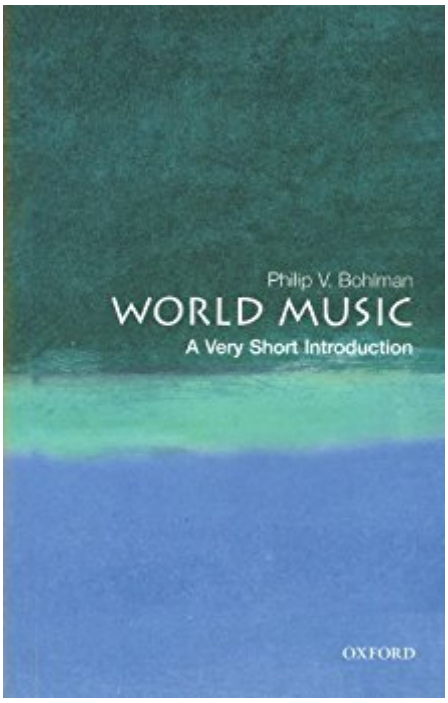
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World Music: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



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Synopsis

’World music’ emerged as an invention of the West from encounters with other cultures. This book draws readers into a remarkable range of these historical encounters, in which music had the power to evoke the exotic and to give voice to the voiceless. In the course of the volume’s eight chapters the reader witnesses music’s involvement in the modern world, but also the individual moments and particular histories that are crucial to an understanding of music’sdiversity. World Music is wide-ranging in its geographical scope, yet individual chapters provide in-depth treatments of selected music cultures and regional music histories. The book frequently zooms in on repertoires and musicians - such as Bob Marley, Bartok, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan - and attempts toaccount for world music’s growing presence and popularity at the beginning of the twenty-first century.ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you enjoy World Music and you are looking to enhance your appreciation, this book is a terrible disappointment. The author is one of those academics who embroider draperies of words in order to conceal the fact they have nothing to say. Unreadable and useless. I am otherwise a fan of the "Very Short Introduction" series. This book is definitely not for the general reader (or anyone else that I can tell).

it attempts to be a very short introduction to a fascinating topic,that of wrold music. however short, it is difficult to read, badly written, confusing in the scope of concepts, with a poor choice of examples. the author must be knowledgeable, but does not manage to convey good information.

Each chapter in this book starts with an encounter with world music and builds through a historical or theoretical excursion, adding a musician profile, an examination of aesthetic meaning and identity, a profile of either an ethnomusicologist or a group of scholars, and concludes with comments about popular music and the ethnographic present. The chapter subjects, however, are disparate, never approaching any sort of thematic coverage of world music.Chapter 1, "In the Beginning...Myth and Meaning in World Music", sets the scene. Encounters with world music, we are told, are intensely personal, developing meaning and realities as myths and experience generate histories. The first encounter -- Bohlman is brave to say it this boldly -- between the music of old and new worlds was in 1557, by the Hugenot missionary Jean de LÃƒÂ©ry. Epistemologies emerge as we learn how music is embedded in social and cultural practice. Bohlman illustrates his theme through a discussion of Jewish myth, Islamic concepts of music and non-music, Buddhist practice in Thailand and China, ritual in the Andes, and the development of Christian hymnody into African national anthems. The eclectic Charles Seeger becomes the first ethnomusicologist to be featured, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan the first musician.Chapter 2, "The West and the World", reformulates the history of ethnomusicology and its forerunners, starting with collectors (Bartok, Densmore, Hornbostel, Pinek), and focusing in on Herder, the 18th-century German who coined the term Volkslied (folk song). At the end there is a discussion of two Grammy Award winners, the Chieftains' "Santiago" and the Smithsonian reissue of Harry Smith's "Anthology of American Folk Music". Chapter 3, "Between Myth and History", takes up a thread from the first chapter, and starts with an excellent account of the 1932 Cairo Congress of Arab Music. Umm KulthÃƒÂ m, not

surprisingly, becomes the featured musician, Robert Lachmann the collector and scholar, rai the contemporary genre. In this account, North Africa fuses with the Middle East. Chapter 4, "Music of the Folk", takes up the collecting theme from Chapter 2, now zooming in on BartÃƒÂ k and fast-forwarding to Hungary today. Notions of authenticity are discussed, namely the intervention of ideology as Bartok recorded and/or transcribed the songs of isolated, pre-modern people with modern technology, and the use of folksong as the 21st century dawns. The featured musician -- blues singer Leadbelly -- and the ethnomusicologists -- the Lomax family who, apart from all their other achievements, discovered Leadbelly -- similarly illustrate questions of authenticity and representation. Two music genres/complexes complete the chapter, the first exposing the myth of Celtic music in a manner that I suspect will not go down well with the many exponents of Irish, Welsh and Breton music, and the second a much more positive discussion of the North American polka belt.Chapter 5, "Music of the Nations" contains a highly questionable account of music in Britain (pp. 88-98). Bohlman then discusses national anthems -- good stuff here, as we learn that a national song may be more ideological than musically significant. Beethoven’s "Ode to Joy" completes the chapter, mentioned first as a transitory national anthem for Zimbabwe, then in an arrangement by Karajan for the Council of Europe. Bohlman doesn’t tease out the significance as much as he could: Beethoven’s melody is surely what makes it popular, even though the ideology in Schiller’s poem (as a "paean to universal brotherhood") explains why European bureaucrats chose it. Chapter 6, "Diaspora", addresses a topic of considerable contemporary interest within the United States. 1492, and the anniversary of Columbus’s "discovery" five centuries on, provides an opening, moving through Sephardic Jews, South Asia and musical instruments as material artifacts that illustrate dispersion and dissemination to Bob Marley and A. Z. Idelsohn. Issues of race are briefly discussed, and the concluding statement celebrates diversity, in respect to which diasporic communities create "one of the most global contexts for world music". Alan Lomax, against the then growing argument that all Americans should share a culture, com mented in 1985 that the world is an agreeable and stimulating habitat precisely because of its cultural diversity; Bohlman would doubtless agree, and would want diasporas to retain or develop their own musical identities. Chapter 7, "Colonial Musics, Post-Colonial Worlds, and the Globalization of World Music", brings the story to the turn of the new century, starting with Eastern European street music and ending with a 2001 world festival complete with pow-wow held in Chicago. Sandwiched into the core of the chapter, Bohlman reflects on how technology shapes ethnomusicology yet challenges our ethical responsibility to protect the music cultures we encounter. From here he offers a brief excursion into the world of the "Rough Guide to World Music", which he rightly notes most ethnomusicologists love

to hate but find particularly useful. The conclusion? Well, the section on the "Rough Guide" ends with an acknowledgement that world music today signifies popular music more than traditional music, thereby challenging many of the ideas of ethnomusicology. And the text itself ends with the comment that each of us "will increasingly encounter the music of the world...the identity and culture of which is no longer separable from our own lives" (p. 150).If the conclusion is unsatisfactory, Bohlman' s topic was always going to prove problematic. Ethnomusicology, still caught in the paradigm of fieldwork, its exponents kept busy collecting, documenting, and analyzing musical processes and products, is not particularly difficult to write about. World music, a term that according to independent record labels was dreamt up in 1987 to help market vinyl, is much more complex, as the product of globalization, appropriation, diasporas and technology (or rather, the product of one or more of these things). Bohlman tries to find meaning in world music through sampling the history of ethnomusicology, weaving strands of continuity from Jean de LÃƒÂ©ry to Manu Dibango, from the Torah to Heidegger, and from Herder's "Stimmen der VÃƒÂ¶lker in Liedern" to the journalism of the "Rough Guide". Essentially, what he offers is not a thorough account, but more a sampling of issues. Sometimes side boxes provide a veritable A-to-Z of a topic, featuring definitions of terms: "ontologies" (pp. 7-8); collections of world music recordings (pp. 32-34); and diasporic world music genres (pp. 126-28). Often, Bohlman assumes some knowledge of the issue under discussion, and this will surely suit students who will be encouraged to delve more deeply by using the suggested further readings and audio recordings listed at the end of the book. Perhaps because the author crams so much in, I find that some sections stop short before the whole story has been told. The shortness of the bibliography is also of note; much of the potentially vast literature is omitted. And finally, Bohlman is an atrocious stylist.

Philip V. Bohlman is a professor of musicology and ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago, an institution reknowned for its foundational works in Anthropology and Ethnomusicology. Being the nature of interdisciplinary ethnomusicologgical research, the book covers areas of study including Musicology, Anthropology, Sociology, History, Political Science, Economics and Philosophy.He begins by expressing the limitations inherant in approaching a global phenomenon with only 150, 4"x7" pages. The reader is consistently reminded of the authors initial disclaimer when reading two paragraphs into an intriguing topic, and finding that it ends there.Nevertheless, Bohlman presents a myriad of ways of approaching and interpretating the global phenonemon known as "world" music. He focuses on topics including: the history of western musicology and ethnomusicology, music in tradition, music in nationalism, music in diaspora, music in mediation, and music in the era of

globalization. He also provides the reader with a nice collection of further readings, references and listening suggestions in the bibliography, organized by chapter. A constant theme for Bohlman is the notion of "encounter". He attributes that it is within the experience of the encounter that we attribute meaning to the music itself, and to the context in which it is experienced.He also postulates that there is a concurrent tension in so far as the way we "encounter" world musics, being mediated by global capitalism and market forces. This can potentialy take a traditional music out of context, resulting in an extention of post-colonial cultural hegemony or "cultural imperialism made sonorous" (147). Conversly, it can provide a medium for identity formation, revival, and representation, while potentially bringing people together, fostering empathy and harmony. You make the choice!Is it musical globalism?-Is the current manifestation of world music a reflection of a global world, where cultural bridges are being reconciled?orIs it musical globalization?-Is world music a reflection of an economically globalized world, mediated by market forces and economic manipulation?This is a complex question that Bohlman poses, ever so succinctly, yet all too briefly.Great introduction for the student, active musician or passive listener.

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