 1992). The Catholic Church established schools wherever they built their churches, and Catholicism became an integral part of their schools' curriculum. Their sacred songs were thus made available to the wider community.

Chinese Community

The failure of the plantation owners to retain the Portuguese indentured laborers on sugar plantations precipitated another labor crisis on the sugar economy. The plantation owners urgently needed another source of "cheap labor," and eventually turned toward Asia, specifically China. Chinese laborers were reportedly already in other parts of the world, including South America (Peru), and rumors suggested they were extremely resourceful and high-end achievers. The main supply company of Chinese labor conducted a systematic campaign of coercion, including employing a system not too dissimilar to the slave trade, including kidnappings and falsification of information in efforts to capture and retain prospective laborers. In 1853 the next supply of laborers boarded overcrowded ships and sailed to the West Indies (Sue-A-Quan 2007, 1). The Chinese also brought musical instruments, and were free to practice their customs, but unlike the Portuguese and East Indians their songs were not preserved. Chinese who were too poor or unable to purchase their tickets back to China were assisted in establishing a community of their own, Hopetown, on the Kaimuni River off the Upper Demerara River, but the community, to their dismay, found their leader, O Tye Kim, embroiled in a scandal and the citizens fled to different parts of Demerara and Essequibo (Sue-A-Quan 2007; Jenkins 1871).

East Indian Community

On May 5, 1838 the first indentured laborers from India arrived in British Guiana (Jenkins 1871) out of concern on the part of plantation owners that the newly freed Africans would resist returning to the sugar plantations. In 1839, following allegations of kidnapping and other forms of coercion, Indian indentureship was

banned, only to resume in 1845, lasting even until 1917 (Jenkins 1871). The East Indians who came to Guyana originated from the West Bengali region of India (Calcutta being cited as the primary port of departure). In the villages where they settled after relocating from the sugar plantations, the East Indians' Hindu majority constructed many temples (Mandirs) with assistance of other ethnic groups throughout the coastal belt of Guyana. The immigrant East Indian community comprised of smaller units of Muslims and Christians, the former establishing the region's first mosques. They contributed to Guyana's cultural mosaic with Hindu and Islamic feasts, cuisine such as curry, roti and dhal, and other dishes such as 'seven curry' associated with Hindu rituals and religious feasts. The East Indian Hindus sustained their musical traditions through religious observances, even created the Tadjah, a percussion instrument that owes its shape and function to the tabla.

Creolization and Shared Values Across Ethnic Groups

Creolization can be understood as the creation of new cultural identities through a process of fusion, particularly as seen among the children of intercontinental marriages. Originally from the Caribbean, this term emphasizes European mixed with indigenous and African influences (Cohen 2007). The origin of the Guyana Creole identity commenced with the slave's experience on the plantations, pre-1838. Africans in Guyana gradually became independent from their colonial masters economically (collective labor or self-help, diverse agro-economy), politically (collective leadership), and culturally (cuisine, language and extemporaneous expressions). Creolization integrates the Afro-Guyanese homogenous community's values emerging from the experience of slavery. For example, a family structure, interdependence, and reinforcement of group orientation were some of the values out of which evolved the post-1838 Afro-Guyanese identity. As ethnomusicologist Tom Turino observed, "Families are a fundamental type of cultural formation for social analysis because they are the cradle of early socialization and habit formation" (Turino 2008, 116). This phenomenon of creolization was, according to Samuel and Wilson (2009), also found in the rural communities especially among younger East Indian couples, but generally without abandonment of cultural and religious identity. Religious traditions were often fused into an amalgam of rituals and festivals. In a

typical coastal village it was possible to find the following being celebrated: Christmas, Easter, Phagwah, Diwali, Tadjah, Jhandi, and Eid-Ul-Adha. The hinterlands festivals, which now are experiencing a rapid decline, include Manore (Wapishana), Mashirimahi (Arawaks) and Kayap (across all indigenous strata), each with its unique musical practices.

Post-Emancipation Village Education

Under European colonial influence, education in the hinterlands became a combination of religious proselytization and empathy for the church (Colson 1998). The first schools constructed in post-Emancipation African villages included those in Victoria, Buxton, Friendship, Ithaca, and Queenstown. As other villages and communities became established, through immigration and migration from the plantations, these original schools expanded to cater to increases in student population. For Africans and East Indians, as well as Portuguese and Chinese students, the schools' environment was another opportunity for socializing; African and non-African students from other villages and communities were all attending the same schools (Jenkins 1871). The East Indians initially had some reluctance to send their children to schools due to Christian indoctrination. Students of Hindu background as a rule would have to recite Christian prayers and sing hymns integral to the schools' curriculum. There did not appear to be an ethnic and/or racial premise but this does not eliminate that variable completely from the argument. However, Eusi Kwayana asserts East Indians and Africans attended schools together, and there was a sizable population of East Indian teachers as well (Kwayana 1999). Since ethnicity is "generally regarded to be more closely intertwined with musical traditions than most social constructs" (Hebert 2010, 94), the preceding discussion offers an essential foundation for meaningful examination of specific musical genres in Guyana.

Music Genres of Guyana

Indigenous Guyanese Music

Guyana's nine Indigenous tribes or peoples utilize shared characteristics in melodic, rhythmic, textural, timbre, dynamics and form with other Native American cultural groups across the Caribbean and South America. Guyana's indigenous music, or

Mari-Mari, is characterized by short repetitive musical motifs of varying cadential intervals according to song and player, similar to other indigenous practices of this region (Anderson and Campbell 2010). The rhythmic pattern is two-fourths with additive meters consistent with the Andean Music of Peru, for example, Rosita Colorou and Mekoro Teja. Indigenous music tends to be melancholic, or ‘dirgelike’ (Roth 1924, 450) and this characteristic is also found in the music among the Macuxis of the Lower Pakaraimas, the Caribs and Wapishanas of the Rio Branco. Historically, indigenous singing is accompanied by such instruments as drums, reeds and flutes. Texturally, traditional Indigenous music employed heterophony during group singing; however in contemporary Indigenous music, vocalization to traditional songs is replaced by the violin following the loss of both fluency of spoken language and particular song lyrics. Most modern Indigenous music uses monophonic textures accompanied by guitars, banjos, keyboards and the Indigenous percussion Sambura. Hybrid styles have also developed, including a fusion of Arawak melodies with the Joropo rhythms of Venezuelan plain music, which was brought to Guyana by Arawaks who escaped Angostura (present day Ciudad Bolivar) Venezuela in 1817. The Macuxi People, emphasizing connection to the community and religious/spiritual experiences also developed another fusion genre, the Alleluia hymns. Finally, in 1978 Neville Calistro created the Cali-Mari beat, a popular fusion of the Mari-Mari and Calypso, as made prominent with the song “Wajili” (*From Sambura to Cali-Mari* 2014).

Afro-Guyanese Music

The roots of African diasporic music are often described as closely associated with the ideal of “oneness” and Ngoma, as expressed in Ubuntu language, “I belong, therefore I am” (Anderson and Campbell 2010, 8). Pre-Emancipation African music in Guyana is represented primarily by songs of survival on the plantations. Structured around tempo and idioms and on two textures—melody (singing) and rhythm (drums), the melodies use two distinct African styles: call-and-response and the heterophonic technique or different versions of the same song sung simultaneously. Pre-Emancipation musics remain largely unknown, as little data on what constituted its form and structure is presently unavailable. Contemporary rhythms performed are sourced to early African Indentureship (1861), with origins

predominantly traceable to Central Africa (Warner-Lewis 2003). The usage of local idioms (Creole) was a novel enterprise that secured a unique social platform for the slaves and post-Emancipation communities. The African community was indeed aware of the difficulties posed by language, and how lack of comprehension by the plantation masters enabled the ultimate goal of concealment. Traditional music was rooted in pre-Emancipation lifestyles and provided a platform for colonial Afro-Guyanese music. Impromptu and extemporaneous creative compositions were sung at moonlight games, weddings, funerals and agricultural festivals. Such moonlight games as Dog and the Bone, Sal Out, and One, Two, Three Red Light accompanied child and young adult activities and were often performed on village dams. The lyrical compositions emerging from these activities were used in Kwe-Kwe and other family and community-oriented activities, which thereafter came to be considered the community's primary form of music.

Traditional African drum patterns introduced by African Indentured Laborers include Congo, Kramanti, Sweet Hand, Chibango, Yallam Pelleh and Patois Hand. The patterns became the newer rhythmic foundations of African Guyanese folk music. A rhythm or drumming section is three part—cut, rhythm and bass where three players constitutes a rhythm section though it is not impossible, but quite unique, that a single percussionist can actually render a complete solo three part performance. African-Caribbean Music continues to forge many paths in the Pan-Caribbean project. Across more than 400 years of African presence in the Caribbean and Guyana, the syntax of African melodies and rhythms has successfully permeated and transcended most genres.

Indo-Guyanese Music

The enduring aspect of Indian culture stems from one central concept, namely, the Hindu belief that, as one prominent Indo-Guyanese scholar put it, “all this creation is an evolution of God, by Himself and of Himself, woven into an infinite variety of name and shape very much in the manner of a spider spreading its web; and that all of it is sustained by the same force: and that all of it involutes back and gets absorbed into that force at the end” (Persaud 1961, 2). Music plays a particularly important part in Indian-Guyanese cultures, a characteristic inherited from India. The oldest record of human utterances are allegedly found in the Vedas, and these for the most

part are hymns set to music which were chanted by the Rishis of old (Persaud 1961, 6). The highest place of honor is given to Sama Veda (the word Sama, means “Song of praise”). Hindus are taught that Lord Krishna declared, “Of Vedas I am the Sama Veda” (Bhagvad Gita X). The musical quality of the Vedas, no less than their spiritual content, ensured their survival, for thousands of years before being converted into writing, and they are considered to be the “rock of ages” of India’s ancient culture to this day. Some musical forms brought by the East Indians to Guyana include the Tassa, Tadjah, Bhajans and Rags, Chowtals, Qaseeda (Islamic), Khan-dan (Persian), and the Chutney, which was originally developed in Guyana.

Other Guyanese Music Traditions

Information concerning Sino-Guyanese musical practices—traditions maintained among the Chinese minority—was not collected for this study, and is a topic that requires exploration in future research. What is known is that Chinese-Guyanese have sometimes played “cymbals, gongs, trumpets, two-string fiddles” and other instruments (Sue-A-Quan 2007, 58). Colonial European music includes practices introduced by the Dutch, French and British, all of whom governed Guyana at various times. However, the British influence was long lasting and especially profound. Still, another source of European music was the Portuguese, who performed classical and orchestral music much to the delight of the village communities. This was in addition to their Roman Catholic hymns, a genre that shaped the early development of music education (in liturgical and catechumen schools) and public performance of masses. Both the British Guiana Volunteer Force and the British Guiana Police Force also had military bands. Constructive developments within music academia in the post-colonial era included the formation of the British Guiana Music Teachers Association (1948), and the British Guiana Schools Music Festival (1952). These institutions largely reflected indigenization of European musical influences. Additionally European-influenced musics that migrated into Guyana have their point of origin primarily from the coastal South American continent and the Caribbean islands. These musics included the Joropo (Venezuela), Quadrille (St. Lucia) Reggae (Jamaica) and Calypso (Trinidad).

Inter-Ethnic Harmony in Guyanese Music

Music was an intrinsic element in communal life but its outgrowth was clearly influenced by such factors as immigration, creolization and other forms of interaction among various ethnic groups. Where their commonality lies can best be explained by specific rituals that were unique as a result of social functions which had synergies among the groups, for example, the shaping of the traditional foods: e.g. cassava grating amongst the Amerindians, grounding of peas by East Indians and of course the pounding of the plantain (foo-foo) by Africans. There is an array of traditional work songs: e.g. the Cassava Grating Song, the Matapei Song, and ritualistic dances.

Walter Rodney and other commentators have identified class structure, a development introduced by the policies of colonial authorities, as a factor that exacerbated ethnic and racial tension in colonial Guyana (Rodney 1981). The following songs were identified through this study as especially representative of shared experiences that may be legitimately regarded as relevant across various distinct ethnicities and Creole communities:

- (1) Rosita Colorou: A narrative that expresses nostalgia for an exiled people the song continuously reinforces the community's identity—ethnic/tribal, language, religion and survival.
- (2) Mekoro Teja: The community is considered a safe space, as part of its identity the welfare of the child/children is indeed never overlooked.
- (3) Samuel Moomah: The community takes care of its own, and music is considered an effective medium contributing to its security.
- (4) Peter: A postcolonial testimony to the strength of communal identity through references to traditional instruments considered important to the functionality of the community.

There are, amongst others, two well-known folk songs that also give a deep insight into the lives of ordinary people in the rural villages where most of these musics originated. Mawnin Neighba and Oh Melda are narratives of the iconic next-door neighbor whose personal details are revealing. Both songs, Mawnin Neighba and Oh Melda, speak to deviancy in socialized behaviors of common villagers. The lyrics do not indicate the characters' ethnic identity, so any conversation revolving

around “ethnic identity” could be construed as almost sacrilege. Three other songs of note that were also later included in the music curriculum are Billy Pilgrim’s ‘Let Us Cooperate for Guyana’, George Noel’s ‘To Serve My Country’ and Hilton Hemmerding’s ‘Beautiful Guyana’ (Dolphin 1996, 22, 19, 34). Two such patriotic songs (Let us Cooperate and To Serve My Country) were written as overtly patriotic anthems to support the Guyana National Service (GNS), a paramilitary institution in Guyana targeting youths reminiscent of organs found in socialist era countries (for it could also be argued that the GNS was an experimental cosmopolitan melting pot). In the case of each of these songs, the first verse reveals great unity in purpose. The musical arrangements contrast with each other, for Let Us Cooperate for Guyana was written in a marching style, while To Serve My Country can be described as calypso. Each song has very strong melodic lines and therefore generates positive responses from young pupils. The third, Hemmerding’s ballad Beautiful Guyana, is particularly triumphant on the kinds of nationalistic themes already located in the earlier pieces cited. Beautiful Guyana also connects singers to a multi-cultural group, the “porknockers” (diamond seekers) who would leave the coast to go “into the interior” for mining in the mineral-rich hinterlands (Roopnaraine 1996). Although ethnically ambiguous, there are subtle indications, for the porknockers were ‘singing sweet calypsos’ and this form of music was closely identified with Africans and usually performed in coastal Guyana. However, they also ‘heave their way’, using a method of transportation (heaving or paddling) that is mostly associated with the Indigenous lifestyle. Each of these songs, by Pilgrim, Noel, and Hemmerding might be understood as placing, in the view of Dalel’s social constructionism (Urbain 2008a, 201–12), both groups of “coastlanders” (Africans and East Indians) within an Indigenous social experience, as they ‘heave’ or paddle their boats up the rivers and creeks. Such songs therefore seemed well suited for a Guyanese school music curriculum.

Toward a Balanced National Music Curriculum

In the introduction of this article, we briefly described the status quo of school music education in Guyana and established the need for this study as a basis for design of a new curriculum. In an ideal Guyanese music curriculum, folk and national songs would arguably be acknowledged as important, perhaps foundational components

and appropriately taught and performed along with global repertoire (Hebert and Karlsen 2010; Hebert and Kertz-Welzel 2012).

When a multi-ethnic choir performs such songs in real time, characters such as Oh Melda and the neighbor in Mawnin Neighba are immediately recognizable. This is because the personalities in both songs are almost stereotypical symbols and overlap with both the urban and rural experiences. When lyrics of folk songs are enunciated during performance, both choir and audience can relate to the songs. This was confirmed in 2011 by a UNESCO-funded Ministry of Education National Schools Choir project among 60 schools, with a total of 1500 pupils and students constituting the body of ten regional choirs and eventually a National Choir (Addo and Sagar 2011). Additionally, a total of 83 teachers were selected for tuition in the basic principles of music theory and practice by a team of six qualified music educators. The National Schools Choir Project established two criteria: (a) that each school choir be inclusive, with broad intra-regional representation, (b) performance of one National Song and a song of choice, with themes of regional/tribal or communal representation. This framework envisaged school choirs performing traditional and national songs, and thereby re-exploring shared values of relationships and empathy, re-connecting both performing choir and audience with values residual in collective memory. Through the performance of national songs in this manner, amongst both choir and audience multiculturalism, an aspiring component of the post-colonial identity is reinforced (Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia 2006; Smith 2012).

In a society beset by ethnic and racial tensions, music education and performance can be a constructive channel whereby creative energies are directed with outcomes that positively impact the aggrieved society (Cohen, Silber, Sangiorgio, and Iadeluca 2012; Hebert and Saether 2014). For example, it had become quite obvious since Guyana Independence that in spite of efforts to ensure social harmony, racial and ethnic tensions continue to persist. Some relevant observations include: (a) the strategy to cosmopolitanize musical compositions has suffered through a lack of adequate research, (b) most national and folk musical compositions are reflective of Guyana's pre-colonial character, (c) there is a sustained perception that national and folk songs are lyrically and musically expressive of one ethnic group, hence, students who are ethnically and culturally

different feel displaced and do not relate in a cognizant way to such materials either as performers or audience.

Oh Melda, Mawnin Neighba, and Sitira Gal may all be regarded as Afrocentric folk songs, while Mekoro Teja is an indigenous song representative of an inclusive identity synergized with a multi-ethnic theme. Constructed during Guyana's colonial era these musics contrast with European genres that evinced the nation's colonial identity. In the village's hierarchical structure, folk and traditional materials are the communities' 'primary' musics, and the European genres the 'secondary' musics. Further, at the village level, folk materials were likely to be composed and performed in both ethnically homogenous and heterogenous spaces, employing Creole which was the substantive language of the plantations and villages. Musics that are either primary or secondary (Nettl 2005, 56) are experienced by all social strata, but are according to Nettle's definition generally experienced through cultural heritage (e.g., delineated by religion or ethnicity) rather than by individual conscious choice.

Another song used by Africans in their traditional pre-nuptial wedding ceremonies, the Kwe-Kwe, was actually 'borrowed' from the East Indians. Historically, a celebration with East Indian/Islamic roots, the 'Tadjah' ceremony, emerged as a cross-cultural phenomenon in colonial Guyana. The tadjah is also an East Indian percussion instrument indigenous to Guyana. Suffice it to say, the Africans adopted the Tadjah where it is a feature in their traditional wedding ritual; according to Lynette Dolphin the bride and bridegroom (who have replaced the effigy) would be hoisted upon the shoulders of wedding guests who would be singing simultaneously the lines "Dis awe Tadjah, Dis awe Tadjah" (Dolphin 1996). Other musical forms that defined the post 1962-1964 violence era include one line of a song that essentially summarized the philosophical outlook of a multi-ethnic community—"Open de door leh de man come in, all awe a wan family." Apparently written for African weddings, this song was to later become a statement of principle for common people of various ethnic backgrounds.

Lingering Challenges of Music Education In Guyana

In public institutions, music is sparingly taught, occurring as an extra-curricular activity. Conditions impeding curricular implementation include: (a) lack of trained and qualified music educators, (b) lack of music instruments in schools, (c) an

overcrowded curriculum of ‘STEM’ related subjects (note that in the first author’s experience whilst coordinating the implementation of the aforementioned UNESCO funded Guyana Ministry of Education’s National Schools’ Choir Project, many students had to leave other classrooms to attend Choir rehearsals), (d) schools are not designed to accommodate choir and band rehearsals during active classroom hours, and (e) parents, who in a recent survey concluded that music was simply not important relative to the ‘STEM’ subjects.

The situation is better in some private schools, yet the private sector is uneven, for one institution may offer music as an academic subject, whereas in another music is only offered as devotional experience. The most prominent systemic challenges to implementing an innovative music curriculum in Guyana’s schools generally revolve around the inability of the Ministry of Education to generate highly trained music educators. Most who primarily identify themselves as professional music teachers have achieved that identity mainly through personal enterprise.

The proposed music curriculum was designed in part to foster social inclusion utilizing traditional, folk and contemporary Guyanese songs. The applicable songs are representative of both homogenous and multicultural values. The curriculum addresses incidences of hemorrhaging of musical heritages, facilitating the re-tooling of musical practices within both national and communal spaces. The student studying Guyanese music is expected to become familiar with the various genres, artists, producers, and writers as well as the following: (a) notable Guyanese artists, performers and writers, (b) music traditions of the various communities—What are these musics, and what can the context tell us about the songs?, (c) day-by-day life-sustaining practices—How does the community presently relate to the music it has produced?, (d) preserving of musical heritage, including ways of facilitating events to sustain and revitalize traditions, (e) understanding musical sounds—examining the form and structure of folk melodies and lyrics, and (f) traditional music as a tool of social integration.

Exchange programs at the school level would be the next step toward familiarizing students with the diversity of the cultures with whom they are expected to interface, through contacts with ethnically different student and nonacademic populations. This would require visits and “live-in” arrangements amongst the target

community, which again provides the kind of experience that students might otherwise only be able to grasp minimally, at the theoretical level. It is important as well that a schedule be synchronized to allow participation in important cultural events of the community. Some examples could include: (1) Heritage Festivals for the Amerindian community, (2) Emancipation Festival for the African community, and (3) Arrival Day for the East Indians. Additionally there are other smaller but equally important events within these communities that should assist the students to successfully complete a module. These would include ethnic and cultural festivals such as Kwe-Kwe, Kwanzaa, Nagara, Eid-Ul-Adha (for the Islamic community), Diwali and Phagwah (for the Hindus) and Kayap, the St. John's Feast (or Fiesta Del San Juan for the Spanish Arawaks in Santa Rosa). The recommendation is for the student(s) to actively observe the responsiveness of the community towards its heritage and cultural values through sharing and participation with a host family and community. This way, students get an opportunity to intimately observe the communities' lifestyles and behaviors, important sub-components of the curriculum.

Music educators equipped with this new curriculum and improved methodologies—especially for schools that are located in distant communities or where travel costs can be prohibitive—can integrate the curriculum with other subject areas by targeting festivals that are applicable to all students or specific cultural groups. In the newer paradigm of ethnic identity, cultural legitimacy and social inclusion, music can become an inspiring educational tool that opens students to empathy toward the cultural identity of neighbors in a way that is both artistic and academic. Our experiences with this project lead us to concur with Felicity Laurence's suggestion that music can “catalyze and strengthen emphatic response, ability and relationship,” and that this potential offers a unique role for it to “function within peace-building” (Laurence 2008, 14).

Discussion

The research design was inclusive of a number of variables that sought to justify through rigorous study the local relevance of a national multicultural music curriculum. Numerous challenges were encountered during the process, some of which tested conventional theories and policies. The most important was how to implement an innovative curriculum where there is steadfast refusal to implement

any preexisting proposals. Additional challenges included how to interpret songs derived from different sources, for example, music educators, cultural practitioners and communal historians, and thereafter identify song origins and variations. Interconnected with the foregoing were the following: (a) lost anecdotes (sources were either deceased or forgotten), (b) newer interpretations, and (c) multiple interpretations (which were encountered less as the research expanded). Additional challenges were associated with analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon of “creolization” and the fact that Creole is relatively unstandardized yet remains the preferred language in Guyanese non-academic strata.

Difficulties in explaining not only the *local* “creole” traditions, but also *global* roots of Guyanese musical heritage—traceable to various parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas—lead us to consideration of a critical theme. How might our project be interpreted in relation to *cosmopolitanism*, a key concept that has received increasing attention among music educators in recent years? Not only is cosmopolitanism understood in disparate ways, but there are differing positions regarding the relevance of global practices in school music education (Anderson and Campbell 2010, Bates 2014, Hebert 2010, Hebert and Kertz-Welzel 2012, Schmidt 2013).

One contemporary music educator views the relevance and potential impact of “cosmopolitanism” as follows:

It offers a balance to some of globalization’s more pernicious practices, such as emptying local complexity or using global comparison for homogenization and not as a space for adaptation and re-imagining. In sum, cosmopolitanism aims to trouble and dissipate overly recognizable images of social, academic, and cultural success and achievement that are forcibly hailed as ‘universal’ or common. (Schmidt 2013, 104).

Upon first examining the curriculum developed from this project (with local songs and music traceable to Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas), some might assume a charge of elitist cosmopolitanism is valid, but as our historical analysis demonstrates, Guyana has long roots to heritage associated with multiple continents. Moreover, we would argue that global connections are discernable in most countries worldwide, and even that it is inherently relevant for any child in rural North America, for instance, to learn at least a few songs from China, regardless of whether she has ever met a Chinese person. It is surely counterproductive to ignore the world’s most

populous nation and second-largest (by some measures, *largest*) economy, with one of the oldest civilizations, yet some students in Europe and North America never learn a single song from China, nor from the entire continent of Africa or subcontinent of India (home of the world's second-largest population and another ancient civilization). While the relevance of global music studies cannot be reasonably denied in the contemporary world, we simultaneously recognize it is also critically important for education to honor local heritage and contribute to the sustaining of endangered local music traditions, for cosmopolitanism and "grass roots" educational responses to *glocalization* are not mutually exclusive. One domain in which we envision knowledge developed through this project applied is in the internationalization of teacher education (Schwarzer and Bridglall 2015), and it is our hope that this field may be strengthened in Guyana through a more cosmopolitan spirit of international-cooperation, capacity building and sustainable development that honors both global and local musics.

Conclusion

We are hopeful that this discussion will enable meaningful insights for those grappling with similar issues in other contexts (Hebert 2009, 2012), and that our findings will contribute substantially to the growing field of research on music education in Central and South America (Baker 2014; Gonzalez-Moreno 2012; Hentschke 2013; Rosabal-Coto 2010, 2014). Performance of Guyana's folk and traditional songs has continued to decline in terms of frequency and breadth, but the lyrics inscribed in each song remain a relevant representation of the experiences of both the village and urban center populations.

The case of Guyana reminds us of what Urbain has written regarding Middle Eastern musician Yair Dalel (Urbain 2008b). Dalel was born Jewish in Iraq, considering himself an "Arab Israeli Jew", thus placing himself into the cultural (Arab), political (Israeli) and religious (Jew) amalgam of identities. Dalel's music reflects all three identities, as he is convinced that the Arabs and Jews share more in common than that which separates them. Specifically, we see Dalel's version of "social constructionism" as relevant to the Guyanese context, where cultures meet and maintain some distinctions while also combining into hybrids and pidgins, and ultimately Creole language and various musical fusions. In such a milieu, music can

thrive, yet may require special efforts to be represented in a balanced way within schools. The goal of attaining such a balance is problematized by colonial legacies, including the aftermath of slavery and indentureship, yet in the postcolonial world grappling with such complex issues is a responsibility of conscientious scholarship.

The development of a research-based music curriculum was realized by analyzing the historical, social and cultural evolution of colonial Guyana, and secondly, a study of colonial Guyana's music stratified by the three major ethnic groups (Indigenous, African, and East Indian). The research attempted to locate within these musics socially thematic ideas and cultural values, establish a nexus between performances of traditional music and harmonious relationships supporting empathy, and validate the data based on strategies of historical ethnomusicology. The research examined co-existence and social cohesion, conditions known and practiced by the rural and urban populations, particularly when juxtaposed against the economic exploitation of the two major ethnic groups (Africans and East Indians) by the European "plantocracy" (Rodney 1981, 175-6). The culmination of this project was that a significant body of colonial Guyana's traditional musical repertoire (Banchikilli, Alleluia, African and East Indian Folk and Traditional instrumental and vocal music, etc.) was incorporated into the national school curriculum. Finally, the research explored a select body of multi-culturally themed music (Oh Melda, Mawnin Neighba, Sitira Gal, etc.) for correlations to antecedent cultural practices.

Curricular recommendations include participatory communal explorations (day-by-day life-sustaining practices—discovering where these activities occur within selected music traditions, and examining other pieces of music to find similar occurrences), and participating in diverse traditional feasts such as Phagwahs, Eid-UI-Adha, Kwanza; ethnic themed celebrations such as Kwe-Kwe and Nagara; and nationalistic celebrations—African Emancipation Day, Amerindian Heritage Month and Indian Arrival Day. The objective here is to allow students within these non-academic experiences, to enter the worldview of another group's milieu and explore it via empathetic activities. To empirically evaluate according to this curriculum, students would be required to successfully perform music such as the indigenous Mari-Mari and its derivative forms, African folk and traditional music, and East Indian Bajans and Rags, also demonstrating proficiency at instrumental performances in European and non-European traditions.

In conclusion, we sense that the outcomes of this curriculum development in Guyana may have not only an impact on music teaching practice in Guyana, but also ramifications across the broad field of social sciences, and certainly music education research. We propose further research addressing themes of diversity, multiculturalism, and multi-ethnicity, particularly in post-colonial societies whose experiences resemble the conditions addressed in this article. In particular, we believe that this article identifies understudied themes such as traditional and folk music as resistance to modern and postmodern economic colonialism, and case studies of identities in multiethnic and multicultural societies. The authors also note the social and economic challenges adverted to in the absence of school music education. By addressing the historically-informed value of an integrated multicultural music curriculum, and the process by which one was developed in this context, we envisage similar possibilities across other Caribbean, Central and South American societies.

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