

# NORTH INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND THE KOLKATA EXPERIENCE: ALCHEMICAL SCHISMOGENESIS AND BEING-IN-THE-WORLD IN A MUSICAL WAY

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## **The Phenomenology of the Foreign Phenomenon**

Ever since Ustad Ali Akbar Khan Sahib made the first long playing recording of Indian classical music in 1955, the west has had a sort of love affair with India and its music. Despite the initial superficial fashion for Indian music, many foreign students have begun to undertake serious musical study both in India and in institutions across Europe and the U.S. Indian music has become a prominent feature of global musical horizons. Lavezolli reflects that 'global interest in the study and appreciation of Indian music has slowly but steadily increased, giving rise to a greater number of gifted performers from various ethnic backgrounds, as well as a broader awareness of the music among the listening public' (2006, p. 434). Every year, many foreigners arrive in India to learn something about the tradition of Indian classical music. Some study for only a few weeks, buy a cheap instrument and continue on their travels. Meanwhile, a small but growing number of others embed themselves in one place, take a formal musical relationship with a guru take regular *talim* (learning) and establish daily rigorous practice routines. These students often return every year, rent apartments close to their teacher's home and establish a lifestyle revolving around many hours of practice, lessons and attendance of concerts. Over many years, close relationships are formed, not just with teachers,

but with other students and the communities in which they live. They develop habits and rituals that reflect their time in India as well as their foreignness.

This research is first and foremost inspired and informed by my own experiences as a student of North Indian classical music and as a member of this eclectic international community. Since 2004 I have studied the *sarode* (a 25 stringed fretless lute) with Sougata Roy Chowdhury, an established international performer and teacher of the sarode based in Kolkata. My journey has involved long residencies varying from one to six months, renting the same apartment every year, eating at the same restaurants, learning the basics of the language (Bengali) and attempting to assimilate the culture. During these residencies I have met many other foreigners attempting to deepen their appreciation and knowledge of North Indian Classical music. This connection with Indian music and the international community that revolves around Kolkata, has served as a great resource to draw upon for extended ethnographic analysis. It also complicates my role as an ethnographer. First and foremost, I am a musician and in this context, a student of Indian music. This primary role allows certain advantages in accessing 'native' knowledge yet it also restricts me to the questions I can ask and when and where I can ask them as I have already made the 'psychological transference whereby 'they' become 'we'' (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 36).

Therefore, I have chosen to utilize my own experience as a musician and student of Indian Classical Music in an attempt to transcend the subjective/objective dichotomy and explore what Tim Rice has called, 'a new ethnomusicological space' between the poles of emic and etic (2010, p. 117). This is 'a space neither completely inside nor completely outside, but a space in which, through self-reflection', I can claim to think about the phenomenon of foreigners playing Indian music in a unique way (ibid, p. 117). By extension, it is relevant to note Rice's theory that 'important aspects of musical culture are not expressed in words by natives, but are knowable and can be expressed accurately in words and performed by outsiders who move

within native cultural horizons' (ibid, p. 117). A musician who moves within native cultural horizons, who can know, express accurately in words and perform authentically, is able to mediate between interpretation and an experiential being-in-the-world. By inhabiting this liminal space between emic/etic, foreign musician and native musician, I hope to document how other foreigners moving within the same cultural horizons understand and appropriate North Indian classical music in their own lives and world views.

I am especially drawn to the phenomenology of Heidegger and the hermeneutic arc suggested by Ricoeur (1971), as a way of navigating the 'blinding light of introspection' (Friedson, 1996, p.5). Heidegger reminds us that, 'Being is understanding' (1966, p. 182) and furthermore that 'being-in-the-world is a mode of experience which grounds understanding' (ibid, p.70). The aim then, is to explore the Being-ness of foreign students of North Indian classical music. The application of the hermeneutic arc to this phenomenological being-in-the-world means understanding knowledge as a process of interpretation and questioning. Heidegger tells us that Being is an 'understanding of our existence as a being whose own Being is experienced as a question' (1996, p. 70). Being-in-the-world, in a musical way, can be a particularly powerful mode of lived experience. By understanding music as a 'sort of essence of the world', I question how phenomenon can represent musical experience (in Nercessian, 2002, p. 61).

Writings from previous experiences and current reflections on my place in this musical being-in-the-world have been analyzed using the same principles of field work rigor. A passage from an unfinished novel written during earlier studies will be used to convey the impact of my first impressions of the sensory world of studying music in Kolkata. By drawing on these personal and semi-fictional narratives, produced between 2004-2006, I will attempt to interpret my own experience of Kolkata through identifying common language patterns, such as

analogy and metaphor, and compare this language with that of other foreigners. An intensive two weeks of field work was also conducted in Kolkata, January/February, 2011. This period was chosen as it is the height of the concert season in Kolkata. During this time I attended the Dover Lane Music Conference, one of India's biggest classical music events and many other smaller events and house concerts, which provided the basis for extensive reflections and analysis. Formal interviews were also conducted with seven musicians from various cultural backgrounds ranging from Australia, Colombia, New York, Ireland, Italy, France and Japan. These musicians had been studying Indian music for over 10 years mostly in Kolkata and return annually for the concert season for periods ranging from one to six months. Excerpts from interviews, field notes and other narrative writing will be intertwined with the theories mentioned above in an attempt to capture the Being-ness of the foreign phenomenon.

### **Being-in-the-world of Kolkata in a musical way**

Being-in-Kolkata is often an intense sensory experience for any traveller. Kolkata is one of India's most populated cities, with over 20 million people living amongst the crumbling Victorian buildings, modern shopping malls, concrete slums and tropical alcoves that constitute the cities sprawling urban landscape. It is a city teeming with life of all sorts. As Ruckert highlights, "The streets of Kolkata are a parade of infinite variety and colour" (2004, p.4) The following field note may provide a sense of the physicality of Being-in Kolkata.

*'Kolkata begins to seep into one's pores. In the day time the road is teeming with traffic, ancient battered buses with exhausts that seem to blow smoke directly into the broken permanently open window of your taxi. Brand new Tata 4WD jeeps with horns that would deafen the most seasoned metal fan. Motorbikes with seemingly impossible numbers of humans astride them, whole families effortlessly perched behind portly moustached men in grey slacks and 1980's style jumpers. Roadside stalls selling everything possible and never ending throngs of people. But apart from sights and smells, the most powerful sense bombarded for me is always sound. It is like the beginning of a kind of osmosis. Breathing it in, Kolkata and I begin a symbiotic relationship. I blow my nose and I already see the black gunk that has been transformed from inside out' (FN, 21/01/11).*

For foreign students of Indian classical music, physical experience is permeated by their emerging musical knowledge, which is absorbed through the skin and eventually begins to transform understanding. A sitar student from Ireland, described his Being-in-Kolkata as a *'the matrix of chaos... the idea that life is some kind of dream or game, is much more real to me from that experience of being in India. Everything seems a little bit... less boxed; it all seems a little bit more loose. These waves and all these paradoxes... it all kind of synchronizes'* (Interview, 02/03/11). Ruckert agrees that India itself is "filled with contradictions" (2004, p. 5). Indian Classical music is seemingly full of paradoxes, where knowledge can be contradicted from moment to moment. In many instances, I have been learning to play a raga and my teacher would tell me *never* to use a certain note, such as the fifth note of the scale called 'PA'. Then in the very next moment I would hear him play 'PA' and he would suggest that sometimes it was alright to use this note, if you knew how! The physical experience of Kolkata seems to embody this kind of paradox, like an overloaded bus that has a strict capacity of only thirty passengers yet somehow seems to accommodate a clinging throng of over one hundred. As Dara suggests, in Indian music and in Indian life, 'everything seems a little bit less boxed'.

Yet somehow, as in the music, there is 'synchronization' where despite the paradoxes, life carries on. This synchronization experience is a common thread in descriptions of experiencing Kolkata in a musical way. In my own writings from my earlier days in Kolkata, I kept coming across descriptions of 'osmosis' and 'transformations' about 'breathing in the city' and the city 'seeping into one's pores'. (FN, 2011, 2006, 2007) Another musician from Italy, likened his experience in Kolkata as a 'soaking up of the mood or the vibe' (Interview, 03/02/10). Ehren, a tabla player from New York, describes how, after 10 years of living in Kolkata during concert season, the city's sonic and sensorial landscape had become part of him and 'embedded' in his Being (Interview, 27/01/10). This kind of synchronization is very much part of the guru-shishya relationship, where the student absorbs tacit

knowledge from having a long term, loving and devoted relationship with a teacher. The phenomenological nature of this relationship, especially for foreign students, has received very little focus in previous scholarship.

For foreign students, and indeed perhaps any student of Indian classical music, due to this synchronistic nature of Being-in-Kolkata, it can be difficult to know where the musical experience stops and non-musical experience begins. The whole world of Kolkata can begin to be experienced as a nebulous musical performance. Being-in-Kolkata-in- a-musical-way requires an adaption of one's own Being to the city's unique rhythms and melodies. This involves an appreciation of the complex rhythms of its day and the empty space of its night. While the day time can be bright, noisy, congested and disorientating, after the evening rush hour, Kolkata becomes eerily quiet. *'Kolkata is a different primordial beast at night...we are nocturnal animals'* (FN, 21/01/11). During the concert seasons, all night concerts of Indian Classical music are common across India. The Dover Lane Music Conference is one of the most respected festivals of this kind in India, and every year, foreigners and an eager listening public, descend upon a large outdoor auditorium in South Kolkata for exquisite recitals of sitar, sarode, violin and vocal music. The music continues until sunrise the next morning when the audience may return home by foot or by taxi through surreal deserted streets. *'The night time is when the music really happens. While everybody else sleeps, horns stop. The city breathes'*. (FN, 21/01/11). The night time is like *kali* or the empty beat in the rhythmic cycles that constitute Indian rhythm. The purpose of *kali* is to allow a breathing space or a sort of contraction in the cycle of the rhythm. This space lets the instrumentalist or vocalist know where they are in the cycle. It is space to reflect on where you've been and where you are going in the improvisation. Likewise, the still dark nights of Kolkata allow the mind the same kind of rest before the onslaught of the next day.

The late evening also has a certain aesthetic mood and therefore is assigned various ragas with emotions such as devotion, longing and pathos. After midnight it

is appropriate to play ragas such as Malkauns, Lalit, Chandrakauns and Darbari Kanada which often have solemn and melancholic moods when performed. The scales of these ragas often feature flattened notes, particularly the sixth note of the scale. Likewise, earlier morning ragas such as Bhairav and Todi have a slow and solemn austerity yet also seem to express hopefulness. Many morning ragas have a combination of minor and major moods, particularly revolving around the interplay between a flattened second and the contrasting tone of a natural sixth. This is a kind of interplay between the differing moods of the early morning and the coming of daytime.

Traditionally, performance of raga follows a strict observance of appropriate times. For example, it would be incomprehensible to many musicians to play Rag Malkauns in the middle of the day. Amongst foreign students, these musical analogies or metaphors relating to raga and also tala theory are often used to describe a musical Being-in-the-world. For example, a student could describe the afternoon in relation to a particular afternoon raga they were learning, such as 'the sunset has the mood of Rag Bhimpalashi' or 'the midday sun beat down like a Sarang' which is a midday raga (FN, 04/02/11). Many tabla players also relate the rhythmic patterns of trains or traffic to *bol* or rhythmic patterns they have learnt. How this compares with the experience of Indian students is beyond the scope of this research, but it seems for foreigners, the use of a metaphorical musical Being-in-the-world, is a tool for attempting to understand the complex and often times abstract nuances of Indian Classical music.

These musical metaphors are not just restricted to times of day or the Kolkata soundscape. Food is infused with great allegorical meaning and philosophy in West Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore and the Bauls, the wandering mystic musicians of Bengal, are famous for their use of food metaphor to point to higher ideas about God, love, devotion and fate. Perhaps because food is such a grounded and everyday experience, it is another way allude to concepts that otherwise would be hard to

grasp. I recall one evening, sitting outside a small chai stall eating cake and discussing ragas with a young Bengali singer in Santiniketan. He sought to gather my understanding of raga by inquiring, *'Does this cake taste more like Rag Bhimpalashi or Rag Yamen?'* (FN, 06/03/2006). Whether he was trying to ascertain my appreciation of cooking or music is debatable, however, this type of interaction further highlights the importance of students of Indian Classical music experiencing the world in a musical way.

Adrien, an Australian sarode player, explained that his guru would use cooking analogies to describe musical concepts.

*'My teacher lived with me in my small apartment in Sydney and we would cook together every day. He would use that time to teach about the different flavours of the ragas. One day, while I was learning Madhuwanti, he was cooking samosas. I couldn't get the right combination between the uttarang and the purovang (lower and upper register). He tried explaining that that purovang was sweet and the uttarang was sour. While we were cooking, he took a samosa and gave me a bite. 'That is uttarang' he said. Then he dipped the other corner into some chutney, 'That is purovang'. Another time I was trying to get the feeling for 're' (2<sup>nd</sup> note of the scale) in Puriya Dhaneshri. He put some cumin on tongue and said, 'There is 're'. He would also talk about recipes for music; you could use the same recipe but that no meal is ever the same twice. (FN, 27/01/11).*

Adrien's narrative is indicative of the kinds of stories that permeate the history of Indian classical music. It seems to be a time honoured tradition that teachers use unusual metaphors to convey the nuances of raga and tal. The great sarode maestro, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan often uses metaphor in his teaching. My own teacher would instruct me to play something more *'buttery'* or more *'sweet'*. Jeff Titon has suggested that, when we reverse Ricoeur's established hermeneutic pathway of text and meaning, the world becomes *'like a musical performance to be experienced'* (2008, p. 28). This idea has often intrigued me and I am unaware of other attempts to apply this theory in an ethnomusicological study. It would seem that in many of these musical metaphors relating to times of the day, place, nature and food we are seeing examples of a musical being-in-the-world where all experience is potentially musical. The potential for experiencing the whole world as a musical



performance is not just limited to Being-ness of Kolkata. The wife of an American *bansuri* player related to me her experiences with Indian music back in New York. Although she herself did not play Indian music, she knew a little about raga theory and knew how they are assigned different times of the day. She had begun to associate in her own way what raga means.

*'Well, I can recognise about 5 or 6 ragas now. I listen to (my husband) practising at home in New York. I began to recognise the raga he would practise in the morning time and then I would notice the different raga he would be practising when I would come home from work. I mean when I hear the music here [India], I feel the link to something ancient. But back home, it's like, you know, this is a going to work raga...a coming home raga. But I can recognise which ragas they are now' (FN, 22/01/11).*

In this narrative, we find a Being-in-the-world with raga that is not just linked to times of the day, but actual *'meaningful actions'* as Titon suggests. This woman experiences the music *as* her day. We joked later about her experience of *'having the morning coffee raga'* or the *'coming home from work grumpy raga'* (FN, 22/01/11). She even began to describe how she heard the *'feeling'* of these ragas when her husband wasn't practising. Indian music is indeed a *'whole universe'* and perhaps by extension, the whole of our universal experiences are musical. While Indian music is a *'link to something ancient'*, perhaps it has the ability to be re-imagined to speak to the present and can show how the even modern world can be experienced in a musical way.

Aubert suggests that *'the quest for the other in its difference is always also a quest for oneself by way of the other'* (2007, p. xi). In attempting to understand the meaning of raga, I was, and perhaps still am, trying to understand something about what it means to make music and by extension, what it means to be human. Yo, a Japanese sitar student, explained that his experience with Indian music led him to reflect on analogies between the rules of music and the rules of life. *'Later you will find that Indian music is a practice. The way to organise a raga, each raga, each note, it sounds something like how we live in this life. As long as you follow the rules, you can do whatever you want. But you should be in rules' 'inside the raga'* (interview). Yo is

articulating music as a way of being-in-the-world. It is through the abstract world of symbols, including musical symbols, that we find meaning in our lives. In this way, learning Indian classical music becomes as much about self-discovery as attaining musical knowledge.

### **Transformation and Alchemical schismogenesis**

To encounter the rules of Indian music requires a re-evaluation of one's own perceptions of musical symbols and their meanings. I believe a new concept is necessary to understand the complexities of the transformative process in intercultural music exchange. For this purpose, I have chosen to adapt Steven Feld's (1996) use of the term *schismogenesis*. Originally borrowed from philosopher Gregory Bateson, schismogenesis can be defined as "mutually promoting actions [that] are essentially dissimilar but mutually appropriate" (Bateson, 1972, p. 109). Feld used schismogenesis to analyse exchanges in world music, in particular the use of sampling of exotic sounds in modern rock, pop and dance. Extrapolating Bateson's idea of organisms being involved in "progressive differentiation through cumulative interaction and reaction", Feld sought to examine how cultures could participate in a mutually reactive musical discourse and possibly lead to a "closer symbiotic interdependence of both groups" (in Feld, 1996, p. 6). I have likened this process to what Aubert calls the "vast game of distorting mirrors" (2007, p.54). "A's" actions are stimuli for "B's" which in turn lead to further action from A. Put simply, schismogenesis could be described as, "we are in the other, the other is in us" (ibid, p.54).

The culture of North Indian Classical music is a ripe breeding ground for schismogenic exchange. The ideal relationship of guru-shishya parampara, is in itself a kind of schismogenesis, where the student is slowly but surely transformed, both musically and spiritually, by an on-going osmosis with one teacher for many years. The guru also absorbs the student into his spiritual field of knowledge and protection. Through this intense yet subtle interaction, the student becomes

intertwined not just with the present teacher but with countless previous generations of gurus stretching back thousands of years. Ehren articulates a symbiotic connection between himself, the music, other musicians and his guru, stating that, *'from any musician you have to find what you like, what's good and you have to take that. That's the way you're going to grow faster. So, I don't know if that's like a personal thing between me and my guru-ji but I can't separate him from my experience of the culture (Interview, 25/01/11).*

Similar to Bateson's original use of schismogenesis, which referred to social interaction as a sort of ecology, in Ehren's description he uses the term to *'grow faster'* as if referring to a plant that has received extra sunlight or nutrients. In his final statement, *'I can't separate him from my experience of the culture'* it seems to reflect Aubert's summary of schismogenesis of being, *'we are in the other, the other is in us'*. Again, Dara would be seen to be referring to schismogenic exchange when he says that to learn Indian classical music *'you need to be in that space where you're absorbing it, where osmosis is happening'* (interview, 02/03/11). The Being-ness of foreigners learning Indian classical music is characterised not just by a re-learning of musical understanding but is intrinsically linked to personal transformation. An attempt to understand musical experience becomes *'a reflexive process that begins with the self's encounter with musical symbols in the world'* (Rice, 1994, p.4). So within the guru-shishya relationship, what are the *'musical symbols'* which the self must encounter and negotiate identity. What musical processes are at work in the osmosis absorption process of schismogenic exchange in Indian Classical Music?

One of the most important symbolic concepts for the student of Indian classical music is practice. Practise or *riaz* has many more connotations than just the development of musical technique. It is also considered spirituality transformative (Neuman, 1990, p. 34-35). The concept of rigorous devoted practice is a *'musical symbol'* which represents the spiritual philosophy underpinning this musical culture. The discipline of practise is learnt from one's guru and is perpetuated by

many historical anecdotes of austerity of great musicians (Ruckert, 2004) (Neuman, 1990). The engagement with these 'musical symbols' allows for the possibility of transformation on a multitude of levels including the personal, musical and spiritual. It seems that many foreign students have begun to assimilate the significant symbolism of practise and are engaging in the transformative process of schismogenic exchange.

*'I have always had a kind of a spiritual practise since I was young. And now it is sitar. It is my daily spiritual practise. But it's a kind of food. The raga flows through you almost like you've got this whole surrender thing going on. That is a very important state or experience for me. Entering into a universal energy or whatever you want to call it. And it's a big transformation too.'* (Dara, interview, 02/03/11)

An Italian tabla player further explained to me that,

*'[Musical] technique is the door. Then after many years of just technique...then something comes. It changes you this music, your lifestyle changes. You have to change...to learn the music'* (FN, 23/01/11).

Schismogenic exchange, according to Bateson and Feld, can have three possible outcomes: A fusion of two cultures; the elimination of one or the other or "persistence of both in a dynamic equilibrium" (in Feld, 1996, p.6). Aubert concurs that students may experience deep theoretical shifts in the process of learning Indian music and that the resulting world view is a hybrid tension between two or more cultures. In relation to his own experience as a sarode student, he recounts that it 'contributed to my rethinking of my own field of musical perception, my manner of living in music...and my vision of the world itself' (2007, p. 80). Borrowing from Feld and Bateson, I would like to imagine this process as an 'alchemical schismogenesis', a process that highlights the individual as an agent of change and creativity in musical hybridity, where music making is constantly working, alchemically 'transforming its object while imposing new stakes' (Aubert, 2007, p. xii). The concept of alchemical schismogenesis is an attempt to locate the issues of inter-cultural music exchange in phenomenology of experience of individuals. Many foreigners, in their narratives about learning Indian classical music, describe a

process of alchemical schismogenesis, where they as the object are transformed. In this interview, Ehren was able to articulate how the music shaped and transformed him.

*'It's changed me in many ways. I think, first and foremost, I have become man with this music. So, in a way, my personality and the way I approach the world has really been shaped...because this is such a major part of...I mean this is like a fundamental part of my life. I mean, Indian music is basically my life in every way' (Ehren Interview, 03/02/10).*

In becoming a man with the music, he has undergone a lengthy initiation in which the music has become fused with his concepts of reality. Ehren's way of seeing the world has been transformed and as Aubert suggests, he 'imposes these new stakes' upon musical experiences outside of India.

*'I'm not really sure of the words, but that, that something, that are used by musicians have really gotten...you know...embedded in me. So, for example, respect for one's instrument, respecting it as, like... it' God basically. When I see other instruments I just treat them that way too, it just really comes natural that way (Interview, 03/02/10).*

Alchemical schismogenesis does not have to mean a negation of the self in favour of a new way of being, rather there can, to re-contextualise Feld, exist a 'persistence of both in a dynamic equilibrium' (1996, p.6). It also is not necessarily profound, spiritual or transcendent. Camilla, a sarode player from Colombia, expressed the way in which Indian music had changed her, yet at the same time hadn't. In regards to the influence of Indian music and its transformation on her Being-ness, Camilla responded, *'Yeah...it's there. I mean it's not thought out but it's just so much a part of my being that it ends up coming out' (Interview, 26/01/10).*

Feld describes music 'as a metamorphic process, a special way of knowing, and feeling value, identity and coherence' (1994, p.90). Through exploring these personal transformations, we begin to move beyond the idea cultural appropriation and of possessing music. Rather, let us begin to consider that music possesses us. Personal transformation, which we have examined through the process of alchemical schismogenesis, can be seen as a result of surrendering to experience of music. The

effect of these personal transformations may not be isolated to Indian classical music or even inter-cultural musical exchanges in general.

### **Conclusions and Reflections: In Our Hearts an Ear for the Word**

*'As soon as we have the thing before our eyes, and in our hearts an ear for the word, thinking prospers'* Heidegger (Building, Dwelling, Thinking)

Naming things makes them come into existence. In the words of Heidegger, 'naming calls. Calling brings close what it calls...thus it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into nearness' (1977, p. 198). In documenting and naming aspects of the phenomenon of foreigners learning North Indian classical music, we have begun to call what has previously been uncalled into consciousness. In describing the experience of Being-in-Kolkata-in-a-musical-way, I hope to have brought something before eyes and all of senses. Blacking reminds us that, "many if not all, of music's essential processes may be found in the constitution of the human body" (1973, p.6). Indian Classical musicians embody the complexities of their experiences and values through a musical Being-in-the-world.

By exploring the phenomenological Being-ness of musicians and their musical worlds, it is possible to provide unusual insights that would otherwise not be accessible through traditional ethnomusicological field work. The sensorial experiences of foreigners engaged in learning Indian music, may offer valuable impressions about the transformative possibilities of music. Music is the primary foundation of experience for many foreign musicians in Kolkata and this perspective extends to the way these students perceive the entire world. Due to its articulate philosophical theory and the synchronistic tendencies, Indian Classical music is perhaps uniquely capable of constructing perceptions about the musical nature of reality. As more and more foreigners seek to fuse their cultural horizons with Indian musical culture, it is fascinating to consider the possibilities of a new collective sense of identity where all experience is fundamentally musical. The complexities of

being a performer in a foreign tradition can lead to the creation of, not just new musical forms, but personally transformative ways of Being-in-the-world.

All encounters with musical traditions are a constant negotiation of an understanding of the past, present and future. It is this conflict or tension that enables traditions to grow and adjust to the immediate and imminent needs of its participants. It is only from confronting ideas about the order of reality, which our imagination imposes upon the world, that we can create new realities for ourselves. Aubert describes inter-cultural music exchange as an expression of a consciousness able to regard itself from nowhere and everywhere, it is a summing up of all 'heres and elsewheres which have been woven into our lives' (2007, p.54). Communities of musicians exploring traditions outside of their own culture could be conceived as a representation of new emergent identities which, through such processes as alchemical schismogenesis, reflect the complex transformation of individuals in a trans-global musical world.

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