

Intro to MIE
October 14, 2003

Notes on "Music and Multiculturalism: Dimensions, Difficulties, and Delights."

Article Quotes

"If we regard any musical idiom as a self-contained system of perception, performance, and pedagogy, then idioms with ineffective pedagogical components are fatally unbalanced: they do not survive."

"Our own workday experience makes it clear that we all work and think differently depending on who we are working with and what tools we have. Knowledge of a musical piece in a nonwestern tradition is shared by all who participate in making it. Just as beginners depend on the experts for guidance, the experts depend on the beginners to provide support for the overall expression at their level of competence."

"If something's boring for four minutes, try it for eight. If it's boring for eight minutes, try it for sixteen, and if it's still boring, try it for thirty-two. Eventually you discover that it's not boring at all, but very interesting."

Personal Thoughts

This is a danger on the cultural level as well as on a fundamental level. For instance if we try to teach music simply by listening to it rather than exploring performing it etc. we are at a similar loss. Also, I seem to think of cultural selfishness when I think of all this. It seems particularly possible that we just don't think other cultures have importance or anything worth our time. After this article, I find believing that to be extremely difficult.

This reminds me of the kind of teaching that was sometimes tried in my high school. There were great attempts to make the teacher fit in to the class and learn just as much from the student as the student learned from the teacher.

In my own experiences that was the case. When teaching elementary school children this past summer I found that I was learning more about my instrument by trying to convey the knowledge I already had to these young students.

Our cultures really aren't that different, but it seems ours tries to hide such connections.

I really don't think this would work for me. I would be bored and not able to actually give it the extra minutes. But I do agree that everything has the potential to be interesting, but there's more to it than just giving it more time in order to understand that. Surely a student isn't going to want to