From the Editors

By the Editors

Welcome to Volume 21 of *Ethnomusicology Review*! We are pleased to offer two articles and one invited paper that, taken together, provide individual perspectives on a single theme while still managing to cover a vast amount of ground geographically, methodologically, and theoretically. In particular, these three essays "testify" to the power of music, broadly defined, to shape crucial aspects of the lives of those very people involved in its ongoing production. Together, they present a critical take on what Nicole Reisnour has recently called the "art of the self"—those musical, "sociohistorical processes by which shared conceptions of the self are constructed, circulated, sustained and transformed" (2017:234). Yet the studies we present here point less to the details of self-cultivation as an *art*, ethically constructed "in relation to particular notions of the good" (ibid.:236), and more to its dimensions as a *craft*—the particular repertoire of construction techniques by which music is used to erect and regulate the boundary between self and other, whether this distinction emerges in relation to past versions of one's own self (Joseph), one's fans (Apolloni, Atkinson, and DeWitt), or the particular marginalized groups that form the "constitutive outside" (Butler 1993) of one's own social reality (Ragheb). It goes without saying that music, thus conceived as an *instrument* of subject formation, may be wielded in ways as nefarious and hypocritical as they are ethical; in this volume we see music deployed in order to combat and temper the systematic oppression of Black people in America on one hand, but also to *perpetuate* the prevailing gender imbalance between male and female musicians in Turkey, on the other. It becomes apparent that these performances also become crucial elements of the persona the performer wraps around herself, whether directed outwards toward a famous musician's adoring public, or inwards, forming the very fabric of the cocoon in which an artist might undertake a personal metamorphosis.

In the invited essay "'We Gon' Be Alright': Mental Health and the Blues in Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly*" (winner of the 2017 Lise Waxer NECSEM Prize), Sayeed Joseph connects Lamar's personal journey of self-recovery, expressed through his 2015 album, to the historical role of music as a therapeutic solution to the ongoing legacy of Black trauma and oppression in America. An insightful analysis of the album's lyrical content, this article traces Lamar's struggle against systematic oppression and personal tragedy and affirms that music is still an important, relevant antidote to a tradition of suffering that has persisted for far too long.

Our peer-reviewed articles turn from the role of musical compositions in subject-formation to the harnessing of surrounding discourses for the same ends. Alexandra Apolloni, Matthew D. Atkinson, and Darin DeWitt analyze the effects of the testimonies of famous musicians on their own public images in "'Can I Get a Witness?': Musicians Performing Politics in the U.S. Congress." While the personal contributions of these famous musicians may result in beneficial changes to government policy, the public nature of the political process sets up an inevitable tension between selfless contributions to the greater good and opportunities to capitalize on this publicity. Accordingly, the authors argue that these individuals' testimonies serve primarily as a "very public performance of self," one in which the performer often presents a carefully crafted yet seemingly "authentic" self-representation to his or her fan base. Thanks to the provocative yet fruitful use of Wikipedia as a methodological tool, the authors are able to empirically prove that these musicians do indeed receive a measurable spike in attention during days following such a performance.

Nicholas Ragheb rounds out our volume with a study of musical instrument classification practices in Turkey, in which he argues that an organological preoccupation with the physical dimensions of musical instruments distracts from the ways in which their classificatory differences might instead emerge through purely discursive distinctions. The two Turkish drums that form the focus of Ragheb's case study, the *darbuka* and the *dumbelek*, are in fact physically indistinguishable—at first glance, they appear to be nothing more than different names for the same instrument. Yet Ragheb shows that they are nothing less than conceptual opposites, with the darbuka linked to "notions of urbanity, masculinity, and professionalism," and the dumbelek linked to "village life, femininity, and amateurism." What becomes clear is that this classification scheme serves to reiterate the male-dominated social space of Turkish drummers, constructing its gendered borders through the exclusion of female musicians who are held to a double standard of competency.

Paralleling our commitment to *Ethnomusicology Review* as a multimedia platform that pushes the boundaries of traditional presentational styles while maintaining the academic standards of a peer-reviewed print journal, we are proud that the authors featured in this volume also represent a wide range of disciplines external to

ethnomusicology (musicology, political science, and history) and career points (from undergraduate to tenure-track faculty). Our Sounding Board, furthermore, acts as an online venue for ethnomusicological expression beyond the requirements mandated by the blind review process; here we also feature the many posts that have appeared since the publication of our previous volume. We hope you find our offerings as inspiring and thought-provoking as we do—our online format, furthermore, makes it possible to provide public comments on individual articles. For more substantial insights, whether related to this volume's contents or something wholly different, please keep an eye out early next year for our next call for papers. In the meantime, enjoy!

References

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge.

Reisnour, Nicole. 2017. "Art of the Self: The Ethics of Balinese *Pepaosan* Performance." *Ethnomusicology* 61(2):234-261.

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