ETHNOMUSICOLOGY
R E V I E W

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R E V I E W

Contents

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY REVIEW

Volume 19 | **Sounding Board** | **Archive**

In addition to the collection of peer-reviewed articles in your hands, *Ethnomusicology Review* publishes multimedia content year-round on our dynamic website.

Volume 19

The **articles** included in this printed volume are also available online, enhanced with sound, video, and color photographs. We also feature **prize-winning papers** from the annual meetings of the regional chapters of the Society for Ethnomusicology, integrating multimedia with text so readers won't miss some of the perks of attending the original paper presentation.

Sounding Board

An ethnomusicology magazine for academics and the wider world alike, Sounding Board presents essays and reviews intended to inspire conversations about methodological, ethical, and political issues. We publish frequently in several subsections, including What's Goin' On (current issues in music scholarship), Notes from the Field, Bring the Noise (popular music), From the Archives, Space is the Place (jazz), Ecomusicology (in conjunction with the *Ecomusicology Newsletter*), and Historical Perspectives.

Archive

View every issue of *Ethnomusicology Review* since Volume 1 (1984).

ethnomusicologyreview.org

From the Editors

Whether you are reading these words on a computer monitor, tablet touchscreen, or good old-fashioned wood pulp, we welcome and thank you for being a part of the conversation in which this journal participates. Volume 19 marks the 30th anniversary of our first publication—meaning that this journal has been in print for longer than most of us have been alive. It is thus a great privilege to participate in this long lineage of ethnomusicological experimentation, and we hope that you enjoy what it has brought into the world this year.

This year's major experiment is decidedly old-school: for the first time in over a decade, we are making print copies of the journal volume. We also welcomed a new section to our Sounding Board, "Ecomusicology," in collaboration with the *Ecomusicology Newsletter*.

Commitment to Open Access

The addition of our print volume is an important next step along our path as an open access journal. Since joining the Directory of Open Access Journals in 2011, we have strengthened our commitment to making our work freely available to anyone. One unanticipated challenge to fulfilling this goal, however, was brought to our attention by none other than Dr. Bruno Nettl at last year's Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) meeting in Indianapolis. Walking by our table in the exhibit hall, and the shiny computer monitor showing off Volume 18, he generously took some time to take in a demonstration. When he asked us if we had anything he could actually hold and read, we were not able to answer affirmatively, and he left empty-handed.

Open access, in other words, means meeting our readers where they are, and making our work accessible to them. Having been fully web-based for the past few years, we have learned that Dr. Nettl is not the only scholar

in our field who prefers to read print journals; open access publication, we believe, should also be open to them. As many of our peers in the music industry are learning, there is real value in the publication of physical texts, whether they be vinyl LPs or ink-on-paper journals.

This new endeavor has also led to other productive surprises. For example, it has caused us to redouble our editorial efforts into meticulously designing all of our various interfaces. Special recognition should be given to Managing Editor Alyssa Mathias, who designed and laid out the print journal for Volume 19, and Technical Editor Mike D'Errico, who has maintained and improved our website edition and Sounding Board pages. In our view, the sleek print design, or the Sounding Board's elegant image slider, are essential to the openness and accessibility of our work.

The Sounding Board: Still Listening

One key element to the development of this goal has been our Sounding Board, which has continued to grow this year under the direction of Managing Editor Eric J. Schmidt. We have now been publishing book reviews, short-form scholarly essays, and multimedia projects on a weekly basis—were we to include only the text of those pieces here, the size of this volume would be more than tripled! Some highlights included:

> "It's a London Thing: Bringing the 'Caribbean' to the UK" by Deonte Harris, a photo- and video-rich document of the author's fieldwork among Caribbean immigrants in London

> "Going Public: The Challenges of Media Interviews and Representation in the Field" by Dave Wilson, written from Macedonia, which explores the challenge of engaging with broadcast media as an ethnographer

> "Ecology and Ethno/musicology: The Metaphorical, the Representational, and the Literal" by Marc Perlman offers a theoretically robust introduction to the field of ecomusicology, by way of considering music and ecology beyond metaphor

> "Historical Narratives of the Akonting" by Scott Linford, a report, which includes video recordings of his fieldwork in The Gambia, on the narrative histories of the akonting—a West African lute that bears striking similarities to the banjo

> "Doing it Backwards: My Unexpected Goldberg Variations" by Dan Tepfer, who explores how he came to record J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* after a long and successful career as a jazz improviser, and what Bach taught him in the process

This year, Editor In Chief Alex W. Rodriguez tells the story of the Sounding Board as part of a roundtable panel at the SEM meeting in Pittsburgh. As part of the panel "Ethnomusicological Perspectives On Open Access Publication," he is joined by James Cowdery, Wendy Hsu, Darren Mueller, Guthrie Ramsey, and Justin Schell. The six presenters' position papers are published here as this year's Sounding Board feature; you can also find them online in the Sounding Board subsection "What's Goin' On."

Volume 19: Manifesting Interdisciplinarity

We are also pleased to offer three compelling peer-reviewed articles that contribute important scholarly insights to our field. Each, in its own way, engages with key threads in ethnomusicological discourse while also taking them in unforeseen directions. David Cashman's thorough documentation of the practices and culture of cruise ship musicians uses the ethnographic method familiar to most ethnomusicologists, taking it off-land and into the complex, de-territorialized and re-spatialized world of commercial cruise lines. His work causes us to reexamine the ways in which people and cultures move, and how their musical practices create space and meaning amidst this movement. Drawing from cultural studies and media studies, James Gordon Williams offers an engaging and sympathetic close reading of T-Pain's "Can't Believe It," highlighting the ways in which T-Pain's "optic-sonic insurgency" resists stereotypes of blackness while imagining its virtual potentialities. Helga Zambrano examines the sonic-textual relationship through the lens of literary theory, particularly from the perspective of translation advocated by Jorge Luis Borges. She deftly applies this analysis to the poem "Sensemayá" by Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, and its symphonic offspring *Sensemayá*, penned by his friend, Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas.

It is also significant that all three authors come to us from outside of ethnomusicology's traditional home, the North American academic music department. Cashman is a lecturer in an Australian university department of Arts and Education, Williams is an Assistant Professor of African American Studies, and Zambrano is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature. Each brings a unique toolkit to the questions explored herein, and these have benefitted tremendously from the editorial exchange offered by our peer reviewers, all established North American academic music scholars. We have been in the unique position to witness this exchange as it unfolded throughout the editorial process, and can attest to its richness and vibrancy. Of course, it is not necessary to take our word for

it: the scholarship speaks for itself, making clear that ethnomusicology's interdisciplinarity extends beyond the marriage of anthropology and musicology proposed by Alan Merriam 50 years ago.

The scholarly dialogue in which these pieces take part explores the ways in which people make sound and space through the production of texts—whether they be a modernist symphony, cruise ship stage routine, or a contemporary music video. These include essential visual and aural elements, and—true to ethnomusicological form—the sounds are considered in relationship with the visual cues, centering the role of sound without separating it unnecessarily from the sonic-visual interplay. In other words, to borrow Charles Seeger's useful dichotomy: this is speech-communication that takes music-communication seriously, considering both the aural and visual elements of both without arbitrarily privileging what we see over what we hear.

And as these words reach your eyes, we sincerely hope that you also open your ears to engage in the next phase of this dialogue. We welcome responses, critiques, and further questions in the comment sections attached to our pieces in the web-based journal volume; also, check back at the Sounding Board for further commentaries on the articles by other scholars in our field. Thank you for helping us celebrate 30 years in the field—and here's to 30 more!

The Editors
Alex W. Rodriguez, Alyssa Mathias, Eric J. Schmidt, Mike D'Errico, Darci Sprengel, Rose Boomsma, Ben Cosgrove, Benjamin Doleac, AJ Kluth, and Kristina Nielsen

Position papers from the roundtable presentation at the 2014 Society for Ethnomusicology meeting in Pittsburgh, PA

Ethnomusicological Perspectives on Open Access Publication

Open Access: Opportunities in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education
Darren Mueller

Publishing is at the heart of the changing landscape of higher education. Libraries are facing new challenges in how to archive and provide access to digital materials. Academic publishers, facing increasing costs and decreasing sales, are being forced to rethink all stages of the process from manuscript to publication. Meanwhile, scholars at all ranks are feeling increased pressure to publish early and often. Digital publication has increased exponentially, impacting the scholarly work of academics, the archiving work of librarians, and the modes of distribution for publishers. Within this environment, "open access" has become an important issue, both for what it means for networks of scholarly distribution and for the production of scholarly knowledge.

So what does this mean for junior scholars and graduate students?

Scholarship has always been a slow process, out of necessity. Meaningful research questions take months, often years, to develop. Gathering enough material in the field or archives to see these questions through is a similarly temporal undertaking—not to mention the addition time necessary for writing and revision. The process of peer-reviewed publication—a necessary step for meaningful feedback and evaluation—further extends the time from idea to scholarly product. This lengthy timeline has advantages. Anyone that has written long-form scholarship has had the experience of working hard on a piece of writing only to realize after the fact that it is not the right direction or not the right fit for the current project. There is much to be said in favor of this incubation process.

Darren Mueller is a PhD student in the music department at Duke University, where he studies, teaches, and writes about jazz, recording technology, and music performance. His work as a writer and researcher includes contributions to Jazz.com and to the Nesuhi Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame, housed at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. He is also a jazz saxophonist and has appeared professionally all over North Carolina and the surrounding region.

In recent years, however, scholars have adopted new media technologies, creating new possibilities for scholarly conversations and for what Cathy Davidson has labeled Humanities 2.0 (2012). Online and hybrid academic journals have emerged along side widely adopted blogging management systems like Blogger, Wordpress, and Tumblr. Social media has its place, too, as Twitter feeds and Facebook timelines have expanded scholarly channels of distribution. It has become faster and easer for scholars to contribute to a wide variety of conversations with simply the click of a button.

The scholarly timeline is shifting.

Not everyone has embraced this new (scholarly) world order. Here is a sampling of "advice" that I (or my graduate school colleagues) have received in recent years about digital forms of publication:

- Your blog is out there for the world to see, and someone will certainly take your ideas.
- Online publications are not as rigorous as other forms of scholarly production, and, as such, they devalue your work.
- Don't publish your dissertation material online, because it will negatively impact your potential for book publication.

- Once you are finished, do not make your dissertation available online, because it will negatively impact your potential for book publication.
- Participating in online scholarly communities like HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) takes time away from the important scholarly work you should be doing.

The problem is not that this is bad advice. On the contrary, it is important to be strategic about publishing your research, especially since the processes of tenure still depend on formal channels of publication and peer review. For early-career scholars, your dissertation is your calling card, and it takes time to learn how to write meaningful long-form scholarship. Additionally, it is also important to stay focused on the work that you will ultimately be judged on when entering the job market or preparing your tenure portfolio.

Yet, it is no coincidence that the largest scholarly societies of music have begun embracing this movement towards digital distribution. Both SEM and AMS have recently launched blogs, titled *Sound Matters* and *Musicology Now*, respectively. In doing so, these organizations joined other scholarly societies such as IASPM-US, which has kept an active and varied blog for several years. In 2014, *Cultural Anthropology* went open access—in part—to make their content more publicly available and to circumvent a system that places universities at a financial disadvantage. This position paper finds itself in a journal, *Ethnomusicology Review*, which has similarly been on the forefront of experimental scholarly publishing, especially in the ways that digital distribution allows for the integration of audiovisual media.

This new world order of open access publishing is not without its problems, as has been well documented. Ethical issues of publication, including the rise of predatory open access journals, have become a hot topic in the past year. The finances behind publishing and the shifted burden to university libraries is similarly a growing concern.

Still, for someone like myself—a late-stage PhD—the open access and accompanying digital technologies have had an important role in my professional and intellectual development. For one, they have helped me engage with the field at large and participate in current conversation. This has led directly to professional opportunities outside of my home institution that otherwise might not have happened.

The *Ethnomusicology Review* Sounding Board is a good example. The idea of a conference panel on open access began at SEM 2013 as the journal's then-future editor, Alex W. Rodriguez, and I began talking about

forms of digital publication. Although Alex and I first met at an alumni gathering for Rutgers-Newark's program in Jazz History and Research, what spurred this particular conversation about open access began our separate contributions in a special edition of the IASPM-US blog: "Music Scenes: Reflections on Performance." This conversation turned into a conference abstract and invites to other music scholars involved in open access modes of production. Alex's idea to gather preliminary thoughts on this subject soon followed.

Another example comes from a digital sound studies project called *Soundbox* that I co-founded in 2011 with two colleagues from Duke. As we send out a CFP (call for provocations) seeking projects that integrated sound into digital scholarship, we got in touch with many scholars already deeply involved in such pursuits. This included Steph Ceraso, whose work I already knew from her activity on Twitter and her role in co-editing a special edition of *Harlot* titled "Sonic Rhetorics" (2013). Several steps down the road, Steph eventually contributed a wonderful piece to *Provoke! Digital Sound Studies*, a digital collection of sonically based projects that will launch in October 2014.

Provoke! also includes several other contributions from scholars I initially "met" through their digital work. This includes fellow panelist Wendy Hsu, whose blog has remained a source of inspiration for me—especially her work on digital ethnography. (Her 2014 article on the subject can be found in the open access publication *Journal of Digital Humanities*.)

Sharing my work digitally and creating space for others to do the same connected me to a network of scholars with similar interests. Such activities have allowed me to engage with the field in ways that traditional forms of publication would not necessarily have allowed at this early stage in my career. Significantly, it is has led to conference presentations, scholarly collaborations, and publication opportunities—the kinds of professional activities that are tangible and mean something for my future.

Distribution networks of knowledge are changing at more rapid pace than the traditional modes of peer review can accomodate. This has meant that there is potential for scholars to reach a wider—and, dare I say, a more public—audience. More and more people consume scholarship online, something that is not bound to change anytime soon. In sum:

- If you an early-career scholar, take those opportunities when you can and if they makes sense for you career goals.
- If you advise PhD students, encourage thoughtful engagement with the larger field through the ever-evolving channels.

Being a part of such a conversation will open up doors in unexpected and meaningful ways. Who knows where such opportunities may lead!

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From Building a Dissertation to Helping Build Others' Projects
Justin Schell

Two facets of contemporary scholarship, multi modality and open access, play a role in two different areas of my scholarly life: one, my own work about diasporic hip-hop and, two, my work as a Council of Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Fellow at the University of Minnesota Libraries. Here I help lead the Digital Arts Sciences + Humanities (DASH) program, which seeks to foster research and pedagogical projects utilizing emerging digital methodologies such as mapping, data visualization, data and text mining, 3D design and printing, crowdsourcing, and more.

My background wasn't conventionally in ethnomusicology, having received my PhD in the Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society program at the University of Minnesota, although taking a number of ethnomusicology courses as part of my degree. (I also have an undergrad degree in Musicology where I worked with Gillian Rodger at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.) In fact, I've only come to open access with my own scholarship relatively recently, starting with my dissertation. However, I did work as a journalist throughout my PhD, writing music criticism for both online newspapers as well as the Walker Art Center, a well-known contemporary art museum in Minneapolis. After finishing my exams, I had intentions of writing a conventional dissertation, albeit one that was informed by the more "popular" voice that I had developed through my journalistic work.

The push to make my dissertation both multimedia and open access only came about after starting to work with video more, and realizing that I wanted to make a documentary film as well as write a dissertation. While knowing that a documentary can do certain things a dissertation cannot (and vice versa), I knew that some sort of hybrid written text incorporating various pieces of media was necessary. However, not wanting to relegate this media into an accompanying CD or DVD necessitated a web presence. I chose Google Sites for my dissertation, because of its relative ease-of-use and practical features, such as its automatic conversion of Microsoft Word footnotes to endnotes. Furthermore, it wasn't *that much* different in form than a conventional dissertation (discrete and linear chapters that followed one another in a logical form).

After finishing my dissertation, I began a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Academic Libraries through CLIR. As part of my work with DASH at the University of Minnesota, part of my job is to help students and faculty explore new models and modes of publishing, both as part of

their research and their teaching. In collaboration with other library staff, including metadata specialists, copyright specialists, and others, this work can take the form of open access online journals and monographs, accompanying websites for academic projects with various forms of media, digital exhibitions using Omeka, multimodal platforms like Scalar, and much more.

I often use my own dissertation as an example for graduate students interested in pursuing alternative or multimodal forms for their dissertation or, more generally, for faculty who want to explore different publication platforms. It allows me to give someone a tangible example of questions like data management, long-term digital preservation, and what consequences (good or bad) have come about from publishing my dissertation online and on its own, rather than with a conventional (or even unconventional) publisher.

Most of these consultations (and eventual projects) involve some combination of consulting about the aspects of someone's project and what platform might be best, and developing a workflow for a project. Sometimes this involves active building on my part, while other times it involves showing the basic overview of a platform and then providing support as needed as the student builds their project.

Whatever my role, I most often strive for this multimodal content to be open and, since much of this involves

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media of various kinds, thinking about things like fair use, Creative Commons, and digital preservation. The goal, in the end, is to help that person create a project—be it part of a single class or something as large as a dissertation—that will not only reach audiences in a different way (and, most likely, reach different audiences) than a conventional printed text, but also will not become a victim of dead links, bit rot, and other forms of digital degradation.

A Wider and More Transparent Ethnographic Feedback Circle
Wendy F. Hsu

I started a blog when I began my dissertation research in 2007. *YellowBuzz* was meant to share my field notes from observing and participating in the indie rock music scenes, first with my research associates and, by extension, the broader public online. These public field notes were written in the style of performance and album reviews accessible for a general audience outside of academic ethnomusicology. I took the voice of a field correspondent and committed to a fast no-more-than-a-couple-of-weeks turnaround. Through highlighting these unusual performances and connecting them to theories of identity formation and community building, my blog lived in a liminal space in which it served both as a part of the process and a product of my research. My participation as a blogger in these music scenes gave Internet-visibility to the Asian American musicians that I came to know in my fieldwork. At a high point, my blog became a hub for readers interested in all things related to Asian and Asian American indie music scenes, and was subsequently cited in two *Wikipedia* articles. My blog and related presence on Twitter (@wendyfhsu) generated a social and discursive space that takes seriously these minority musicians' below-the-radar cultural production within the public domain. The observations I made as a blogger led me to explore a series of inquiries related to musicians' digital sociality and to theorize the formation of digital media diasporas in the context of post-9/11 racial politics and geopolitics.

Blogging and academic writing are two modes of knowledge production. They are framed differently—short vs long, informal vs. formal, impermanent vs. permanent—and for these reasons, they yield different rhetorical consequences. Their audiences might overlap, but for the most part, don't. In my own work, I find and leverage the productive tension between these two modes of communication; where one ends drives the beginning of the other. The continuum between blogging and research writing generates a set of reflexive dynamics that can deconstruct the notion of the "field" (Kisliuk 1997). Sharing bits of field findings live as the research is undergoing can question the subject-object binary in ethnographic research. Tricia Wang suggests that live fieldnoting makes visible meaning-making, a process that's critical to ethnographic work, but is often not made transparent until the publication of a monograph or a peer-reviewed journal article (2012). The multi-year arc of a print-based scholarly publication project for academic ethnographies presents a

Wendy Hsu is an ethnographer, musician, and community arts organizer who engages with multimodal research and performance practices informed by music from continental to diasporic Asia. She has published on Taqwacore, Asian American indie rock, Yoko Ono, Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Bollywood, and digital ethnography. Her postdoctoral work engages with Nakashi (那卡西) street music-culture in postcolonial Taiwan and practices of music and mobility of Taipei's urban underclass. Hsu received her PhD in the Critical and Comparative Studies in Music program at the University of Virginia. As an ACLS Public Fellow, Hsu currently works with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. She recently completed a Mellon Digital Scholarship Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Center for Digital Learning + Research at Occidental College, where she researched and taught ethnographic methodology, digital pedagogy, digital sound studies, and community-based participatory research. An active performer, Hsu is a founding member of ethnographic ghost pop band Bitter Party, vintage Asian rock band Dzian!, improvised music trio Pinko Communoids, and Yoko-Ono-inspired noise duo Grapefruit Experiment. She also co-founded engaged innovations collective Movable Parts and experimental music group HzCollective.

dissonance with the principle of participatory engagement. Conducive to fast and creative reuse of content, digital and online media can contribute to changing modes of scholarly communication. Elements such as media synchronicity, networked, iterative structure, and efficiency make digital media a great vehicle to open access to scholarly materials. These digital affordances can drive the transformation toward an ethos of openness. For those of us engaged in ethnographic work, this means a wider and more open ethnographic feedback circle—from fieldwork to publication and impact in and around the field.

In the space below, I offer two stories about how I conceptualize openness in my own scholarly communication practices, with a bit of commentary on the politics and economics around scholarly transparency from the perspective of a young non-tenure-track scholar. I also hope that these stories serve to illustrate the possibility of a generative relationship between blogging and journal article publication.

Seven years later after I started *Yellowbuzz*, I'm still blogging about my research. I have experienced a few arcs from the time of field research to peer-reviewed journal article publications through my research project lifecycles. A blog post I wrote in 2007 marks the beginning of my field engagement with the band Hsu-nami. I presented a paper about the

religious imagery in the band's music at SEM in 2008 and developed this paper into a full chapter in my dissertation, which was completed in 2011. An article-length version of this chapter became published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2013, seven years after my initial research interaction with the band. My second peer-reviewed journal article publication followed a similar arc.

Both of these publication arcs concluded with a les-than-ideal closeness. My research associates, among whom are professional journalists, tried and failed to access the article about their music. What does this say about informational and epistemological politics? Both journals that I published in are non-open-access with fairly strict copyright terms. As a young scholar, I don't have the luxury of time to negotiate to retain my rights as an author. In the case of *Asian Journal of Communication*, a journal under the Taylor & Francis Group, I was given the "option" of paying $2950 to make my article open access. This option appeared to be a non-option for me, a postdoc fellow in a double-contingency trap: her contingent job situation as a non-renewable researcher in a higher education institution; the contingency of her job prospects on her publishing successes. To me, an "open access" option that requires an exorbitant amount of money in order to administer what is proclaimed to be an open, unrestrictive process itself is a contradiction. Like other neoliberal models, this framework equates the labor and production of academic knowledge with its consumption, and outsources the financial responsibility to deliver products to the content producer. Taylor and Francis's ostensibly open access option capitalizes on openness, a value that is increasingly important to the scholarly community. In more than one way, it defies the tenants of the actual open access movement. So I tweeted my stance resoundingly:

Wendy Hsu
@wendyfhsu

🔲 Follow

I'm not paying Taylor and Francis's $2950 to make my journal article #openaccess.

1:15 PM - 11 May 2013 ⦿ Pasadena, CA, United States

2 RETWETS 2 FAVORITES   ↩ ⇄ ★

A more open and efficient research publication arc I experienced was with my project on digital ethnography. Throughout this project lifecycle, I experimented on various digital platforms to play with the content and form of my research expressions. In these experimentations, I iterated my research in an open form as a post on a blog associated with my graduate fellowship program at University of Virginia; then as I developed my work within a postdoctoral context, I began publishing it on my personal site. Two years ago, an editor-at-large of *DH Now* and, by extension, *Journal of Digital Humanities*, spotted my work on the blog and contacted me to explore an interest in developing the blog post (on my personal site) into a full-length journal article. Around the same time, the editor of the *Ethnography Matters* blog invited me to serialize my research on digital ethnography. I thought I would take this set of opportunities to develop my blog post series, staging it as an open forum to invite feedback on my work. This helped me polish the writing for the eventual manuscript submission for the *Journal of Digital Humanities*. More than just an open access journal, *JDH* transforms the peer-review process by leveraging the open web protocols to source and distribute scholarly content. The editorial and review process begins with an identification of a likely submission based on blog feedback, comments, and social media metrics. Then the journal provides "three additional layers of evaluation, review, and editing to the pieces."

Writing within a network of peers and colleagues makes the process of ideation deeper, more productive than writing in isolation. The evaluation and review process with *JDH*, for the reasons above, felt so human to me. Each touchpoint was encouraging and yielded constructive insights to further the development and refinement of the paper. When the paper was published in this past spring, I felt confident about the timeliness and relevance of my work. Through its lifecycle, this research project published content in various lengths, types, and formats. This multiplicity of form and content reached a wide network of readers, ranging from academic to applied ethnographers, digital humanities scholars, and geographers.

The technological affordances of these publication platforms allowed me to engage with complex layers of content and voices across disciplinary and social perspectives. Kim Fortun and Mike Fortun compare the scholarly community to a village, a

> community of practice [that] cannot prosper if all it encounters is judged with established concepts of what is proper and valuable; the village should not be taken out of history. Instead, we must deliberate and figure out how to respond to changes in the landscape, new problems, new technologies, and new connectivities. (2012)

Publishing, to me, in its simplistic sense, is to make something public. If our public precludes those who have been our research associates, or individuals without institutional affiliations or access to scholarly journals, then we should rethink how we communicate our scholarship. Lastly, I return to the question of research impact, an inquiry central to the ethnographic perspective and a critical step of the ethnographic feedback loop. The issue of transparency can set the course of impact of our research. Having an open and transparent channel of communication is the beginning of a meaningful dialogue we ethnomusicologists can foster with the public. Informational openness, however, is a complex discourse that requires further contextualization, and its discussion would not be complete without a full consideration of access, ethics, and responsibility (Christen 2012). We're living in a moment where the value of scarcity associated with industrial mode of production (Suoranta and Vadén 2008:131) is being challenged by the dispersed openness afforded by digital media. The scholarly publishing industry itself is a cultural field with policies and infrastructures driven by commercial values (Miller 2012) that mostly defy public interests. We should maintain our critical viewpoints as we engage with our own scholarly communication practices.

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On Developing *Sound Matters: The SEM Blog*
James R. Cowdery

Sometime in 2009 a colleague at RILM made an offhand comment—
something like, "We know so much about the interesting things people
are publishing! We ought to have a blog about that." I thought that it
was a great idea, and an excellent way to raise awareness about RILM's
bibliographic database, which is largely unknown outside academia. I
queried my Facebook friends about software, settled on WordPress, and
launched *Bibliolore* in October of that year. For a niche blog, it is fairly
successful; it rarely gets fewer than 100 hits per day, and it's not unusual
for it to top 200 hits in a single day.

In 2012 I joined the SEM Board of Directors as First Vice President, a
position that entails overseeing the Society's publications, and I arrived
at my first meeting eager to suggest that SEM should launch a blog; I was
delighted to learn that Harris M. Berger, the incoming President, was
already planning to propose that!

A call was put out for an editor, and since I am enjoying blogging for
RILM I decided to apply myself. The Board graciously gave me the nod,
and I put together an Editorial Advisory Board, which helped me to
hammer out guidelines for submissions and select a name: *Sound Matters:
The SEM Blog*.

A good blog has a clear mission. My Advisory Board and I agreed that
the mission of *Sound Matters* would be to publish lively, widely accessible
peer-reviewed articles, taking advantage of the opportunities allowed by
online publishing and fostering both a sense of community within SEM
and an atmosphere of outreach beyond the limits of academic journals.

A call for submissions was issued in early 2014 and, per the SEM
Board's mandate, members of my Advisory Board and I started to contact
colleagues who we thought could contribute articles that would make
worthy blog posts. A fine contribution arrived almost immediately after the
announcement, sailed through peer review, and became the inaugural post
on *Sound Matters* on March 12, 2014. Two more submissions followed
soon after, and both were peer-approved and published.

And, so far, that was that. Despite very positive feedback, *Sound
Matters* is stalled, with no new submissions since spring 2014. I recently
issued a suggestion on SEM's listserv that teachers could have their
students produce SEM-style blog posts, and forward to me ones that seem
likely to pass peer review. I plan to proselytize tirelessly at SEM's next
annual meeting, where I also hope to discuss this situation with members

of my Advisory Board and with the SEM Board of Directors. If *Sound Matters* is still not building momentum, it may be that we simply have to be patient; scholars and students may yet realize its potential. But it is also possible that we need to rethink its mission.

One possibility would be to redefine it not as an online journal, but as something more like a magazine with staff writers. A number of fine blogs work this way; one of my favorites (being a professional editor) is *Lingua Franca*, which is published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. *Lingua Franca*'s blogging staff comprises experts in linguistics who are also teachers, and its mission involves exploring interesting corners of the English language and presenting general observations about teaching; posts eschew technical lingo, inviting a wide readership. Such a mission might be deemed worthy by SEM, but I suspect that *Lingua Franca*'s staff members are not writing for free.

Several interesting questions arise from this situation; I look forward to discussing them with the roundtable members and with you!

James R. Cowdery is Editorial Director at Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM). He has served as Editor-in-Chief of *Ethnomusicology* and as a consultant and writer for the PBS television series *Exploring the World of Music*; his publications include *The Melodic Tradition of Ireland* (Kent State University Press, 1990), articles in several encyclopedias and journals, and, as co-author, the textbook *Exploring the World of Music* (Kendall Hunt, 1999). He was elected First Vice President of the Society for Ethnomusicology for the 2011–13 term, and has served twice on the Society's Council. As a composer, Cowdery has received commissions from the Long Island Choral Society and Meet the Composer, and his works have received premieres in New York City, Tokyo, and Budapest. He also performed Irish, Scottish, English, and American traditional musics throughout the U.S. and Canada from the 1970s through the 1990s. He received the PhD from Wesleyan University in 1985.

The *Ethnomusicology Review* Sounding Board: A Brief History
Alex W. Rodriguez

The *Ethnomusicology Review* Sounding Board began in 2006 as a space
for invited contributions to the journal by senior faculty in the discipline.
By the time that I arrived on the editorial staff at the beginning of 2012,
the Sounding Board—along with the journal itself—was already beginning
to be reimagined. With the publication of Volume 16 in 2011, then-
editors Nolan Warden, Logan Clark, Jessie Vallejo, and Andrew Pettit
had engineered an inspired transformation of the journal, which included
a new name, a new website, and indexing by the influential Directory
of Open Access Journals. The Sounding Board grew, as well—featuring
an invited essay by David Shorter as well as "General Generations," an
archival collaboration between Warden and the Native American DJ
collective known as A Tribe Called Red.

   As the incoming Website Editor for Volume 17, this piece stood out
to me. It embraced the experimental possibilities of digital publication,
emphasized collaboration, and, as Warden put it in the introduction to
Volume 16, "places audio, rather than text, at the center of the intellectual
statement." This served as a model that I would pursue over my next three
years on the *Ethnomusicology Review* editorial board.

   Volume 16 had also launched a "blogs" section of the new journal site,
with the intention of providing space for ethnomusicologists to share
their research immediately with a global audience. However, as I began
to manage this section as part of my role as Website Editor in 2012, it
did not function as intended. This is largely due to a fact with which I
had become acquainted before I came to UCLA, as a music journalist and
web producer: blogging is hard! Or, to put it another way: the process of
publishing—even in the immediate, online format of a blog—amounted to a
labor requirement that was too much for individual authors to manage on
top of the many other demands of ethnomusicological research.

   Any given post, I knew, required many steps, including:

1. Outlining a theme or idea to post
2. Producing any audiovisual content and uploading it in the
    appropriate format
3. Drafting the post text
4. Checking for copy errors
5. Formatting the post to be easily viewable on the web interface
6. Publicizing the new post

Furthermore, I knew from my time in web journalism that the key to developing an audience of readers online is to publish regularly. These blog posts were being posted sporadically, and thus receiving very few pageviews.

Inspired by the example of the Volume 16 Sounding Board, we decided to build the Sounding Board its own section on the website, featured under its own tab on the dropdown menu, replacing the "Blogs" tab. Rather than an open space for authors to publish unfiltered posts, we agreed that the Sounding Board would publish in the style of an online magazine, with *Ethnomusicology Review* editors actively seeking out contributors, editing copy, formatting posts, and publicizing them via our new social media channels.

Initially, the Sounding Board was divided into four subsections, each managed by one editor. These included "What's Goin' On," for news, reviews, and editorials; "From the Archives," on archives and ethnomusicology; "Notes from the Field," for essays on current fieldwork; and "Space is the Place," for posts related to ethnomusicology and jazz studies. The publishing system was designed so that posts could be tagged in multiple categories—for example, my double-CD review of two jazz discs was published under both "What's Goin' On" and "Space is the Place."

Although this took most of the year to get off the ground, by the time the journal volume was

Alex W. Rodriguez is the current Editor in Chief of *Ethnomusicology Review*. He is also a writer, improviser, trombonist, and PhD student in ethnomusicology at UCLA. He studied trombone performance Amherst College, and completed a Master of Arts degree in Jazz History and Research at Rutgers University, where he wrote his thesis on early jazz trombonist Jack Teagarden while studying trombone with Conrad Herwig. His current research focuses on jazz clubs around the world and the creative improvised music communities that surround them, with case studies in California, Chile, and Russia. Alex also contributes jazz coverage to *NPR Music* and maintains a blog, *Lubricity*. He also leads the Omni-Musicality Group in the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology, and serves as the Assistant Director for the UCLA Jazz Orchestra.

released in November, we had published twenty-seven posts on the new Sounding Board page. Half of these, it bears noting, were produced by Ethnomusicology Archive librarian Maureen Russell, whose enthusiasm and diligence has provided a shining example for all of us at the journal.

The following year, we were fortunate to add a sixth editor to our editorial team; this allowed us to tweak our editorial structure to include an Editor In Chief, a Technical Editor, two Reviews Editors, and two Managing Editors. Because the Sounding Board had grown so dramatically, it made sense for the Managing Editors to divide their responsibilities—one managed the peer review process for the annual journal volume, and the other managed the Sounding Board. Increased interest in the Sounding Board also allowed us to introduce two new subsections—"Bring the Noise" for popular music studies and "Historical Perspectives" for historical ethnomusicology—that spring. At that time, we also added the image slider to the front page.

We also decided to post all reviews on the Sounding Board throughout the year, rather than have some be associated with the journal volume and others with the Sounding Board. Reviews editors Eric J. Schmidt and Darci Sprengel solicited twenty-four reviews over the course of the year—and, I'd like to add with a hint of pride: that's more than the journals *Ethnomusicology* or *Ethnomusicology Forum*. In total, the Sounding Board published 79 works of public scholarship in 2013. These have included traditional academic book reviews, fieldwork notes, collaborations with musicians, commentaries on issues in the field, and original scholarship. When we published Volume 18 in November, Sounding Board returned to its original place on the journal page, with an overview of all that we had published there over the course of 2013.

This year, I have taken over as Editor In Chief, and the continued activity has coincided with further growth for the journal. Our editorial staff now includes ten members, including our first Associate Editor from outside UCLA, Ben Cosgrove, who manages our new "Ecomusicology" section. The collaboration grew out of a conversation between Volume 18 editor Scott Linford and UCLA ethnomusicology graduate Michael Silvers, who has worked to galvanize further interest in ecomusicology. We have maintained a similar editorial structure—with separate managing editors for the Sounding Board and journal volume—and published seventy-one pieces on the Sounding Board.

The rapid growth of this digital publishing institution would not have been possible without the continued effort and investment of many people—like all sustainable publishing endeavors, this requires a coordinated effort that includes both authors and editors. I am optimistic that, as I become less involved with the journal soon, the incoming editors will continue to develop this system. Most of all, though, I am proud to see that the Sounding Board continues to offer ethnomusicologists an

opportunity to demonstrate how scholarship in our field can be accessible, multimodal, and collaborative. And so, I will be watching and listening eagerly and attentively to the adaptations and permutations that emerge in the coming years.

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From Browser to Browser
Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr.

As someone who began his scholarly career when the word "browsing" meant literally treasure hunting through aisles of library stacks, I'm as shocked as anyone to think that I now possess something called an "online presence." I remember being completely mystified about ten years ago when I kept running into the very profoundly unattractive word "blog" and thought it sounded like nothing I'd ever want to do. To be frank, my instinct was that social media—particularly the idea of sharing one's work with an infinite, invisible, and often, ungracious audience—was the perfect waste of time. Plus the fact that my age, training and orientation as a writer was, for better or worse, purely academic. I didn't even read blogs faithfully. Unlike the music I wrote as a bandleader, the prose I pushed out was intended for my colleagues and students. If it resonated outside of those parameters I was grateful, and, perhaps, a little surprised.

Much has changed.

I owe it to two individuals for curing my aversion to digital media. When I hired a former student to help me promote my first recording *Y the Q?*, she insisted that the best way to achieve this was to engage the public in the way her generation did. My sister, a part-time photographer who regularly used social media to advertise her business, also convinced me that there were people who'd love to know more about the scholarly and musical things I'd been doing. I didn't believe either of them. The biggest challenge was overcoming the socialization I'd undergone in graduate school about which audiences matter, which modes of discourse were "acceptable" for a scholar, and which knowledge bases deserved attention. Once I took my cicerones' advice, started the blog Musiqology.com, and promoted it through my newly acquired Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr accounts, I received my first "likes." That sealed the deal. I understood now what many others had already known well: there were real people and real issues being joined in social media, and if one wanted to join in the conversation, one had to lose old biases and begin sharing ideas in the digital world.

But there were challenges to my new outlook and interest. I needed to appreciate that the traditional media of print, radio, and television weren't the only ways to disseminate my work. And that, in fact, the immediacy and control over information were the most powerful aspects of the digital world. Although many people had complimented me on the accessibility of my scholarly writing style, it soon became clear to me that writing

for readers beyond the academy would take a lot of practice. Since the bloggers I admired most had been doing it for years, I learned to model their compression and hard-hitting styles. Although I admittedly have not yet acquired the appetite for the continuous cycle of controversies to which other bloggers are motivated to respond, I love introducing historical topics into the digital mix.

As I've advanced in my career, one of the joys I've experienced is becoming more activist. When I first entered the field there were much fewer people writing about African American music than there are presently, and doing so did seem like a form of activism. With more scholars engaged in this topic now, but in the context of many forms of state-sanctioned atrocities against black Americans (i.e., the prison industrial complex and unequal access to education), to do only scholarship is short-sighted. I believe what we need is a music scholarship that intervenes by not only addressing the contemporary world when it's appropriate but also circulating these insights in settings beyond the academy. Social media is perfect for this agenda. Without a library card or access to a physical institution people can engage dynamic ideas—with one click of a browser—in ways that would have seemed miraculous just twenty years ago. I'm humbled to be part of this movement.

Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. is the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Professor of Music and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* and *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History and the Challenge of Bebop.* In 2012, his band released *The Colored Waiting Room*, a recording of original music blending jazz, rhythm and blues, gospel, neo-soul, and classical. Ramsey is the founder of the popular music blog Musiqology.com.

Corporately Imposed Music Cultures: An Ethnography of Cruise Ship Showbands

David Cashman
Central Queensland University

ABSTRACT. Cruise ships are among the most visible postmodern tourism products, and cruise tourists are the antithesis of cultural tourists. Within the physical cocoon of the ship, a social and cultural cocoon is constructed by the cruise line, sheltering the temporary inhabitants of the ship from the realities of the ports visited. Despite the portrayal of a cruise as an "exotic" holiday, onboard the ship, cruise ships construct a representation of western culture, particularly with the assistance of onboard musical performances. This article considers the performance of the showband, a central ensemble to the musical experience of a cruise vacation. It is the result of an extended period of participant-observation on cruise ships and interviews with showband musicians. The contribution of the showband is found to be central to the construction of a western and cosmopolitan music culture within a deterritorialised and mobile geography. By performance mode and genre, appearance, repertoire, and nationality, the showband constructs a façade of music culture; however, the reality behind the façade is quite different. If the ship may be considered an empty vessel into which culture is poured, it is the music of ensembles such as the showband that creates and defines this culture.

Introduction

One night in the middle of a cruise, amidst the lights, noise, and scantily-clad dancers of an evening production show, the showband pianist quietly slipped off the bandstand and moved to the wings. There was nothing unusual about this; it happened every time the production show was performed. On cue with the singer, he moved to the middle of the stage where a convincing mock-up of a grand piano was spotlighted. He sat down and pretended to move his fingers over the keys, miming to a recording while the singer writhed atop the constructed piano. Finishing, the pianist returned to the bandstand and continued with the show. After the curtain dropped, he put his charts back, made his way to the crew bar for a few drinks, and put the mimicry from his mind. The next day, in the breakfast buffet line, an older passenger stopped him, saying how much she loved jazz and had particularly enjoyed his solo in the show last night. The pianist, not wishing to shatter her illusions, simply thanked her, and moved on to his scrambled eggs and grapefruit juice.

   The guest's misinterpretation of the veracity of the performance is understandable, as the cruise ship entertainment product relies on fabrications of culture (Wilkinson 1999). Aboard a cruise ship, one is accosted by fabricated jazz clubs (Cashman 2013a), surf (FlowRiders), rock-climbing cliffs (Kwortnik 2008), representations of cultural performances (Cashman and Hayward 2013), and gardens (this last aboard some of the Royal Caribbean ships). Cruise ships are "polyvalent leisure environments" and "money traps" (Chardon 1992), and the very essence of post-tourism.

   The creation of new and fabricated touristic products is not, of course, limited to cruise tourism, nor to post-tourism. The demands of twenty-first-century tourism include the pre-packaging and commodification of cultural representations. Tourists who particularly seek out cultural experience are referred to as "cultural tourists," a term used by Erik Cohen (1979) to navigate the counterpoint between Daniel Boorstin's view of tourists as dupes (1961) and Dean MacCannell's view of them as seeking (but not necessarily finding) authentic culture (1976). However, the constructions of culture they do find may overemphasize "pastness, exhibition, difference, and where possible indigeneity" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995:370). The processes of postmodern tourism—also referred to as "post-tourism"—are similar though the intent is markedly different. Post-tourism creates value by the construction of fabricated and hyperreal

culture (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995:396; Eco 1986). Controlled and closed sign-systems invite guests to engage playfully as in a game, an idea core to the concept of post-tourism as originally expounded by Maxine Feifer (1985). Thus, both cultural tourists and post-tourists engage with a cultural construction; however, cultural tourists encounter representations that profess authenticity, while post-tourists (including cruise tourists) engage playfully with an overt fabrication that is not designed to be "real."

Cruise ships are examples of post-tourism, because value is contained within these constructed sign-systems (Berger 2011, 2004). The constructed onboard culture (especially the music culture), presented as an alternative to the perceived authenticity of cultural tourism, is implemented by the corporate decision of the shipping line. Cruise tourists engage with this constructed culture, aware that the music culture offered by cruise ships is neither maritime nor local, but is a diversion that permits engagement at a superficial and uncritical level. Indeed, the cruise ship goes so far as to actively reject the very physical and cultural environments in which it finds itself (Cashman 2013b) rather than interacting with the oceanic environment in the manner of an aquapelago (Hayward 2012). Rather than comprising an engagement with a visited society, cruise tourism comprises "a social and cultural practice, that . . . reflects and embodies the values and norms shared by the members of a particular group or society" (Vogel and Oschmann 2013:5). A cruise ship is a container for a temporary society formed of two codependent groups, the guests ("tourists") and the crew ("locals"). Guests are literally and figuratively encapsulated within the cruise experience for an extended period, obliged to interact with a fabricated, ambiguously "western" culture provided by the cruise line and by the crew (acting under management instructions).

The consideration of authenticity has been a more-or-less constant debate in tourism studies for the past fifty years. For Boorstin (1961) and MacCannell (1976), authenticity was something that existed behind the tourist façade and was impossible to present to tourists. For Ning Wang, authenticity was an existential concept, incapable of being constructed (1999). More recently, for Britta Tinn Knudsen and Anne Marit Waade, authenticity is something negotiated between tourist and local (2010). Cruise tourism, however, is a post-tourism product (Berger 2004, 2011; Nilsson 2007; Vogel and Oschmann 2013; Weaver 2005), and as such, the quest for authenticity is not a significant factor in the construction of cruise ship culture.

Such fabricated cultural representation is, of course, common within tourism. Hotels from New York to New Delhi co-opt signs of western culture within their hotels and tourism environments, creating such a homogenous western experience that the superficial touches of local culture stand out (Culler 1981). Postmodern and hyperreal tourist destinations including cruise ships, theme parks such as Disneyland (Carson 2004; Pachter 2009), and themed cities such as Las Vegas (Loi and Kim 2009; Loi and Pearce 2008; Wood 2005), construct and represent cultures with which tourists interact. At most of these venues, guests escape to their own lives and cultures at the end of the day.

This article discusses the construction and presentation of the fabricated music culture of cruise ships. It is an unusual ethnography in that the culture under discussion is not the result of humans living together, but one constructed by corporate decree. The "local residents" of the cruise ship (i.e., the crew) do not inhabit the cruise ship by birth, but for reasons of economic necessity, adventure seeking, or interest in becoming tourists themselves. I focus my attention in this article on the ship's showband. This ensemble is core to the cruise experience. While other ensembles perform in their particular cruise venues, the showband performs in various locations around the cruise ship. Moreover, the showband typically accompanies the main evening show that frames and focuses the cruise ship entertainment product.

This research is the result of an extended period of participation/observation as the author undertook employment on several cruise ships. Following this, surveys and formal interviews were conducted with cruise ship musicians, other onboard employees, and shoreside personnel; which created a mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis. As the focus of the research is on the corporate cruise ship culture, interviews were not undertaken with guests, who form a temporary addition to the cruise ship.

Cruise Ship Music Culture

Cruise ships are now so large that they can be described as "shipscapes" (Kwortnik 2008), as "mobile tourist enclaves" (Weaver 2005), and as mobile geographies unto themselves (Cashman 2013a). The RMS Titanic (1912) that displaced 46,328GRT, was the largest ship in the world at the time. By contrast, the latest Oasis-class mega-cruisers operated by Royal

Caribbean International displace 225,282GRT.[1] They utilize solar power, contain sixteen passenger decks, and are constructed as "neighborhoods" with living parks, theatre districts, and dining areas. There are now nine ships over 140,000GRT, all built within the last decade; nine more will be delivered over the next four years. Such large constructed geographies create and define an area within which humans can live, creating temporary cultures which last the length of the cruise, which can be as short as three days or as long as four months.

These mobile geographies have also been referred to as "cocoons," as they protect guests from the realities of the environments through which they pass (Huang and Hsu 2009; Mastin 2010; Papathanassis and Beckmann 2011; Vogel and Oschmann 2004). For example, ships limit interaction with the natural aquatic environment, while fabricating and mediating guests' interactions with water (Cashman 2013b). Instead of interacting directly with the aquatic environment, guests are accosted onboard by enormous waterslides, fabricated surfing experiences on Royal Caribbean's FlowRiders, and water features in atriums. Many companies also lease islands from Caribbean nations, altering the physical environment to match popular representations of island paradises. Disney, for example, unhappy that the original state of its island (which it renamed Castaway Cay) did not match the popular perception of a Caribbean paradise, dredged sand from the middle of the bay, cleaned it, ground it up finely, and deposited it on the beaches (Wood 2000:362).

In the same way, the culture of cruise ships is constructed to keep the tourists ("faux-voyageurs" in the words of Jean-Didier Urbain [1986:295] and John Frow [1990:127]), from interacting with the local cultures through which they travel. In fact, potential interaction with local culture, Robert E. Wood notes, is often disturbing to and unwanted by cruise ship guests (2000:360). Contact with local culture is mediated through "shore excursions" to locally-themed tourist attractions within and around the port area (Jaakson 2004), or through the provision of onboard "local shows," choreo-musical presentations of local culture (Cashman 2011).[2]

Cruise ships delineate western culture by a series of semioses that are purposefully implemented and offered to guests. The external and internal design of the ship is opulent and deemed aesthetically beautiful by western standards. Western linguistic and textual signs are imposed by the use

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1. GRT stands for Gross Register Tonnage, a measure of the permanently enclosed volume of the ship. One GRT is equal to 100 cubic feet (2.83m²).
2. Between 50 and 80% of guests partake in shore excursions (Klein 2005:93-95). Ocho Rios in Jamaica is one example of a carefully-controlled tourist environment offshore (Garin 2005:276).

of English in public areas of the ship.[3] Musically and choreographically, western culture is presented by the performance of western music, often popular western music, to guests. In some cases, representations of other cultures are incorporated into this culture as signifiers for "exoticism," for example, by the use of a resident Caribbean or Latin band, or of the "local" shows. However, overwhelmingly, the majority of cultural representation is of western culture.

In the constructed and mobile geography of the cruise ship, the "local" residents are the crew. However, these "local" residents are from many different ethnic groups. Gibson notes that in some cases a single crew may comprise more than fifty nationalities (2008:45-50). Typically a single crewmember will undertake a contract that may last a few months or more than a year. The crew thus comprises, in a very real sense, a floating population of individuals coming and going from the ship, living in extremely close proximity to each other and speaking a variety of languages. This comprises an unusual culture in many ways; significantly, it is a culture created by corporate decree.

The Music Culture of Cruise Ship Showbands

There are several types of musicians onboard cruise ships. There are ensembles of collectively-contracted musicians who perform a popular representation of a particular genre (e.g., jazz, classical, or rock) in a themed venue. Soloists operate in a similar fashion, but are individually contracted and perform on their own. Guest entertainers perform the evening cabaret show and can be musical (singers or instrumentalists) or non-musical (usually comedians, jugglers, or ventriloquists). Production singers and dancers comprise the onboard "cast" and perform in the themed production shows. The focus of this study is on the fifth category, the showband, also known as the ship's orchestra. It is the showband's musical responsibility to accompany the evening guest entertainer or production show and to perform in various locations around the ship as needed.

While a version of the showband exists on every large cruise ship, they vary in size and lineup. Most often, the showband consists of between five and nine performers and is of two kinds: the "traditional" showband is a cut-down swing band with a horn section (often consisting of trumpet, one

3. It should be noted that some lines, notably Costa Crociere, Iberocruceros, and Croisières de France do cater to non-English speakers. However, they still represent a western culture.

or two saxophones, and trombone) and a rhythm section (usually piano, bass, drums, and guitar). This instrumental lineup permits the group to perform jazz standards well, but some instruments become superfluous in the performance of rock. The "modern" showband, which is used on some Carnival Cruise Lines vessels and on the Holland-America Line, is an adapted version of the band on the American television program *Saturday Night Live*. It is comprised of a single saxophone and rhythm section (in Holland America's case, augmented by a second keyboard) and is able to perform rock more easily than swing.

Musical ensembles akin to the showband have existed on passenger shipping since the 1880s (Cashman 2014). The showband is descended from the bands of earlier passenger shipping, such as the famous Titanic musicians. The first ensembles were brass bands on the German Norddeutcher Line, which performed arranged parlour music, light classical music, and German melodies. From the early 1900s, string players appeared on Cunard and White Star, but the emphasis would remain on performing classical music for first-class passengers until the 1920s and 1930s. From this time, dance bands began to appear on passenger ships and would remain until the dawn of modern cruising in the 1960s and the establishment of the showband proper. While the focus of the job has changed from this early time, the fundamental requirements have not.

Participants

Showband musicians, through their ethnicity, education, and backgrounds, say much about the focus of the constructed culture of the cruise ship. These musicians are obliged to be well-trained in western popular music, particularly in jazz and rock. They ideally must be both strong improvisers and strong readers, as the showband may be called upon to perform a variety of genres including light classical music, rock, jazz, and ballroom dance music.

In the welcome aboard show held on the first night of a cruise, a standard line used by many cruise directors makes reference to how well the many nationalities aboard the ship get along. The ship, they say, is a veritable "mini-United Nations," and "the real U.N. could learn a thing or two from us." The reality is quite different, with a near-caste system of officers at the top, staff in the middle, and crew at the bottom. Crew from certain countries (particularly Indonesia and the Philippines) are paid less for doing the same job as their counterparts from other countries (Wood 2000:353-358). Musicians, considered to be staff, are in the middle of this hierarchy.

Showband musicians tend to be young, though older musicians also exist. While 30% of the musicians sampled were under the age of thirty, none were under twenty-five. By contrast, 25% were over forty-five, and 7% were over sixty. Showband musicians are far more likely to be male (83%) than female (17%). They may be of a variety of nationalities, but are traditionally from western countries, such as the United States, Canada, UK, and Australia. In fact, showband musicians are more likely to be from western countries than almost any other group of shipboard employees. In recent years, however, there has been an attempt to employ showband musicians from Southeast Asia (especially the Philippines) and Eastern Europe. However, informants report that, from a musical point of view, this has been generally unsuccessful because of the perceived lack of reading ability among Filipino musicians (though they are considered excellent improvisers) and of improvisational ability among Eastern Europeans (though they are considered excellent readers). However, as the salary of musicians from these countries is lower, it has been successful from the financial point of view of the cruise lines. Cruise ship musicians are also highly educated, with 77% of surveyed musicians holding a tertiary qualification, compared to 27% of U.S. citizens (U.S. Census Bureau 2009) and 24% of Australian (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007). Showband musicians are typically contracted for around four months, though shorter and longer contracts exist. They sign onto ship's articles, meaning that they are governed by the laws of the country of the Flag of Convenience (a process by which a ship is flagged in a country apart from that where the shipping line headquarters is located) and are subject to the discipline of the captain.

The social structure of showband musicians' music culture is controlled and defined by two aspects: musical ability and social skills. Of the two, musical ability is of vastly greater consequence. Cruise ship musicians, like many performing musicians, are harsh judges of talent and impatient with sloppiness, requiring of others the same standards that they demand of themselves. Showband musician Brett Caine gave the following advice to a hypothetical guest entertainer:

> Hey, here's an idea. . . . Take some vocal lessons, learn to play your instrument, study the best comedians and learn from them before you bring your crap-ass little dog and pony show out here to my ship where you've spent more money on your freaking wig and make-up than you have on your charts! This ain't supposed to be amateur hour, and you're wasting my time making you look better than you really are! (Interview, 2011)[4]

4. Names given in this article are pseudonymous as requested by some of the participants.

While social skills are of secondary importance, they also form a part of the social structure. The highest rung of showband culture is the "great musician, great guy," who enjoys strong support from all players. Lower quality musicians are pegged lower on the structure of shipboard society, even if they are personable. The lowest rung of the social ladder is reserved for those of low social and playing skill.

While musicians generally feel positive about the cruise experience, the continued commodification of their art coupled with the repetitive nature of the music they create can cause long serving cruise ship musicians to become "dark." "Darkness" is an industry term for feelings of general negativity, helplessness in the face of perceived harassment by management, and depression. It is manifested in a darkly humourous and aggressive manner among musicians between themselves. Musicians wear their "darkness" as a badge of pride. It signifies that a musician has been on cruise ships long enough to become dark and is unafraid of consequent harassment by the official shipboard hierarchy. This attitude can encourage other musicians to also develop negative attitudes towards their employment. Showband musician Thomas Mason describes the phenomenon of "darkness" as the result of disappointment in musicians' employment:

> Too many of us believe in some mythical, perfect gig out there that simply doesn't exist, and consequently we get dark about whatever job we're currently on. Normally we'd walk away from the gig at the end of the night, get up the next morning, and go on to the next thing; but on the ship you do it day after day after day. There is no home to go to; you live there. You constantly put up with the petty rules and regulations of a wannabe navy that has little (other than the corporate office) to keep it in check. It's a dictatorship, and what the officers say goes. Combine that with the sheer boredom and monotony that occurs when you don't go out of your way to mix it up, and things get dark fast. (Interview, 2011)

Cruise ship crew, including musicians, have a tendency towards substance abuse, a position tacitly (and sometimes actively) encouraged by cruise ship management.[5] In the documentary, *Ships*, a cruise ship officer says,

> [When you arrive onboard] you have two options: either you have fun, or you don't have fun. Go for the first option. Have fun! Enjoy what you do! Be proud of your job. At the end of the day, hang out with your friends. Have fun! Drink! If you don't want to drink, don't drink. But if you want to drink, drink crazy! (Eldib 2011)

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5. On Regent Seven Seas Cruises between 2007 and 2010, musicians received a $100 per month drinking allowance to be used in passenger areas.

Most surveyed musicians agreed that alcohol abuse is prevalent among cruise ship musicians. They cited three main reasons for this phenomenon: general boredom (71%), the need for a coping mechanism for the stresses and anxieties of ship life (24%), the boring and repetitive nature of the gig (14%), and alcohol's use as a social tool (9%).

Officially, any crew member must maintain blood-alcohol content of under 0.05% at all times, considered necessary for efficient handling of the ship in case of an emergency. All shipping lines may at any time run alcohol tests among any of the crew members; however, this is rarely enforced, and may be used to get rid of people or make a point. Showband musician Mike Johnston notes, "If they tested and fired everyone coming out of the crew bar drunk when it closed, they wouldn't have enough people left to run the ship." The officer interviewed in *Ships* states that "on cruise ships, you're supposed to have [no more than] a certain level of alcohol in your blood. But, to be honest with you, it doesn't matter" (Eldib 2011).

The response of onboard management to extreme alcohol abuse varies depending on how useful the performer is. An experienced cruise director, Jack Alexander, recounts a story:

> I'd just become cruise director. I was working with a captain who I'd known for a few years, great guy. There was a singer on the ship who was great, had been with the company about ten years longer than I had and . . . was a notorious drinker—notorious. I sat there in a captain's meetings one day and the captain said to me, . . . "You need to tell him to stop drinking." . . . I said, "No, he's an adult. He can do exactly as he pleases. He knows the rules, and if he wants to break the rules, he can break the rules. He knows the consequences and he'll go home; and it's your decision, Captain, whether you want to enforce the rules and get rid of him or because you like the guy you just let it go." And he was like, "Oh, okay, okay. Well, we'll see." . . . The rules are there and if [musicians] want to drink to excess you can drink, and the sad side of it is, I did it constantly. No, that's not the sad side, because I had fun doing it. (Interview, 2011)

Opportunities for sexual encounters and romance are frequently available aboard cruise ships and can be a strong incentive to undertake shipboard employment. Many crew are young, single, and with few ties on land. The constant turnover of crew provides a flow of possible sexual partners. The opportunity for sexual encounters on cruise ships is so available that crewmembers may become serial monogamists. A female crewmember stated,

> It feels like guys have this mentality that you don't know their past and their histories, so they can sweep you off your feet if they so choose—you know, "you're the only one for me!" But you damn well know that as soon as you get off that boat, there's going to be someone else who is the "only one for them" for that contract. It's the fine print, you know? (Eldib 2011)

Most musicians share cabins, limiting sexual opportunities. Arrangements between roommates may be made, such as a previously determined signal that one is with a sexual partner (for example, a tie or a hat will be left over a door handle) or a roommate negotiating a time during which one musician has the exclusive use of the room. For musicians unwilling (or unable) to engage in onboard sexual activity, in certain locations of the world, particularly the Caribbean and South America, musicians may avail themselves of the services available in brothels. More than other crew, musicians are able to leave the ship for the day, making sexual encounters with prostitutes a viable alternative to onboard sexual encounters.

Ships may encourage consensual sexual encounters between crew, but sexual encounters between passengers and crew are officially forbidden. Crew are not supposed to be in guest cabins at any time. The danger of cultural misunderstandings or misperceptions with consequent legal issues for cruise lines is too great. That said, some crew do undertake illicit sexual encounters with passengers. According to a musician who worked for Carnival Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, "Sex between crew and passengers happens all the time. Every cruise, every day. Crew go into passenger cabins, and guests go into crew cabins. Both seek it out, passenger and crew" (Klein 2002:64). Such liaisons have been occurring for so long to have become nearly institutionalized. In the 1970s,

> passing through a crew hallway with the Mardi Gras' second-in-command at the time, a senior Carnival executive noticed a young female passenger slipping out of an officer's cabin, obviously after a rendezvous. Even in those swinging days, this was a serious breach of company policy . . . "You see," the executive said, pleased, "She'll be back again." (Garin 2005:103)

Showband musician Daniel Clarke says,

> Lots of lady passengers come on the ship that are mature-age and single. Maybe they've just divorced hubby and they've taken a cruise on the payout. You're not supposed to hook up with passengers, but a lot of guys do. A buddy of mine used to have a thing running with the security. They'd knock on the door and say, "Mr. John, Mr. John,

> we're coming back in ten minutes" just to give him time to get out and back to his cabin. (Interview, 2011)

Generally, the showband's relationship with fellow performers is warm, except sometimes towards guest entertainers. Guest entertainers receive large salaries and have shorter contracts and vastly greater privileges than showband musicians, sometimes without the essential musical talent that defines and socially ranks showband musicians. Guest entertainers, on the other hand, can perceive showband musicians as jealous, negative, and complaining. There is some truth to both of these perceptions.

Due to the social status derived from musical ability, talented guest entertainers establish a certain respect among musicians. These performers are lauded for several virtues: short rehearsals, superior charts, acceptable responses from the audiences, and the rare privilege of a night off (if the performer does not need the showband). In some cases, when an act may not be as entertaining as other acts, showband musicians may still support them if they are perceived as good musicians and respectful of the talents of the band. Other guest entertainers are despised among the showband musicians as weak performers with bad charts, who are perceived as using the showband to make themselves look good. Showband musician Joshua Davies reported,

> The feelings of the showband vary quite dramatically towards the entertainers. This depends a great deal on the quality and attitude of both parties. Although I can recall perhaps a dozen entertainers whose shows were of high quality, many were not, and there is a certain amount of resentment in playing for people who seem to have a lower skill set than the band who earn significantly more than you. One such example to me was performing the show of a saxophone player of considerably lower standard than myself. (Interview, 2011)

The social ability of guest entertainers is also important. A weak or unmusical guest entertainer who buys the band a round of drinks after the show to show their appreciation may get a certain grudging respect. However, guest entertainers less than pleasant in their dealings with the band create antipathy among the musicians. This hostility can manifest itself in various ways. A musician may simply play the chart as written (known as "phoning in" a performance) rather than "stepping up to the plate" and playing to the best of one's ability. They may have a few drinks before the main show rather than waiting until afterwards. They may not smile on stage. Joshua Davies notes,

> The great guest entertainers . . . tended more to galvanise the band both on and off the stage, socialising and endearing themselves to the

musicians so they wished to perform to their best for these entertainers, who had become their friends. Some entertainers had significant egos, and, in line with most musicians, this is a defense mechanism for their own flaws. In the same way that when I have met Phil Woods, Branford Marsalis, Bob Mintzer, etc., they have not been bitchy, only encouraging. . . . The "bitter and egotistical" kind of guest entertainer is, however, more common on the whole, and the better ones more of a rarity. (Interview, 2011)

One guest entertainer in particular, asked showband musician Daniel Jackson to write some charts for him in 2005. According to Jackson, the payment offered was a case of beer (which would cost twenty-four dollars as opposed to the standard price of $150 per arrangement). When Jackson declined, the guest entertainer grew hostile and said, "Well, it's getting late. You know, I think I'll have a sleep in tomorrow morning. Enjoy your boat drill, boys," crudely rubbing his higher status in the musicians' faces. For many years after that, whenever this particular entertainer played with musicians who knew the story, there was a certain sullenness about the band (Interview, 2011).

Performances, Repertoire, and Spaces

Within the themed cruise entertainment product, venues, as the subencapsulators of the musical experience of the cruise ship, deserve specific consideration. Vision has long been held to be of significance within in tourism studies (Gillespie 2006; Scarles 2009; Urry 1990; Urry and Larsen 2011), although in recent years other senses have come under scrutiny (Pine and Gilmore 2011; Schofield 2009; Brambilla et al. 2007; Everett 2008; Dann and Jacobsen 2003; Hall and Sharples 2003; Hjalager and Richards 2002). Venues contextualize and physically situate performances utilizing physical and arising aural signs to convey the particular theme of the performance.

Specifically, cruise ship venues are designed to create interaction between the audience and performers. Michael S. Minor et al. note, "The spatial layout and functionality aspects [of performance venues] are of high importance for the service encounter due to the purposeful nature of the service encounter" (2004:10). The design and functioning of a performance space directly affects patrons' enjoyment of musical performance, and this is nowhere more evident than aboard cruise ships. Onboard theatres and performance spaces are designed with care and consideration. Seats in theatres are usually comfortable, and venue sizes are appropriate to traffic and audience sizes. Often they are themed to the point of becoming fantasies of their genre (Cashman 2013a).

Physical factors uniquely impact upon the design and experience of performing in cruise ship venues. Due to the ever-present possibility of violent movement on cruise ships, chairs in theatres are usually immobile, unable to be moved at a passenger's whim. From a safety and venue management viewpoint, sudden ship movement cannot be permitted to scatter chairs. Large internal spaces such as the theatre weaken the physical structure of the ship and require large support columns running from the ceiling to the floor, supporting the weight of the upper decks. Such columns can create sightline issues, and venues must be carefully designed to allow the areas behind these columns to be free of seats. Cruise lines construct their entertainment to be inclusive and powerful. Jack Alexander, the previously quoted cruise director, notes that guests must be physically close to the performer; as he says, "up close and personal with the drum kit" (Interview, 2011) Venues are thus designed with little space between the performers and audience, encouraging interaction.[6]

The Evening Show

The evening show is different from other performances. One important goal of most onboard performances is to attract guests into a venue where they are encouraged to consume alcohol, the second-biggest onboard revenue stream (Becker 2006). However, at the evening production show, guest alcohol consumption occurs only marginally; the musical performance is of primary import, and socialization among guests secondary (the reverse to most shipboard performances). Evening shows exist to provide a focus for shipboard entertainment and to prevent guests, as much as possible, from retiring for the night.

The most typical performance space for showband musicians is the theatre, a venue that forms a representation of an opulent land-based theatre including semiotic signals for high social class and theatricality. The theatre aboard Cunard's RMS Queen Mary 2 is typical of the cruise ship theatre. The large thrust stage reduces the distance between the performer and audience, encouraging interaction despite the barrier of the high stage. The showband may be placed at the front of the stage in a pit that can be raised or lowered, or (more typically) at the back of the stage. The red hues of the decor and the chandelier above the stage area encourage the perception of the theatre as a special place associated with luxury, high class, and expense.

Production shows are themed choreo-musical performances performed by the onboard cast and showband. They are described as "Vegas-style"

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6. For more on cruise ship venues as spaces for engagement, see Cashman 2012.

(Gulliksen 2008; Wood 2004) or "flesh-and-feathers" (Dickinson and Vladimir 2008:59), but are carefully sanitized to remove anything that may cause offense. Blandness and "cheesiness" are criticisms often levelled at cruise ship entertainment (Minarcek 2011; Ritzer 2010; Clemence 2012). As a single production show is typically performed twice on its designated night to the necessarily broad demographic of guests, production shows need to be of wide appeal and devoid of anything offensive. The latter is dealt with by careful implementation and a general lack of dialogue in shows. The former is dealt with by careful matching of production show themes to the guest demographic.

Theming a production show permits guests to easily contextualize the production show before they have seen it, and the theme is usually clearly identified in the title of the show as well as the onboard advertising; thus, Princess's *Motor City* is about Motown, Carnival's *X-Treme Country* performs country music, and Cunard's *Zing Went the Strings* is about music sung by Judy Garland. Based on the responses of interviewed showband musicians, by far the most common themes revolve around western popular music. Other themes that are significant include musical theatre, jazz, western dance, and film—themes that are somewhat more esoteric, but certainly of broad interest. Only one musician reported a production show that explicitly addressed world music cultures, and it involved a world tour in popular music; France was represented by a can-can, Italy by Dean Martin's *Mambo Italiano*, and so forth.

In a time frame of forty-five to sixty minutes, a production show needs to present a musical representation of the theme. Necessarily, this involves a sampling of a large number of songs from the genre. P&O UK's production manager Michael Bee says his production shows "are very punchy, very bright, very fast moving." Audiences weaned on television programs such as *The X Factor* and *Strictly Come Dancing* are "used to seeing shortened numbers, medleys, and a lot of visual stimulation" (Quinn 2011:22). These techniques are used to sample large numbers of songs very quickly; for example, the Supremes medley in *Motor City* contains eight different songs sung by The Supremes.

The production show is currently changing. Royal Caribbean has replaced production shows on its larger ships with trimmed Broadway musicals such as *Chicago*, *Hairspray*, and *Saturday Night Fever*. Further, the showband's role in the production show is declining. Several lines now use pre-recorded backing tracks. Some musicians report having to mime production shows, reducing their role from specialist performers to instrument holders.

The guest entertainer show focuses attention on a particular cabaret entertainer who is contracted for a period of time, which may be as short as a few days. The guest entertainer provides arrangements, which are rehearsed in the afternoon. The show itself is performed twice in the evening. The repertoire chosen by the singer should be familiar and entertaining. Songs are chosen for one of the following reasons:

- To showcase the talents of the performers: a pianist may choose an overly technical but accessible work, such as Liberace's "Bumble Boogie," to showcase their technical ability. A singer may sing a "pattersong" far too fast to demonstrate their talent.
- To form a bond with the audience: the relationship between the performer and audience is important, and the performer must be liked. Thus, singing a song with which the audience is familiar and likes will assist that relationship.
- To affirm the audience's appraisal of them as significant artists: a singer may sing songs from the shows they have performed on Broadway or in the West End.

Helen Lewis, a guest entertainer says,

> My goal is very simply (on a cruise ship) to keep them interested, involved, and awake! My rule of thumb generally is to do a mixture of songs they know and comedy songs. Maybe occasionally you can throw in an unknown number, but only if it's extraordinary and there's an interesting story behind it. I think we all use "the tricks" too—picking songs with big and long notes at the end and also pattersongs sung at ridiculously fast tempos. (Interview, 2011)

When evening shows go wrong, they go very wrong. I performed in a comedian's show in an onboard 1100-seat theatre and, because of the perceived old-fashioned show, there were perhaps twenty guests by the end. As the pianist, I was forward of the orchestra, and I watched guests streaming out the exits after perhaps ten minutes. This was a potential disaster for the line, as there were now eleven hundred disgruntled guests onboard who were possibly heading back to their cabins. The show had failed to engage the audience, an essential aspect of cruise ship entertainment.

Evening shows are significant onboard events. As they are designed to engage guests and prevent them from retiring for the night, both types, the production show and guest entertainer show, must be engaging and not overly taxing on audiences. They must be energetic and uplifting, and place guests in a good frame of mind to go out and enjoy the amenities of the ship, even when they are tired from a day in port.

Ballroom Dance

Music to accompany the social and choreographic practice of ballroom dance forms a significant musical repertory performed by showbands. This music is arranged and performed to accompany ballroom dancing, images of which are strongly associated with pre-war passenger shipping. Cunard vessels contain a second showband (known as the "Queens Room Orchestra" that performs this music in a designated ballroom, but most lines co-opt the showband for this role, performing once or twice per cruise in a shipboard venue that has a dance floor.

Venues for ballroom dancing contain a bandstand and seating, but also a dance floor between the audience and band. The onboard ballroom descends from earlier steamship ballrooms, which were themselves recreations of hotel ballrooms of the 1910s and 1920s. As such, modern ballrooms reference these earlier shipboard ballrooms, attempting to recreate the glamour of earlier shipping. They are luxurious and opulent and focus attention on the dancers rather than the musicians; however, they are also increasingly rare on cruise ships.

Onboard ballroom repertoire reflects traditional ballroom dance repertoire and is commonly drawn from popular music of the swing era, though examples drawn from earlier or more recent music are not necessarily excluded as long as they meet the demands of dancers. Cruise ships collect large numbers of arrangements to permit ballroom dancing. One such collection of dance music, called the *Princess Dance Book*, used across the Princess fleet, contains 155 arrangements covering the ten official styles of international ballroom and Latin standard dance. The vast majority of these arrangements are by a few arrangers, including Dave Wolpe (a Florida-based arranger who contributed more than half the charts), Dan Higgins, Rusty Dedrick, and Tom Kubis.

Other Performances

Showband musicians are employed to be versatile, equally able to sightread and improvise, and to temporarily adopt the role of an ensemble or soloist. Such performances may provide an additional performance of a type that exists onboard, or may provide an addition to onboard offerings. In the former instance, such performances may provide additional offerings to the shipboard entertainment schedule, performing small-ensemble jazz in a cruise ship that already has a jazz ensemble onboard, or performing a cocktail piano set additional to that performed by the soloists. While these may vary the original onboard offering (by

the addition of horns to a jazz set usually performed by a piano trio, for example), they replicate the purpose of the original set. Showbands are typically jazz-centred ensembles and perform rock—even the tame rock provided on cruise ships—with difficulty. In the case of a small cruise ship the showband may form the defacto ensemble, providing all onboard music. Even in large ships with a range of performers, the showband can be required to provide special shows. In the author's experience, the showband of the Grand Princess in 2007 was obliged to play popular representations of traditional jazz when leaving New Orleans.

It is important that all such performances are accessible. A shipboard jazz performance, for example, caters to the touristic and popular culture image of the jazz band at sea and provides high-class popular cultural signifiers. However, it tends to be conservative rather than innovative and may include traditional swing works from the 1930s and 1940s, such as "Satin Doll," "Don't Get Around Much Any More" and "Take the A Train." Guests attending a performance will be comfortable with such jazz standards. Musicians, however, often prefer to perform 1950s and 1960s jazz or 1970s jazz-rock, which is of more interest to them. Such jazz-influenced performances conflict with the desires of the audience for listenable tunes that stay in the background. Songs that merge rock or funk beats with a strong melody (such as "Sidewinder" and "Cantaloupe Island") are performed as a compromise. Similarly, tunes that have a strong melody and musically interesting chord progressions (such as "Blue in Green") may be used.

Performances that do not adhere to this rule of accessibility may find themselves at odds with the cruise ship aesthetic. Classical performances, a style that signifies the high-status required by cruise ships but which are less accessible to the guests, has the potential to cause problems. Thus, shipboard classical repertoire is drawn from the popular classical canon for that instrument with an emphasis on popular classics. A harp may perform Pachelbel's Canon, or a pianist may perform Chopin's Op. 9/2 Nocturne or the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. However, the illusion of performing classical music is more important and acceptable than the reality. Joshua Davies recounted the following story:

> When I was on the Star Princess . . . we had a classical piano player come on in Europe who was a guy called [name redacted], and he was world class. Carnegie Hall piano player, did concertos with the New York Philharmonic, had CDs out under his name. And he did a beautiful recital where he played pieces by Liszt and Chopin. He even tried to dumb down his products by doing some Gershwin. He

> told the story about when Gershwin was interviewing for *Porgy and Bess*, that the first singer came in and sang "you say potayto and I say potayto, you say tomayto and I say tomayto," (laughs). So he really tried. But he got fired that evening because people just walked out of his show. The piano player in the orchestra and myself knew the level of this guy, having spoken to him earlier in the cruise. So we went to the second show, bought a bottle of wine and just sat a couple of rows from the front. Be the time we got to the end, everyone else had left. I'm not exaggerating, literally, by the end of it, only the two of us were sat there, listening to the best pianist I've ever heard. (Interview, 2011)

Other musicians recounted several similar stories. Cruise ship guests are interested in the fabrication of classical music culture, rather than the reality.

Showband performances outside the ballroom and theatre may take place in any venue on a ship. Often they occur in permanent venues such as onboard bars or the atrium. Sometimes they take place in temporarily adopted venues, such as on the lido deck. However, showband performances are more general than others, which are typically related to a particular genre, and so rarely occur in themed venues.[7]

Performances of Music of Destination

While musicians have limited opportunities to stray from the repertoire associated with the constructed and cocooned onboard culture, they do occasionally reference the cruise ship's destinations by the performance of popular music that is associated with the destination. More unusual destinations, with a greater sense of exoticism such as Hong Kong or Mumbai, are more likely to be referenced than more typical cruise destinations such as the Alaskan inside passage or Acapulco.

The showband occasionally references the destination of the cruiseship, albeit in a westernized and popular manner. When performing music for ballroom dance, a showband may play a popular and recognizable song strongly associated with the destination, such as a cha-cha version of "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)" the night before arriving in Turkey, or a quickstep version of "Waltzing Matilda" before arrival in Sydney. When I was performing on a ship out of New Orleans, during sailaway the band would attempt to portray traditional New Orleans jazz through the performance of Dixieland tunes before reverting to the standard repertoire with which we were more comfortable. Such performances are popular representations of the destination best understood within the dominant western culture of cruise ships.

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7. See Cashman 2013b for a discussion of the role of theming in cruise ship venues.

Onboard performances other than those by the showband can represent a fetishized "exotic" culture, but these too are typically drawn from musical styles already popular in western musical cultures. For example, many ships carry a "Caribbean" band. While the performers are usually Caribbean islanders, the repertoire performed by these bands incorporates Caribbean music made famous in the west over the last fifty or so years (Cashman and Hayward 2013). Calypso and 1960s reggae is more common than more recent genres such as dancehall and reggae fusion. These performances, typically occurring beside the pool in the afternoon of a sea day, are constructed to represent "exoticism" and "island culture" rather than local Caribbean culture.

On rare occasions a ship may be in a particularly exotic and unusual port such as Tahiti or Buenos Aires, a place where passengers may require a closer (if mediated) encounter with local culture. Choreomusical performances may take place as part of local tours, or (if the ship is overnighting, itself a rare occurrence, or sailing late), a "local show" may be performed onboard. These performances involving local performers need to be, in the words of one cruise director, "classy and colourful" (Logan 2011) rather than representative, an approach to touristic cultural portrayal that Linnekin describes as the "*Reader's Digest* approach" (1997:232).

Material Culture

Physical objects on cruise ships used for musical purposes are divided into objects directly used in the process of and in response to musical performance (designated musical objects) and those used indirectly (non-musical objects). The provision of instruments varies by instrument. If instruments are portable enough, musicians supply them; this group includes horn players, guitarists and electric bass players. However, ships always supply pianos, keyboards, and drum kits due to their impracticality as luggage, and they may also supply upright basses. However, this can result in performance on old and poorly maintained instruments. Drummers often choose to bring their own cymbals, as ship-provided cymbals are usually very poor quality due to shipboard economic priorities and occasional contact with sea air. The decision between playing a known instrument that musicians have to transport themselves and playing an unknown instrument that makes for an unpleasant performance is a difficult one for musicians, but one that is usually made by cruise lines.

The problem is exacerbated for pianists, who are at the mercy of large and heavy shipboard instruments, and is compounded by cruise lines regarding pianos less as musical instruments and more as pieces of furniture imbued with semiotic meaning. Most modern ships are equipped with Kawai or Yamaha mid-size grand pianos in performance venues. The constant motion of the ship causes shipboard pianos to go out of tune more quickly than land-based pianos; however, maintenance can be haphazard as pianos are maintained in turnaround ports at the request of the musical director, and in some parts of the world it can be hard to find competent piano tuners. Out-of-tune pianos are consequently endemic on cruise ships. Static pianos are held in place by piano chucks that are attached to the floor of the ship. Stage pianos that must be moved are held in place only by the friction of the locked wheels of the piano trolley.[8] Ship designers place grand pianos for their visual properties as much as or more than their musical properties. A pianist in a tuxedo playing a beautiful, shiny, black piano is an important image for cruise ships. Some pianos are placed for visual reasons rather than performance and are rarely played. Performance on poorly maintained and poorly placed instruments can make quality performance difficult.

Musical notations form another designated musical artifact. Showbands, formal dance bands, and classical ensembles all use notated music. Charts are typically provided by the cruise line or by the leader of the ensemble. Charts used by the showband are usually stored in large black folders in a central location, and are the responsibility of the individual musician. Production show charts remain in order from one show to the next, allowing the musicians to quickly turn to the next chart. Dance-set charts are usually maintained in alphabetical order and are "pulled," (or physically ordered so as to allow uninterrupted accessibility to arrangements in the correct order) before playing, a process that may take fifteen minutes. After the performance, these are carefully replaced in the folder in the correct order. Besides the instruments, these notations form the most important physical artifacts for musicians.

The amount of performance space required on the bandstand varies from player to player. Pianists, drummers, and keyboardists need the most space with their large instruments. Bass players, guitarists, and trumpeters have a relatively small "footprint." Trombonists need space in front to allow for the slide, and saxophonists need both space in front to hold their instruments, and space to the side to place their doubles. Onboard sound

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8. The researcher had the experience of playing a guest entertainer's show when the ship hit an unexpected wave, and the piano started rolling towards the audience. He managed to hold the piano until the technical staff ran onstage to assist.

and lighting equipment are important to cruise ship musicians who wish to be heard over the guest conversation. Even relatively small venues such as Carnival's piano lounge will have a built-in entertainment system. Performance spaces and equipment must also be designed so as not to affect the ship's buoyancy (Dickinson and Vladimir 2008:54).

Conclusion

At the start of this paper, I argued that cruise tourism (as other forms of post-tourism) utilizes a different model of touristic engagement; unlike many other forms of leisure tourism, the cruise industry does not seek to construct a representation of the destination. To a large extent, it rejects the destination and constructs a play area within which tourists engage in a constructed manner. To Robert E. Wood (2004), cruise ships form a deterritorialized destination, one that has had all traces of actual physical and cultural location excised, designed to focus guests' attention on the ship rather than the destinations, and encourage guests to consume, and creating, in George Ritzer's words, "cathedrals of consumption" (2010:9).[9] The cruise ship experience does not reflect reality, but creates a hyperreality that, more than distorting the cultures through which the ship travels, attempts to sanitise and expunge them from the ship. The vessel forms a barrier that separates tourists from the physical and cultural environments through which they travel.

Onboard musical performance colludes in this cocooning, constructing a homogenized and bland western music culture, and enveloping guests in the familiar and western rather than the different and local. Musical performances are typically by musicians of western nationalities performing cosmopolitan western popular music. This is particularly so with the showbands, which, made up of predominantly of American, Canadian, British, and Australian musicians, present the carefully managed production and guest entertainer shows.

In a recent study of tourist motivation for undertaking a cruise, Hung and Petrick (2011) found that the most important reasons cited were self-esteem and social recognition (e.g., "I cruise to do something that impresses others"). Learning and discovery (e.g., "I cruise to experience other cultures") were much further down the list. Within this motivation lies the key to understanding the postmodern tourism product of cruise

9. The concept of deterritorialization been discussed by Appadurai (1990) and Deleuze and Guattari (1972).

ship music. The cruise industry demographic wishes to be pampered and to retreat from daily life in the context of a safe vacation, albeit one that is seen by others as exotic. The cruise industry responds to this need by providing huge mobile holiday resorts that cruise between exotic destinations with which cruise guests need not actually engage. Instead, tourists experience a relaxing, undemanding, and fun entertainment product in an encapsulated and fabricated environment rather than a mediated cultural encounter. Guests that engage more exclusively with this onboard experience—which includes live musical performances—are more likely to spend larger amounts of money and contribute to the profitability and success of the cruise industry.

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Crossing Cinematic and Sonic Bar Lines: T-Pain's "Can't Believe It"

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ABSTRACT. In cinematic history, black bodies have been represented as inhuman, super-human, and sub-human. T-Pain's work enacts strategic resistance to these discursive formations. T-Pain's "Can't Believe It" music video resonates with wider practices of how black bodies are represented in visual media. After an analysis of T-Pain's use of Auto-Tune as a technology that represents the human voice via machine, I articulate how T-Pain's earlier radical improvisational work with Auto-Tune and his subsequent cinematic strategies in his widely popular video represent the radical black imagination. T-Pain's "Can't Believe It" music video resonates with historical practices of how black bodies are represented in visual media. I analyze T-Pain's transformation of Auto-Tune into a subversive technology that represents the black voice via machine. I connect that sonic analysis to signifiers in the video, which are representations that deploy constructions of race, class, gender, and sexuality as they relate to notions of blackness. Crossing bar lines, the semiotics of T-Pain's trademark Auto-Tune sound, raises questions about what is at stake in the music through the generative force of sonic propulsion and the simultaneously old and novel articulation of a freedom drive propelling black performance.

> Imagination is a magic carpet / Upon which we may soar
> To distant lands and climes / And even go
> Beyond the moon
> To any planet in the sky / If we came from
> Nowhere here
> Why can't we go somewhere there?
>
> Sun Ra, "Imagination"

In this essay I argue that T-Pain uses an optic-sonic insurgency in his music video "Can't Believe It" to represent the positionality of blacks in American society and to explore black potentiality in the virtual sphere.[1] Many of the televisual representations in the video appear to be a cinematic rejoinder to the long history of black stereotypes that have historically permeated all media. I contend that T-Pain's cinematic strategies can be read productively as a political backlash against the long and continuing tradition of portraying blacks negatively in film. His video emerges at a time when contemporary music video directors working in tandem with artists have started to use CGI technology to create dynamic expressions of black bodies in alternate realities. These black artists have reterritorialized virtual spaces by increasingly creating alternative representations of blacks in music videos.[2] The guiding questions of this discussion are: How are black ontological positions represented through sonic and visual semiotics found in the "Can't Believe It" video? Does T-Pain's video function as a narrative of black resistance to codified forms of black caricature and art? What are T-Pain's specific cinematic and musical strategies of resistance?

Before we discuss the work of T-Pain it may be useful to look at examples of recent depictions of blacks in two well-known films. Recent portrayals of blacks in the American film industry have continued the long historical tradition of attributing innate criminality and inhumanity to blacks. *End of Watch* (2012) depicts many instances of blacks as criminals who behave in inhumane ways. Shot in documentary style by director David Ayer, the film features two vigilante Los Angeles police

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1. I would like to thank George Lipsitz and Anthony Burr for their suggestions and close readings of this paper.
2. This claim does not argue that African American artists have total control over how they are represented in films or videos. In recent times, however, hip-hop artists and producers have had increasing autonomy in constructing their own iconography.

officers, one, a white male ex-Marine played by Jake Gyllenhaal, and the other, his Latino partner played by Michael Peña. The opening scene features Gyllenhaal's character explaining in voiceover what it means to be a Los Angeles police officer. From the point of view of their police car's front window, we see the two officers chase at breakneck speed two black male suspects through inner-city streets. Once the inevitable confrontation occurs, a shooting match ensues, and the officers kill the blacks in perfunctory and celebratory fashion. Shot down like villains in a video game, the black males are filmed in the scene with no defining facial features. Through this technique, director Ayer emphasizes their threatening physicality as they shoot at the police officers. Later in the film, the police officers respond to a call from a South Central Los Angeles home. A black female and male—apparently under the influence of illegal substances—complain about their missing children. The black woman, whose eyes bulge as she speaks rapidly and incoherently, states that her children are missing, while the black male, now pinned down on the couch by Gyllenhaal's character, orders her to keep her silence while stating that the children are with their grandmother. Suspicious of their nervous and frenetic claims, Gyllenhaal conducts a search of the disheveled house and finds a baby and a toddler, mouths and limbs bound with duct tape. Gyllenhaal's character heroically rescues the children from the degradation and insanity of the black adults. The cinematic narrative strategy here presents blacks as agents of inhuman acts who bind their children so that they can enjoy drugs while forgetting their children's whereabouts.

Django Unchained (2012), film director Quentin Tarantino's modern-day Western, strives to give historical agency to an enslaved black male named Django, played by actor/musician Jamie Foxx. Django's agency, however, is attenuated by his position as a pupil who is intellectually inferior to his paternalistic teacher, the infamous German-born bounty hunter Dr. King Schultz (played by Christoph Waltz). Schultz rescues Django from two white slave traders. However, this salvation is conditional. Django must help Schultz find the Brittle Brothers. Though Django is freed, he is once again enslaved by Schultz, who apologetically informs Django of his conditional freedom. Tarantino gives borrowed agency to the enslaved Django character, humanizing him, but only through the tutelage of the German bounty hunter (who, in contrast to Django, is depicted as refined, educated and articulate, though he is eventually shown to be a vengeful and violent man). Upon hearing Schultz's offer to join him in finding the Brittle Brothers and use violence

against them, Django remarks, "Kill white people and get paid for it, what's not to like?" Tarantino may have been attempting to rescue the black male from historical celluloid portrayals as subservient, docile, and inarticulate. This rescue attempt, however—just like Schultz's rescue of Django—may only promote and exacerbate the perceived inhumanity of blacks by inviting the audience to enjoy Django's violence against whites.

These two cinematic cases—one that propagates the inhumanity of South Central blacks through portrayals of them as inhumane in contradistinction to the LAPD, and the other only extending partial humanity and agency to the enslaved Django through European guidance and vengeful violence—reanimate and revise tropes about blacks as inhuman in American cinematic history.[3] In response to the predominance of both historical and modern-day representations, I argue that T-Pain's video disrupts the tradition of racist representations in film by producing unconventional images and sounds that recast blackness in ways that momentarily convey—in several permutations—the fluidity and complexity of black identities.

In my critique of T-Pain's work I am not making an argument about black authenticity or claiming that he is producing protest music. Instead, I argue that his work should be placed in the category of strategic contestation. Black popular culture is not pure, has no pure forms, and cannot be a recovery of something pure. As the late Stuart Hall argued, "Always these [black popular music] forms are impure, to some degree hybridized from a vernacular base" (1998:28). Within complex structures of commercial culture, however, narratives of resistance can still be found. Popular culture relies on these narratives to perpetuate itself (Lipsitz 1988:100). The storytelling of blackness in the "Can't Believe It" music video reveals how the general demonization of black people in the imagery of popular culture drives some artists to invert, subvert, and signify on dominant sights and sounds in order to deploy them for oppositional ends.

Crossing Cinematic Bar Lines

Going beyond the common definition in music theory of a bar line as a way to separate meter into units, I use bar lines metaphorically to represent how various practices of racism and other social inequalities constrain a group's humanity. When an artist crosses bar lines he or

3. See Donald Bogle's *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Blacks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films* (New York: Viking Press, 1973).

she seeks to transcend racism and fend off despair through creative practices. Black filmmakers and musicians seek to cross cinematic bar lines in response to the perpetuation of archetypes by creating alternative images in alternative virtual spaces. Some of the signifying strategies I will analyze in "Can't Believe It" include T-Pain's conjuring of objects and events, his nonlinear traveling through space and time, and multiple representations of T-Pain's virtual black body as simultaneously large and small, as alternately silhouettes and shadows. The music video emanates from T-Pain's music production skills and sound aesthetics. This is why it is also important to analyze how the choreographed images reflect T-Pain's use of Auto-Tune technology to perform a musical fantasy. This musical performance of fantasy is represented in his use of space on the harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic levels. Following a brief biography of T-Pain, I will discuss his strategic use of Auto-Tune. I will then discuss in detail how T-Pain crosses the bar lines through cinematic strategies.

Hip-hop singer and rapper T-Pain (Faheem Najm) was born June 30th, 1985. The "T" of "T-Pain" signifies Tallahassee—the city in Florida where he was raised—and the "Pain" part of his stage moniker signifies the pain he suffered while growing up in northern Florida. Due to his imaginative use of Auto-Tune pitch correction plug-in software to improvise and create various sonic textures, T-Pain has become a music industry phenomenon. T-Pain's music video "Can't Believe It" is a text filled with iconic signs that represent black male agency through contemporary and mythological representations of virtual social life. Similar to the work of Sun Ra in *Space Is The Place* (1974), as well as several other black artists across different genres, T-Pain's work simultaneously creates and signifies on alternative realities.[4] Meanings are never fixed. One cannot be certain of what T-Pain exactly intends to communicate through his manipulation of Auto-Tune timbre or the images in his videos. His cultural production does provoke questions, however, about what his sonic and visual representations suggest regarding constructions or representations of black masculinity. The sights and sounds of his video for "Can't Believe It" exemplify the work of African American artists who resist archetypical representations of black bodies. T-Pain's representations depict agency derived from an understanding of blackness that registers on the outskirts of civil society.[5]

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4. Too many artists fit this description for a footnote. However, artists that come immediately to mind include George Clinton, Janelle Monae, Kanye West, Busta Rhymes, Michael Jackson, Anthony Davis, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and Charles Mingus.

5. Civil society, from the point of view of afro-pessimism, represents social institutions that are never fully accessible to blacks because of their status of social death.

Before analyzing the images, it is important to examine the pitch and rhythm scheme from which the music video images were choreographed.

The Sound of Racial Identity In Auto-Tune

T-Pain utilizes Auto-Tune pitch-correction software in ways that defy its originally intended uses.[6] His innovative use of technology extends from the black music tradition of manipulating and reshaping technology to meet new musical needs that reflect different cultural priorities. For example, rap producers have challenged established mixing techniques, formulaic lyric construction, and the limits of the distortion zone by pushing the bass levels past what is considered musically appropriate by the dominant culture (Rose 1994). The manipulation of sophisticated music technology to reflect cultural priorities is connected to the black composer/improviser's long tradition of transforming European acoustical instruments on the level of sound and technique. Adolf Sax likely never imagined the reinvention of his instrument via the technical innovations and unconventional timbre in the work of saxophonist John Coltrane. Many music critics have largely misunderstood these ferocious transformations of musical technology. Such modernist music criticism has been reflected in critiques of Miles Davis's trumpet technique. Jazz critics in the modernist tradition failed to understand and appreciate that Davis did not strive to achieve European standards of trumpet performance (Walser 1993). Rather, Davis's trumpet performances—and I would include his compositions as well—were a manifestation of an aesthetic that comes from a unique understanding of music, community, and politics. This also holds true for hip-hop artists. The distinctive way in which T-Pain uses Auto-Tune software suggests how he is thinking about sound and how that sound reflects his racial imagination.

Before T-Pain's innovative use of Auto-Tune, pitch-correction software was predominantly used to correct out-of-tune vocal notes in the popular music industry. T-Pain uses Auto-Tune instead for creating desired sound

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6. Antares Auto-Tune, invented by Dr. Andy Hildebrand, is a software plug-in designed for use in both studio and live settings to correct out-of-tune or wavering pitches in a singer's performance. Using sophisticated analytical and algorithmic processing techniques, Auto-Tune compares a vocal performance in real time to a user-specified scale, in most cases corresponding to the key of the composition. If the singer is either flat or sharp in relationship to a given target note, then pitch correction is applied according to several smoothing variables in the software. If the singer is singing at the correct pitch, no automated correction occurs. T-Pain's "brand" is no longer associated with Antares Auto-Tune; since 2011 he has launched his own production style software, *The T-Pain Effect*, with iZotope (Brown 2011).

effects that stem from his musical and racial imagination. For T-Pain, audio technology is not a prosthesis—it is a means for innovating a racially authentic sound. Employing the formidable technological apparati of the studio, T-Pain's goal is to sound racially "natural" or "authentic."

We can connect T-Pain's reinvention of musical tools to a growing list of musicians who continue to reinvent sound on instruments long associated with European performance traditions. These reinventions are central to the Afro-diasporic musical traditions. While acknowledging the inescapable hybridity of black musical forms (Hall 1998), I contend, as other scholars have, that African musical traits not only survived the Middle Passage but continue to play a role in the development of various types of African American music (Floyd 1995; Maultsby 1990; Stuckey 1988). The repertoire of trumpet sounds from Miles Davis or the anti-pianism of Thelonious Monk, for example, illustrate the historical and cultural practice of reinventing sound on "traditional" instruments. Instruments once used to represent pastoral scenes of a European countryside have been transformed through percussive embouchures, innovative breath control, and fingering techniques to create sounds that represent the quotidian tribulations of marginalized communities. Socially marginalized players who emerge from these communities develop different musical values, and thus have different musical priorities. This is why it is necessary for African American musicians to transform traditional European instrumental technology and modern recording studio technology into instruments that reflect their imaginations. Social marginalization of black musicians has kept their cultural production from being fully commoditized. Though black music thrives as an international commodity, black musicians have the ability to retain some level of autonomy within the commoditization because blacks continue to exist on the outskirts of "civil society." As Amiri Baraka explains,

> Afro-American music, because of its exclusion as a social product yet ultimate exploitation as a commercial object, could influence that whole of the musical (and social and aesthetic) culture of the U.S. and even be subjected to mind-boggling dilutions and obscene distortions; yet the source, the Afro-American people, was spared the full "embrace" of commercial American absorption because of their marginalized existence as Americans. (2002:261)

Despite the wholesale commodification of black popular music on the international scale, a space for innovative music making by black musicians remains, because economic and social marginalization continues to be a catalyst for innovation. While T-Pain is one of the most

commercially successful artists in the music business, and while his music and representations can appear to support sexism and racial stereotypes, his past musical innovations through Auto-Tune and the related, imaginative cinematic representations in his "Can't Believe It" video can also be recognized as important commentary on social and racial matters. T-Pain's popularity is built upon his reinvention of Auto-Tune pitch correction software for his own creative purposes and cultural priorities.

Through Auto-Tune technology, T-Pain sought to create an innovative sound based on both the "natural voice" and the saxophone. As T-Pain states, "My dad always told me that anyone's voice is just another instrument added to the music. . . . I got a lot of influence from [the '60s era] and I thought I might as well just turn my voice into a saxophone" (Sniderman 2011). Using Auto-Tune technology and various production equipment to create a sound that reflects 40-year-old production values, T-Pain has been criticized by Raphael Saadiq and by rapper/business mogul Jay-Z, who titled one of his songs "D.O.A. (Death of Auto-Tune)" (2009). These criticisms proceed from the idea that audio technology can and should capture a natural or pure black voice. Yet the idea that the recording process captures the natural (black) voice, or any natural or authentic acoustic sound, is an illusion. From the beginning, audio recordings have been technologically manipulated or enhanced. Audio recording has never recorded a pure or authentic sound, and this includes recordings of black voices. While many still believe the purpose of the recording process is to record sound as authentically and transparently as possible, "all popular music recordings could be analyzed as technologically determined artifacts, even though some might appear to be more or less the result of technological intervention and manipulation than others" (Warner 2009:135). T-Pain's work embraces technology to trouble the binary between racially authentic sound and technologically manipulated sound.

T-Pain "credits the core of his music and lyrical style to R. Kelly and Cee Lo Green, two R&B artists known for their expressive—and unfiltered— voices" (Sniderman 2011). Citing the late singer Amy Winehouse as an example of a musician who achieved a vintage sound on *Back To Black* (2006), T-Pain discusses being influenced by the musical production of older recordings from a past era:

> I'm leaning more towards old school Neve and TubeTech preamps and tube compressors. . . . I was amazed at how they made Amy Winehouse's *Back to Black* sound like it was made in the fifties, and

> I think a lot of that had to do with the old school hardware they used when making the album. (Guitar Center Interviews)

T-Pain bends modern technology to make his Auto-Tuned voice reflect the sound of crooners like Sam Cooke. This contrasts the sound in rap songs like Ice Cube's "Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It," which is focused on representing an ironic and aggressive representation of black masculinity. T-Pain explains:

> I feel like my sound comes from a similar place, like old crooners like Sam Cooke or even the old Stevie Wonder stuff. I want to go towards that sound, so you need the right hardware to do that. You can't just get a bunch of plug-ins and make that happen. You have to record to tape and use old tube hardware. (Guitar Center Interviews)

Tricia Rose has argued that rap producers have used sampling as a musical time machine to access and reframe present sounds produced by black artists from the 1970s (Rose 1994). In this process, black cultural priorities in sound are continually revised and expanded to adapt to modern social conditions. T-Pain's creative use of Auto-Tune fits within this tradition of sonic revision. He reaches back in order to go forward. One may argue (as a fellow musicologist once did to me) that since T-Pain's voice is mediated by Auto-Tune, T-Pain is liberated from historical constructions of the black male voice—you cannot hear racial signs in his music. Therefore, my colleague argued, we should not analyze his work within the tradition of black male singers. T-Pain, the argument goes, has achieved a post-racial musical sound through technological obscuration. My colleague's argument indicates a belief that the use of technology swallows identity and that technology renders the sound of racial identity mute. Such arguments reflect the notion that "corporate power assumes an important, even dominating role in conditioning our thinking about computers, art, image, and sound" (Lewis 2000:36). However, T-Pain's Auto-Tuned version of racial sound is deliberately highlighted at the same rate his voice is mediated. Auto-Tune for T-Pain is a means to highlight racial identity in sound, not an end. In T-Pain's desire to represent disbelief and fantasy musically, he creates a rhythmic scheme that narrates an ethereality through musical techniques of time suspension and implied beats.

Rhythmic Representation of Fantasy and Space in an Eight-Bar Phrase

One of the first things listeners may hear while listening to "Can't Believe It" is the subtlety of the rhythm track. The rubato opening acts as an ethereal prelude while the arpeggiated keyboard sound combined with guitar evokes a mystical sonic backdrop. This brief, nonmetric twenty-one-second prelude prepares the listener for the repetitive harmonic sequence, which will soon follow, forming the basis for T-Pain's Auto-Tune panegyric on love. Rhythm is not foregrounded in this song. No ostinato bass line is used to outline the meter or pulse. T-Pain's musical priorities appear to be creating a sound of fantasy and magic. The sound of fantasy is achieved through the use of subtle rhythm tracks and sparse bass lines. Rappers in the past have crossed the bar lines by pushing the bass sound far into the distortion zone, making the bass drum the loudest sound on the record, and purposely bleeding the bass sound into the other tracks (Rose 1994:77). In contrast, the relatively subdued rhythm track on "Can't Believe It" likely indicates that T-Pain wished to prioritize other musical aspects in order to reflect the lyrical message of disbelief and fantasy. The surreal atmosphere is buffeted by a high-pitched, synthesized, descending pentatonic melodic riff that occurs at the beginning of every four-bar phrase. These registral and musical aspects are prioritized in the mix to represent suspended space and fantasy. T-Pain also uses rhythm to create a feeling of suspension in time.

T-Pain samples a finger-snapping sound and bass drum in the repetitive eight-bar rhythm sequence of "Can't Believe It." A feeling of space is created through T-Pain's placement of beats in the song. In this minimalist soundscape, T-Pain creates a contrast in register and timbre through the orchestration of high-pitched finger snapping complemented by a low register bass drum. The finger snapping occurs on beats two and four in common (4/4) time. The way the rhythm is divided in this sequence is what makes the song interesting, because the rhythmic divisions simultaneously create rhythmic tension and a feeling of space.

With the exception of the last beat in bar 8, T-Pain emphasizes a feeling of space and rhythmic tension by putting a rest on the fourth beat in the seventh bar. The two sixteenth notes occurring in the middle of measures 2-3 and measures 6-7 emphasize the space left on beat four of bar 7. By deliberately leaving a rest on beat four for most of the eight-bar phrase, both the sixteenth notes on beat three and the downbeat are pronounced. The repetition of rhythms in the song remains interesting

due to the unexpected inversion of the rhythms in bars 2 and 3. It is not a full inversion of the rhythm because of the variations on measure 1 in bar 4. The offbeat sixteenth note on beat four of the repetitive eight-measure phrase also keeps the repetitive rhythm interesting by emphasizing the downbeat. In bar 5—the beginning of the second half of the eight-bar phrase—the stop-time or "break" creates space in the form and allows T-Pain to emphasize the words and the descending melodic figure that occurs at the beginning of every four-bar phrase. The prominence of T-Pain's verbal text is essential here. The rhythmic scheme is designed to accompany, not dominate the text. T-Pain creates a feeling of suspension in time through a calculated instability. This feeling of chronological musical suspension not only creates harmonic interest, but is also evidence of a sonic performance of resistance to the expectation of a steady, predictable, common time beat.

How are these musical strategies connected to the video? The music I have analyzed here is important because it provides the essential backdrop of the music video. The sparse musical texture likely inspired the fantastical imagery of black bodies effortlessly traveling through space and time, unhampered by borders. It would seem that T-Pain and the directors absorbed the musical semiotics and lyrics of fantasy in the song and used that material as the foundation for the creation of the film.

Virtual Performance of Fantasy and Social Life

The award-winning music video was created with computer-generated imagery (CGI) by the design and live-action directing company Syndrome: Design and Direction. When I contacted Syndrome to see how much artistic input T-Pain may have had in the representations of himself, I was told that the information I wanted regarding production was not available. I was also told that speaking with the design team was not a possibility (March 5, 2013). Yet Syndrome's own statements indicate that T-Pain had a significant influence on the kind of images he wanted his audience to see. Members of Syndrome wrote:

> The vibe and energy clicked very naturally between Pain and ourselves and that energy spilled all over these videos. It's one thing to have an artist stand in front of a green screen and perform, but when they interact and play off of what the treatment calls for, *that interaction takes it to another level by adding the emotion and soul* [my emphasis]. T-Pain really went hard with his performances and got

what we were going for *ultimately being the key ingredient to bringing the concepts to fruition* [my emphasis]. ("Robot Film's")

Does Syndrome's description of the collaboration indicate that T-Pain realized Syndrome's artistic ideas rather than that Syndrome acted as a conduit for T-Pain's racial imagination? Without more information one cannot say specifically how the creative process worked. Yet Syndrome's design team was clearly influenced by T-Pain's presence and direction in the studio. The design team was also influenced by T-Pain's Auto-Tuned music and the lyrical content, which discusses various locations around the world.

> I think his music video was his vision . . . after taking a pound a meth . . .
>
> YouTube comment from ballinpc223

T-Pain's agency is represented in the way he magically conjures objects and events. His magical agency is also represented in the way he transports himself and his love interest through virtual space to locations around the world. Rooted in the collective DNA of blacks spread throughout the African diaspora, the once-covert practice of conjuring continues to be openly represented in African American musical and cinematic expression. Indeed, black musicians such as T-Pain may use conjuring codes in their cultural production as a strategy of identity affirmation without understanding that in other historical periods, "conjurational performances" by enslaved Africans "ensured the practicioner's personal survival or vocational integrity" (Smith 1994:125).[7] To be sure, T-Pain uses conjurational codes in his film as a cultural strategy of "deformation of mastery" (Baker 1986).[8]

In the following eight scenes of the T-Pain video, I read various representations of black mysticism and benign black magic that represent

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7. For more on African American conjuring practices please see also see Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983).

8. The concept of "deformation of mastery" is defined as an African American cultural strategy manifested in a metaphorical phaneric mask that is used to distinguish rather than conceal differences. The phaneric mask displays and advertises difference as a form of agency. Deformation of mastery concerns creating an indigenous performance and sound art that is used to protect territory and raise the survival possibilities of an endangered group. Deformation of mastery is intended to display strength and sound that represents a peculiar indigenousness. Following Houston Baker (1986) and Graham Lock (1999), I found the deformation of mastery concept useful in discussing T-Pain's musical and cinematic strategies.

a virtual black humanity. The function of T-Pain's allegory is not only linked to representations of impossible transformations; the scenes also work as an allegory of black social life. While many representations are problematic (representations of his love interest might be deemed highly problematic for their sexism), this video is nonetheless important in its representation of insurgency against common representations of blackness. Visual representations of blacks in films are never arbitrary or left to chance; they represent corporate decisions about what those images are supposed to portray or signify. American film history reveals many examples of how religious organizations and film industry policies have dictated which races were praised and idolized, and which races were degraded on the silver screen (Robinson 2007:201). Degrading depictions of nonwhites, or European races that were "not white enough," were enforced and policed with institutional vigor. This is why the work of black minstrels on the stage has a direct connection to depictions of resistance in early independent black film. These cinematic strategies were manifested in such visible ways as an all-black cast. Robinson argues, "By the late nineteenth century, minstrelsy had come to contain concealed resistances, gestures of opposition smuggled in and hidden by the black minstrel performers so prominent in the form. Their impact was to be reflected in a second cinema: the independent Black film or all-black-cast film" (2007:130). Despite a clear difference in historical circumstances, a direct correlation connects these early cinematic strategies of resistance in the work of early black filmmakers and modern-day music video cinematic strategies of hip hop performers and producers. Representations in the work of T-Pain can be placed in the celluloid genealogy of black resistance film that extends back to the subversive performances of black minstrels. Black artists have also resisted the commodification of black bodies by representing black bodies in self-portraits that are disfigured. Alternative representations of blacks should not be criticized within the hegemony of western art history discourse but should be read instead as resistance to portrayals of black bodies in the western art history canon. As Nicole Fleetwood argues,

> Because idealized projection and fantasy are associated with whiteness in Western discourse, black portraiture and self-portraiture function quite differently in dominant visual representation and canonical art history. Portraits of black subjects by black artists often serve as counter-narratives to cultural and discursive meaning associated with blackness and black bodies. They also become locations for creating critical genealogies and archives that speak to

very different audiences; many of these works play with vanity and excess. . . . These portraits often included aesthetic and discursive severing, cutting, and splaying that reconstitute "black bodies from crude commodities and ciphers into fashionable actors performing in displays and expositions of their own making." (2011:113)[9]

Such depictions of corporeal resistance by black artists, whether in film, self-portraiture or any other medium are related to what Afro-pessimist scholar Frank Wilderson calls the "grammar of suffering" (2010:10). Wilderson defines grammar of suffering as related to the social death of blacks, which "can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic design)" in film (2010:5).[10] However, I argue that representations of blacks and blackness in music videos become liberated through transmogrification. The depictions of magic and agency in "Can't Believe It" are productions and representations of a virtual agency that represents social life, not social death.

Strategies of Cinematic Deformity

Does the magical world of play and travel possibilities represented in T-Pain's "Can't Believe It" video reflect a desire to represent a kind of black posthumanity that counters the historical ideas of black bodies as objects? Perhaps. The argument that black artists have a peculiar and privileged access to constructing artistic representations through informational technologies that re-conceptualize the human has been borne out in various media of black cultural production (Weheliye 2002:29). This is true because, on every level, blacks were denied human status for centuries. The practice of creating new racial constructs to combat racist representations extends all the way back to black minstrelsy, where black

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9. Fleetwood quotes from Richard J. Powell, *Cutting a Figure: Fashioning Black Portraiture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

10. According to Wilderson, "Blackness's grammar of suffering" arrises from an "antihuman" ontological position (Wilderson 2010). Wilderson defines ontology as "the capacities of power—or lack thereof—lodged in distinct and irreconcilable subject positions, e.g., Humans and Slaves" (14). Illustrating the tension between these irreconcilable subject positions, or the Human (whites) and Slaves (blacks), Wilderson asserts that the institution of slavery renders blacks "always already void of relationality" to society (18). Blacks are "socially dead" to the rest of the world. This idea is based on Wilderson's distinction between the experience of slavery by whites—who still had human status while enslaved—and the ontological position of slavery for blacks. Moreover, the perpetual outsiderness that is blackness is the ontological yardstick by which humanity "establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal integrity" (18).

minstrels performed in whiteface in such shows as *A Trip to Coontown* (1898). Black minstrels had an investment in tearing down constructs that upheld stereotypes and reinforced the practice of lynching blacks (Robinson 2007:155). The act of putting on whiteface make-up was designed to challenge racialized archetypes of blacks through disrupting the practice of imitating blacks (53). These performances by blacks in whiteface were considered a bold and revolutionary act, "because they emerged without preconceived signifiers" (274). These strategies of black minstrel resistance found their way into independent black films such as Oscar Micheaux's *Within Our Gates* (1920). More recently, we can find posthuman counter-representational strategies in the work of musicians such as Sun Ra, Rammellzee, and Mad Mike—artists who have avoided creating works that reflected "a really pointless and treacherous category" of the human (Eshun 1998:193).

While the majority of posthuman representations in popular culture have been based on white males, T-Pain's cinematic and musical strategies are not based on white liberal conceptions of selfhood. T-Pain's art reminds us that the idea of a universal humanism—a humanism that equally applies to all subjects—is a fallacy (Wilderson 2010). It would reasonably follow that there can be no universal post-humanism (Weheliye 2002). Whether one is talking about the radical use of pitch correction software (as in the case of T-Pain's use of Auto-Tune to improvise), cutting-edge computer graphics, or any use of intelligent machines, black musical expression—in all of its hybridity—cannot be based on values of universal liberal subjecthood. Historically and in our present time, neither that particular worldview nor privileged life experience is available to the socially marginalized. As Alexander Weheliye has argued, the notion that splicing human beings together with intelligent machines maximizes human capabilities (Hayles 1999:290) changes when one understands the tension between the black subjecthood of "New World Black Subjects" and the sign of the human (Weheliye 2002:29). T-Pain, in his use of Auto-Tune and in the representations of black subjects in his video productions, joins the many contemporary black artists who have rejected the need to create representations of humanity in their work, "bypassing the modality of the human in the process of moving from subhuman to posthuman" (29).

I am interested in how cinematic strategies of racial resistance also occur in T-Pain's music videos. In music videos such as Busta Rhymes's "Gimme Some More" (1998), hip-hop artists have used the music video format to challenge black cinematic archetypes (Dickinson 2007). Artists

such as Busta Rhymes and T-Pain allow themselves to be portrayed in music videos that are "deliberately antirealist as if to pour scorn on the project of realism ever being able to portray African American experience, and to rescue them from the often blunt unimaginativeness to which realism often adds up" (23). The fantastical images of Busta Rhymes as a padded muscle man juxtaposed with the blazing speed with which he "spits rhymes" directly challenges the limiting narratives of blacks in film. The interventions represented in the video promote "technological addition rather than narrative limitation" (24). Dickinson also argues, "These televisual moments are part of a surprisingly beneficial synaesthetic strategy that is catapulting African American representation off into new, and hopefully less constricted spaces—ones where more advantageous relationships between finance, music, and the moving image might possibly be achieved" (24). Representations of defying bodily limitations have also been shown in the work of rapper/actor Ludacris in "Roll Out (My Business)" (2001), a music video that critiques intrusive fans. Ludacris is shown performing boxing moves at high speed while key words of his lyrics are splashed across the screen. Additionally, his body is deformed, with a large head and smaller body parts. "Get Back" (2004) has representations of Ludacris with oversized forearms, which he uses repeatedly to punch out opportunistic black men who desire to have access to his wealth and status. In the end of the video, his head explodes into blue and white confetti that slowly falls into the streets. This grotesque caricature of Ludacris is a means to an end. Deformity in this case may be designed to present alternate black representations that both reinforce and challenge black archetypes.

"Can't Believe It" opens with representations of T-Pain in dual versions of himself. Dressed in his trademark ringleader hat and white Oakley sunglasses, T-Pain's head is slightly titled down, and his face points to the right. T-Pain conjures a miniature version of himself, appearing magically out of a swirling, amorphous white dust that rises from his right hand. This immediate representation of doubleness already indicates a complex fluidity associated with his virtual blackness. T-Pain's conjuring of himself is synchronized to a long Auto-Tune sigh—first an exhalation and then an inhalation. The coloristic texture of the scene's background is fused with shades of grey and violet. Coordinated with this vocal expression of desire, a dancing mini-T-Pain sings, "She make me feel so good / better than I would by myself or / if I was with somebody else," with accompanying expressive gestures. While mini-T-Pain is singing these words, the larger

Figure 1. T-Pain opening conjuring scene in music video "Cant Believe It"

T-Pain figure appears stoic in comparison to the animated mini-version.

   In the backdrop of a faint circular light, a silhouette of a woman appears center stage when T-Pain sings, "She make the people say 'yeah'." The black woman emerging from the silhouette is his love interest and the reason he can't believe his good fortune. Changing quickly from a silhouette into an African American woman in a black miniskirt, T-Pain's love interest walks suggestively on a celestial runway toward the viewer. Her transformation, like T-Pain's, happens out of clouds of dust fragments, although less dramatically than T-Pain's earlier manifestation in smaller form. In this sequence, we first see blue swirling rings. These blue swirling rings encircle the representation of the black female subject. The trope of the rings has multiple meanings. They remind the viewing audience and consumers of T-Pain's Thr33 Ringz brand, they highlight T-Pain's love interest, and they work as a segue device between the sequences of the music video. The swirling clouds of dust fragments indicate a benign black magic and black creativity. T-Pain's act of creation in this film is a representation of black male power, but it is also a seductive bewitchment. While his black female object of desire passively looks on, T-Pain conjures out of white dust a gold antique frame, which quickly becomes a portal to the next location.

Borderless Blackness and Time Travel

In the "Can't Believe It" music video, T-Pain boasts about the various places he is able take his love interest, while he simultaneously transports her to the places. Indeed, his video reflects his lyrics. Through borderless time-travel we witness T-Pain transport his love interest to a cabin in Aspen, Colorado, a condo in Toronto, a mansion in "Wiscansin" and a beach in Costa Rica. T-Pain's notion of heterosexual black masculinity may be embedded in representations of African American women as pliant when they are offered travel and wealth, but this is not a new trope in the hip-hop world. T-Pain represents his ability to break through boundaries that blacks face in quotidian life through representations of traveling to various locations around the world. What makes "Can't Believe It" a fantasy song is that it is designed to appeal to T-Pain fans that likely have no discretionary income for travel, and in some cases, may never have traveled out of their urban environments. "Can't Believe It" is filmed to simultaneously represent two types of desire: the desire of a new romantic infatuation and the desire to break free from segregation and poverty-induced geographical limitations. In a Guitar Center interview, T-Pain indicated that the songs he writes and the images he produces are designed to inspire factions of his audience who cannot travel: "Not everybody can travel all over the world. A lot of people never leave their state, city, or even neighborhood. I like to sing about things that get people inspired, but you can only do that if you can relate to them" (Guitar Center Interviews). This is why representations of boundless travel may appeal to audiences that desire to broaden their experiences of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. T-Pain's and Syndrome's cinematic representation of black potentiality in characters that have limitless access to travel are what make these representations vital, important, and a strategy of resistance.

Through T-Pain's white dust, the frame erupts into a shimmering gold rectangular portal, which he uses to transport his love interest to seemingly random exotic locales. The notion of transforming one's experience through physical and imaginative travel has been prominent in the collective black imagination. The black travel trope has historically been a part of black cosmology and culture, and this travel trope has been expressed in all of the African American arts. Historical African American narratives are saturated with the theme of travel away from slavery and oppression. In the enslaved black community's collective imagination, blacks envisioned flying back to Africa, taking the chariot to heaven, or escaping through the Underground Railroad (Szwed 1997:134). These ideas

of flight or escape are the foundation of many blues songs that celebrate locomotion as a way to freedom (Floyd 1988). Similar to Sun Ra, who stated that "space is the place" for blacks, virtual space for T-Pain is a way "to relocate himself so as to embody all time and nature and to escape the confines and limits of life on earth" (Szwed 1997:130).

When T-Pain sings, "and you don't understand she make the people say 'yeah'," T-Pain with two open hands casts glittering smoke towards the feet of his love interest, who is encircled by blue-white light. With this spell, T-Pain conjures a red and yellow contraption that quickly becomes a roller coaster. Suddenly, T-Pain and his love interest are on the roller coaster, which now proceeds through a large mouth representing a portal, with swirling eyes and burgundy top hat. This is another representation of the T-Pain circus brand, but it is also another representation of black doubleness and deformity. Entering through the portal on the conjured roller coaster, T-Pain and his love interest are immediately in the nexus of a metroplex with a composite of iconic, urban skylines. As indicated by a sign, this virtually represented city is Toronto. While they travel down the unstable and slippery slopes of the roller coaster under a full moon,

Figure 2. T-Pain, conjuring an urban roller coaster

T-Pain sings, "She on the main stage, she make the people say 'yeah'."
As the word "yeah" is repeatedly sung, its text appears three times in
different configurations, floating freely around the architecture of the roller
coaster. The visual text functions as a yellow and red neon billboard that
emphasizes the sung text and the color themes of the T-Pain brand. The
roller coaster, which passes under the text, leads the viewer to the next
scene, now in a new locale. A sign shaped as a red hat with yellow letters
spelling "Thr33 Ringz Condos," is above the entrance of a skyscraper.
Before the entrance, T-Pain and his love interest stand in front of a red
Lamborghini Murcielago.

   Following this frame, a giant-sized T-Pain smiles and glances at a globe
held in his right hand. As T-Pain sings about a "beach house on the edge of
Costa Rica," we see the text "Costa Rica" on the globe, further emphasizing
this next "exotic" location where T-Pain will transport himself and his love
interest. In this virtual Costa Rica, this virtual beach, T-Pain conjures a
white, exotic flower from his left hand while singing that the flower is for
his love interest to put in her hair: "Put one of them little flowers in your
hair, having you look like a fly mamacita, fuego." As a transitional device
and thematic connector, three large golden rings follow the exotic beach
scene, traveling from the middle of the screen towards T-Pain's torso. He
subsequently casts these rings about as he sings, "cause you look so good
/ you make me wanna spend it on all you." These three rings become a
simulacrum for personal wealth; traces of golden light intersect with the
golden rings that are cast upward. As the rings are cast into mid air, they
also become portals for circus-themed events. The shiny golden rings
frame the digitized circus characters, all returned from previous sequences.
Juggling clowns, leather-clad dancers, tumblers and gymnasts, white-faced
sidekicks, and black women dancing on stilts all erupt from the three rings
that T-Pain has cast.

   A log cabin in Aspen, Colorado is another location where T-Pain and
his love interest travel. High on a snow-covered, sunny mountainside
embraced by virtual clouds, a tree-lined multilevel log cabin stands in
exclusive and eerie isolation. Entering through a rear window adorned
by transparent white curtains, the viewer is transported across a wooden
table with place settings for six. Yet it quickly becomes apparent that
two face-painted members of T-Pain's entourage join him and his love
interest covertly in the log cabin behind the couch. The representations do
not indicate why. In this new scene, the attire has also transformed; the
changing of clothes with changes of scene signals the new setting, showing

Figure 3. T-Pain with love interest in log cabin in Aspen

a variety of forms of black style and black wealth. Both T-Pain and his nameless love interest are foregrounded with yellow translucent orbs that splash across their bodies, emanating from the sunlight hovering above.

While at first glance the interior of this virtual log cabin appears to be inhabited only by the virtual human forms of T-Pain and his love interest, menacing white-faced phantoms lurk and peer from behind the tan couch on the right side of the virtual room. I was only able to see these figures when I viewed the video frame by frame; with eyes trained on the central subjects, it would be easy to miss this covert symbolism. In the cabin's fireplace is a mantle adorned by a deer or antelope head. This sequence ends with the scene enclosed in a snow globe.

The next sequence opens with T-Pain's object of desire in front of a vertical knife-throwing table. More importantly, encircling both her and T-Pain, in front of the revolving, vertical knife-throwing table, is a circular stream of illuminated halos. This echoes the theme of black phantasmagoria that is prevalent throughout the video. T-Pain's love interest appears on "stage" with tinsel curtains in the background, but is

quickly transported away. In the middle of the video, we are shown an array of white figures that are deformed and lack the same kind of vibrant animation given to T-Pain and other lesser prominent characters in the film.

Continuing with the circus theme, a collage of white freak-show archetypes dance in the scene. Segregated from the rest of the characters in the video, the white circus archetypes are represented as near-static objects, whereas the representations of T-Pain and the love interest are animated. The images consist of red-masked musclemen who carry chains and anchors in their teeth while holding a dumbbell, across from a scantily clad woman who also carries a cannonball in her teeth. Foregrounded in this scene is a sword-swallower in the motion of swallowing two swords, one in his right hand, another in his left. In front of this first muscleman's right leg is the misspelled word "Aluring" in red ink, with an off-color background shaped as a circle. Despite the misspelling of the word, one gets the reference, defined by Webster's online dictionary as "the quality of being powerfully and mysteriously attractive or fascinating." More
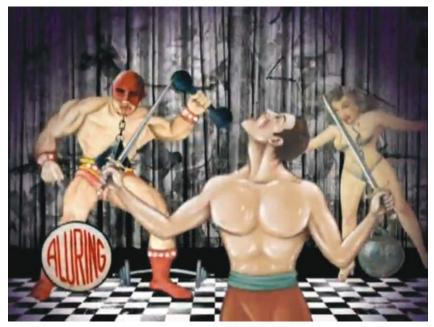

Figure 4. Representations of white otherness in circus theme

representations in this sequence ensue. For example, double-headed bodies hang upside down amidst an obese caricature of a blond woman dressed in blue and violet clothing. A two-headed, seemingly Egyptian woman stands with both hands extended in opposite directions, forearms perpendicular, flat hands perpendicular to forearms, in an archetypal pose. This Egyptian woman stands in a fire across from what appears to be a redheaded woman in a green bikini who peers at herself in a mirror, admiring her beauty. Above her to the right side is a caricature of a grey-eyed brunette woman with a half-simian face. Directly across from her on the right side is more written text. In capital letters in black font the word "ALIVE" appears in a yellow circle. The stage recedes from the viewer while the gradations of deformity increase as the frame disappears into a cloud of smoke. Why are these images ghettoized in the film, almost to the point where the images are disruptive and seemingly patched together? Other than buttressing T-Pain's circus theme, why are the images all white? Why are the white images less animated than the black images? Why did the film director choose these images to represent white deformity?

Another sequence opens up with another sartorial transformation. T-Pain is dressed in a dark blue fur coat and a charcoal-colored top hat wrapped in a band of dark blue, light blue, and silver around the brim. The clothes have particular significations: T-Pain's top hat becomes a portal for a visual cacophony of circus characters that stream upward, like smoke, in interlocking figures. Contorted, digitized Asian circus acrobats do handstands, kicks, and flips while two juggling, masked clowns in polka dot outfits follow them about. Amid this display are two female black-leather-clad African American dancers who, because they have no clear thematic connection to the circus theme, represent an anomaly in relation to the other characters. Immediately following this scene, another appearance of T-Pain finds him dressed in his original ringmaster uniform. In the backdrop of fireworks, smoke, and halos, which have combined to become a connective trope in these sequences, T-Pain sings and dances while his entourage comes out one by one to represent the end of the show.

T-Pain uses an array of cinematic strategies in "Can't Believe It" to express agency through representations of black social life. Moreover, as an Auto-Tune improviser, T-Pain uses technology to sound natural and authentic. He strives to sound like a saxophone, similar to the way Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald imitated improvising instrumentalists to revolutionize their voices. T-Pain composes a rhythmic scheme that represents fantasy and travel to various locations. He uses a sparse,

Figure 5. T-Pain with blue top hat as portal

repetitive rhythm, creating tension by emphasizing the third and fourth
beats. Polyrhythms are manifested in the high-pitched finger snapping
and complex syncopated bass lines. T-Pain's visual fantasy serves as a
spectacular representation of black social life, inviting those with limited
opportunities for travel to journey with him to far-flung locales both
real and imaginary. While his video was produced by Syndrome, T-Pain
influenced the way his body—and the bodies of others—are represented in
the music video. The black bodies in T-Pain's videos are not commodities.
Rather, they represent vanity, excess, and—most importantly—freedom
in a world apart from earth. T-Pain crosses bar lines through the creation
of alternate depictions of black life outside of civil society. As Sun Ra once
explained, "Myth permits man to situate himself in these times and to
connect himself with the past and the future. What I am looking for are
the myths of the future, the destiny of man. . . . I believe if one wants to
act on the destiny of the world, it's necessary to treat it like a myth" (Lock
1999:61).

In the video for "Can't Believe It," T-Pain uses both pitch correction software and cinematic representations to create a semiotics of black fantasy in virtual space. T-Pain manipulates Auto-Tune to present an alternative, aural topography of fantasy. What may thrill us from watching these fluid, televisual representations is the pleasure of hearing and viewing free flight—a claiming of virtual space to represent a non-monolithic race. Yet the overarching theme of T-Pain's spectacular audiovisual travels is not the escape from harsh everyday realities to seemingly random urban and exotic locales—though it may be tempting to reduce the motivation behind the art to that conclusion. Rather, through a circus-themed brand, T-Pain's audiovisual strategies are designed to represent an alternate reality of black play, borderless travel, and conjuring powers as a multilayered antipode to the representations of historical and contemporary black pathology that are still virulent and prominent in the mass media industry. Perhaps buried underneath the CGI shape-shifting techniques is the metaphorical train trope storied in African American folk music through the ages. After all, moving, getting away, and transcending the reality of social inequities is still a vital impulse in African American art.

For Sun Ra, outer space was explicitly the alternative destiny where African Americans were fully entitled to participate in technology and other aspects of mythical life (Lock 1999). Ra's sartorial, sonic and visual insurgency was designed to advertise boldly a black alien subjectivity that battled dehumanization while representing infinite, black potentiality.

In his way, T-Pain also represents alternate destinations with familiar names like Aspen and Toronto. Yet naming and showing animated versions of those real places is not as important as representing the idea of global citizenry and bold space travel. T-Pain represents a powerful black masculinity that conjures events through omnipotent acts to please his African American love interest, represented in the video as a silent love interest. To be sure, the politics behind T-Pain's music and visual productions are not as easily accessible or clear as the politics of Sun Ra. Guthrie P. Ramsey reminds us:

> Meaning is always contingent and extremely fluid; it is never essential to a musical figuration. Real people negotiate and eventually agree on what cultural expressions such as a musical gesture mean. They collectively decide what associations are conjured by a well-placed blue note, a familiar harmonic pattern, the soulful, virtuoso sweep of a jazz solo run, a social dancer's twist on an old dance step, or the raspy grain of a church mother's vocal declamation on Sunday morning. (2004:25-26)

Yet the absence of black pathos and the celebration of play and borderless travel is a political statement. The transformation of T-Pain's vocal diction and tonality through Auto-Tune improvisation is a political statement about black subjectivity as well.[11] T-Pain's work in "Can't Believe It" is a popular music product of mass media culture. But his work is also the continuation of cinematic African American trickster storytelling traditions of benign black magic—a representation of the crossroads where sound and picture work together to produce a counter-narrative threaded through spatial and sonic alternate realities. In this way, T-Pain crosses the cinematic and sonic bar lines to represent an alternative version of blackness. As George Lipsitz explains, "People fight with the resources at their disposal and frequently their pain leads them to quite innovative means of struggle. . . . Storytelling survives, even when the story tellers develop coded and secret ways of communicating with one another, inside and outside of commercial culture" (1988:221).

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Reimagining the Poetic and Musical Translation of "Sensemayá"

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ABSTRACT. This paper conducts a comparative microanalysis of the oral tone poem "Sensemayá, Un canto para matar una culebra" (1934) by Cuban poet Nicolas Guillén and the orchestral piece, *Sensemayá* (1938) by Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas. Within the historical backdrop of Guillén and Revueltas's shared commitment to social, racial, and political issues in Mexico and Cuba, the poet and composer partake in a form of aesthetic cross-fertilization that begins dissolving the discursive mechanisms that isolate the domains of letters and of music. I position my study within a theoretical doctrine of translation, as developed by Efraín Kristal through his critical interpretation of Jorge Luis Borges's short stories (2002), with the purpose of reshaping the methodological approach to critical comparative studies of music and poetry. I first discuss the historical intricacies of Guillén and Revueltas's political ideologies, aesthetic principles, and shared friendship. I then examine the critical musicological studies from the late 1980s and 1990s that have discussed this poem and musical piece in order to identify their shortfalls and more holistically supplement these studies with my analysis of crucial poetic devices and processes of listening to poetry in "Sensemayá."

In this article, I aim to analyze in detail the cross-comparative relationship between the poem "Sensemayá" from the 1934 *West Indies, Ltd.* publication by Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, and the 1938 orchestral piece *Sensemayá* by Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas. Stemming from extensive studies on this subject as posited by Charles K. Hoag (1987), Peter Garland (1991), and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon (1998), I would like to propose an alternative theoretical mode of conceptualizing and reconfiguring this musico-literary comparative analysis by drawing from a theory of translation posited by Jorge Luis Borges (Kristal 2002). More specifically, this theory of translation dissolves the linear historicity or the sacredness of the "original work" that the translator is beholden to as

> To assume that every recombination of elements is necessarily inferior to its original form is to assume that draft nine is necessarily inferior to draft H— for there can only be drafts. The concept of the "definitive text" corresponds only to religion or exhaustion.
>
> Jorge Luis Borges,
> "The Homeric Versions" (1932)

faithfully or unfaithfully translating the work at hand.[1] Instead, Borges conceptualizes the act of translation, and the translation itself, as a process of recreation that holistically takes into account the translator's creative license in light of the work he or she is translating. Rather than reducing this process linearly, translation studies within a Borges theoretical framework opens the possibility of examining processes of translation as a constellating continuum of several components such as the historical, aesthetic, and linguistic pieces that contextualize this process. The studies conducted by Hoag, Garland, and Zohn-Muldoon operate under this more traditional mode of linear historicity that I intend to dissolve in my case study.

Drawing from Borges and considering Revueltas's piece as a translation of Guillén's poem, the domains of music and poetry as manifested in these two works demonstrate overlaps that need to be carefully discussed. In order to determine the aesthetic decisions made by Guillén and Revueltas,

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1. See the Matthew Arnold v. Francis W. Newman debate on theory and practice of translating Homer in Matthew Arnold's *On Translating Homer: Three Lectures Given at Oxford (with F.W. Newman's Reply),* (London: Millford Oxford University Press, 1861).

I will compare specific rhythmic variations, stress accents, meter, and linguistic tonal devices operating within the poem of "Sensemayá." Then I will determine how these devices are transformed in *Sensemayá*. To open this in-depth analysis, I will lead with a recording by Nicolás Guillén reciting "Sensemayá" and argue the methodological and historical importance of listening to the recited poem in addition to reading the poem as a critical first-step to this poetic and musical process of translation. This approach will shift the critical studies of Revueltas's *Sensemayá* as it relates to Revueltas's handwritten manuscript (Garland 1991), the bass ostinato (Hoag 1987), and other rhythmic elements in the piece. This literary and audio analysis of the poem, not conducted in such depth in the previous studies, is paramount to understanding why a composer would value Guillén's poem as an integral point of departure for *Sensemayá*. I suggest that the tonal and metric variations that operate in *Sensemayá* more clearly inform our understanding of the inherent musical and tonal characteristics in the poem. Additionally, I will discuss the specific ideological, racial, and social issues Guillén raises when poeticizing this Afro-Cuban religious ritual, as well as how these raised issues connect to Revueltas's and Guillen's shared political and intellectual sympathies particular to Cuba and Mexico in the 1930s.

By conducting a micro-analysis of one instance where a poem is set to music, I propose a more detailed methodological approach to examining the cross-comparative aesthetic, musical, and poetic particularities in both works. Consequently, I would like to dissolve the discursive mechanisms that have positioned Guillén and Revueltas as isolated figures quarantined in their specific national, artistic, political, and public identities and affiliations. Reevaluating this comparative study illustrates a more complex matrix of sociological, religious, poetic, and musical values that relationally position Guillén and Revueltas as artists, intellectuals, political activists, and friends.

Borges: Theory of Translation as a Lens for Comparison

Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon provides an extensive study that "attempts to precisely ascertain how Revueltas based his symphonic work on Guillén's poem" (Muldoon 1998:155). He concludes that this process of integrating poetic form into music form constitutes part of the "wonderful cycle of transliteration begun by Guillén's reenactment of an Afro-Cuban snake

rite in his poem, and brilliantly continued by Revueltas's reenactment of Guillen's poem in his symphonic work" (155). Zohn-Muldoon's choice of "transliteration"—the rendering of the letters or characters of one alphabet system into those of another alphabet system—is the very concept that I wish to examine. By extension, I will consider "translation," as theoretically framed by Borges, to reconceptualize the bridge between poetic and musical form. I argue that Zohn-Muldoon falls short in suggesting that Guillén's poem begins this cycle of transliteration through reenacting the Afro-Cuban snake rite, which is continued in Revueltas's reenactment of Guillén's poem. What Zohn-Muldoon does not recognize is that the process of transliteration of Guillén's poem to Revueltas's piece does not begin and end there—they are both part of a greater continuum. To suggest that Revueltas bases his symphonic work on Guillén's poem is to ignore the notion that Revueltas had the creative license to transform and recreate the poem in musical form.

Efraín Kristal positions Jorge Luis Borges's short stories as doctrines of translation that provide an alternative theoretical basis for how to critically challenge and eradicate linear historicity within the process of translation (2002).[2] Zohn-Muldoon's study upholds this linearity between Guillén's and Revueltas's works that I would like to reconfigure. Although Borges is concerned with literature, I would like to expand this theoretical framework to critique the translation between two different media, poetry and music. One of the recurring themes in Borges's writings centers on the process of translation as subjected to the judgment of linear historicity (Kristal 2002). Nevertheless, Borges argues that all literature exists in a greater continuum of translations of translations: "His bias is in favor of bracketing those considerations in the hope that translations may attain the same status as original works of literature" (Kristal 2002:33). Removing the historicity or the sacredness of the original work, where the translator is beholden and evaluated against the spirit of the author, a specific ideal, or essence of the original work, Borges opens the possibility of conceptualizing the act of translation—and the translation itself—as a process of recreation rather than a literal translation or copy of the original (32). A literal translation attempts to maintain all the details of the original, but changes the emphasis, or understood meanings, connotations, associations, and effects of the work. Contrastingly, a recreation omits the many details in order to conserve the emphasis of the work, with added

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2. Although not an inclusive list, the primary short stories and essays that suggest these issues of translation include "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote," "The Circular Ruins," "Averroes' Search," and "The Immortal" (*Labyrinths* 1964).

interpolations (32). Kristal notes that Borges believes a faithful translation is one that can retain the meanings and effects of the work, whereas an unfaithful translation changes them.

Translation as a theoretical concept allows for the negotiation and dissolution of differences and boundaries between two linguistic forms of expression and, in this particular case, two artistic media. Translation paradoxically renders the possibility and impossibility of fusing these different worlds. It is possible because these different linguistic, idiomatic, or musical modes of expression subtend a kind of sameness in the forces that drive them; it is impossible because of the nuanced residues of expressive modes that cannot be fully conveyed across linguistic and musical divides. Guillén and Revueltas shared in the same spirit of political activism of La Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (LEAR) (League of Writers and Revolutionary Artists)—resisting fascism and sharing a deep friendship. They also shared in the effort not only to respect each other's artistic endeavors, but to translate them into their own work.

Guillén and Revueltas: Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios

Nicolás Guillén and Silvestre Revueltas were brought into acquaintance with one another in 1937 when Guillén received an invitation to participate in El Congreso de Escritores y Artistas convened by LEAR, (Augier 1965:200). LEAR was an organization of artists and intellectuals whose political and social ideals aligned with the Mexican Communist Party during the 1934-1940 administration of Lázaro Cárdenas government (Azuela 1993). Before meeting Revueltas, Guillén had already published three collections of poetry—*Motivos de Son* (1930), *Sóngoro Cosongo* (1931), and *West Indies Ltd.* (1934)—all in a time period that marked a dramatic political turn in Cuba after the fall of the dictator Gerardo Machado and the takeover of the Communist Party. In addition to low labor wages, mass poverty, and the struggle against the Machado dictatorship and their imperialist sympathies, Guillén also concerned himself with racial and social injustices. He contributed significantly to the literary movement of black poetry in his poetic works, newspapers, and magazines (Augier 1965:158-159). Guillén shared the same political sentiments with LEAR and, by extension, the Spanish Republic battling against Franco's fascist party.

LEAR defined itself as a proletarian organization seeking to restore diplomatic relations between Mexico and Soviet Russia, promote true culture for the productive masses, legalize the Communist Party, and raise class-consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat (Azuela 1993:85-86). From 1934-1938, LEAR built an alliance of poets, painters, musicians, playwrights, educators, scientists, architects, and filmmakers who published in LEAR's journal *Frente a Frente* (*Head to Head*), fulfilling their social function as revolutionary intellectuals and pointing out the dangers of cultural production at this time (Hess 1997). In addition to Revueltas and Guillén, LEAR members included poet Juan Marinello, Mexican poets Carlos Pellicer and Octavio Paz, the Republic's ambassador to Mexico Félix Gordón Ordás, the Mexican composer Luis Sandi, the painter Fernando Gamboa, Gamboa's wife and journalist Susana Steele de Gamboa, the poet and writer María Luisa Vera, the author of children's literature Blanca Trejo, and Revueltas's brother José Revueltas (Hess 1997:297). The editorial policies, declarations, and illustrations of each publication expressed the artists' commitment to contemporary social issues, employing culture as a weapon against fascism, Nazism, and imperialism.

Revueltas served as LEAR president from May 1936 until February 1937 (Revueltas 2002). In 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out and ignited LEAR's active support. In response, Revueltas and LEAR organized the 1937 Congreso de Guadalajara (Congress of Guadalajara) in Mexico, whose attendees included Nicolás Guillén, José Chávez Morado, Octavio Paz, María Luisa Vera, Elena Garro, and José Mancisidor. Collectively, they formed part of a delegation that traveled to Spain and attended the Congress of Valencia to demonstrate solidarity with the Spanish Republic (Revueltas 2002).

Consequenctly, Revueltas and Guillén solidified their friendship as political compatriots, fellow intellectuals, and artists during the Congress of Guadalajara and their subsequent visit to Spain. During the social gatherings in the course of their stay in Guadalajara, many of the writers and artists shared their work with one another. According to Eugenia Revueltas, daughter of Silvestre Revueltas, the members would gather at La Casa Kostakowski—a social space where Revueltas would gain the inspiration to compose *Sensemayá* after listening to Guillén recite "Sensemayá" (2002:180).

In addition to Guillén, Revueltas established friendships with other poets that shared his political and aesthetic values, including Mexican

modernist poet Ramón López Velarde, Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, and Mexican poet Carlos Pellicer. According to an account given by Pellicer, the poet and composer solidified their friendship during their 1937 visit to Spain (1973:25). On their ship ride from Spain to Mexico, Revueltas personally requested a copy of Pellicer's collection of poems, *Hora de Junio* (1937). Shortly thereafter, Revueltas telephoned Pellicer informing him that he had composed a small orchestral piece for woodwinds, piano, and percussion entitled *Tres Sonetos*—a piece inspired by three sonnets from Pellicer's *Hora de Junio* (Pellicer 1973:25). This is yet another musico-literary moment with Revueltas worth studying in more depth.

Folklore and Ideology in Guillén's "Sensemayá"

The word *sensemayá* is a combination of *sensa* (Providence) and *Yemaya* (Afro-Cuban Goddess of the Seas and Queen Mother of Earth). The poem poeticizes an Afro-Caribbean snake dance rite conducted by the practitioners of the Palo Monte Mayombe religion. Palo Monte Mayombe derives originally from the Central African Bakongo and other Bantu cultures (primarily in the Congo, Cameroon, and Angola), and it is one of the leading Afro-Caribbean creole religions of the largest Spanish-speaking Antilles (Murrell 2010). The religion operates in concordance with nature, and it places strong emphasis on the individual's relationship to ancestral and nature spirits and its practitioners. The Palo *mayombero* specialize in infusing natural objects with spiritual entities to aid or empower humans to negotiate the problems and challenges of life (Murrell 2010:136). Palo Monte is often referred to as Reglas Congas (Kongo religions) and has accrued more symbolic names than one wishes to count; however, these locutions share a common historical creole African-Spanish signification of an African spirituality.[3] *Palo* and *monte* are creole-Cuban creations that have a distinct connection to the religious import of trees for the Bakongo people. Palo is a Portuguese and Spanish word for tree, while Mayombe is forest area in the Central African Kongo region. The Mayombe forest serves as a sacred space where courts, debates, marriages, and initiations are held; thus, Palo practitioners augur the religion's dual Kongo and Cuban spiritual reality (136).

In the poem, the snake is portrayed not only as the snake on earth to be killed, but as the sacred Infinite represented by the Snake itself—a spiritual

3. Murrell enumerates more common symbolic names such as: Palo Monte Mayombe, Congas Reglas, Reglas de Palo, Regla de Conga, Regla de Palo Monte, Las Reglas de Conga, Palo Kimbisa, and Santo Cristo Buen Viaje (2010:136).

entity with which the mayombero or Palo infuses the snake. The killing of the snake, a sacred creature, symbolizes renewal, fertility, growth, and wisdom. This is because snakes shed their skin annually, linking them to the rainbow, heavens, gods, and the earth for African and pre-Christian civilizations (Kubayanda 1990:105). Because it is a dance ritual, the bàtá drums are usually deployed, with the *iyá* (mama drum) playing the dominant role (105).

Another interpretation by Keith Ellis discusses the poem's heightened feelings and emotions, as manifested primarily by the rhythmic refrains, finding them to be excessively serious for folklore about killing a snake. The snake acquires a status of symbolizing imperialism and the need for definitive liberation (1983:83-84). Additionally, the title of the collection of poems, *West Indies Ltd.*, suggests the geographical unity of the territories that form the imperialist enterprise conveyed by *Ltd.* (85). *Ltd.* alludes to several islands of the West Indies, including Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica, which had sugar estate work forces of primarily black African descent and managed by North American commercial industries.

Kubayanda finds that Ellis's conclusions reduce the poem's significance to merely social and political ends (1990; 1983); in so doing, Ellis ignores the ritual and Afro-Cuban creole specificities of this snake dance. According to Kubayanda's interpretation, the snake-spirits are common among Bantu cultures in Zaire and East Africa. The death of the snake represents not a silence of extinction, but a silence that stands in harmony with Creation and the Absolute (Kubayanda 1990:107). Taking both Ellis and Kubayanda's interpretations into account, this poem brings sociological, historical, and ethnographic value to the greater social consciousness of Cuba that Guillén raises.

Upon the publication of *West Indies Ltd.*, Guillén conducted readings and lectures of his poems at the conference "Cuba: Pueblo y Poesía" ("Cuba: Popular and Poetry") at the Institución Hispanocubana de Cultura in 1937 (Augier 1965:198). His lectures discussed the historical importance of creating an African-Spanish reawakening of national consciousness in Cuba, a reawakening that would include the African languages, music, religions, and rituals that contributed to the historic and economic development of Cuba as a nation (Ellis 1983:83-84). Guillen's commitment to the social injustices the African black criollo community faced would weave itself through "Sensemayá," through the integration of Spanish verse with Central African Bakongo vernacular and rituals.

Sensemayá *Canto para matgar una culebra*	**Sensemayá** *Chant to kill a snake*
¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!
La culebra tiene los ojos de vidrio; la culebra viene y se enreda en un palo; con sus ojos de vidrio, en un palo, con sus ojos de vidrio.	The serpent has eyes made of glass; The serpent comes, wraps itself round a stick; with its eyes made of glass, round a stick, with its eyes of glass.
La culebra camina sin patas; la culebra se esconde en la yerba; caminando se esconde en la yerba, caminando sin patas.	The serpent walks without any legs; The serpent hides in the grass; walking hides in the grass, walking without any legs.
¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!
Tú le das con el hacha, y se muere: ¡dale ya! ¡No le des con el pie, que te muerde, no le des con el pie, que se va!	Hit it with the ax, and it dies: hit it now! Don't hit it with your foot, it will bite you, Don't hit it with your foot, it will flee!
Sensemayá, la culebra, sensemayá. Sensemayá, con sus ojos, sensemayá. Sensemayá con su lengua, sensemayá. Sensemayá con su boca, sensemayá . . .	Sensemayá, the serpent, sensemayá. Sensemayá, with his eyes, sensemayá. Sensemayá, with his tongue, sensemayá. Sensemayá, with his mouth, sensemayá . . .
La culebra muerta no puede comer; la culebra muerta no puede silbar; no puede caminar, no puede correr. La culebra muerta no puede mirar; la culebra muerta no puede beber; no puede respirar, ¡no puede morder!	The dead serpent cannot eat; the dead serpent cannot hiss; cannot walk, cannot run. The dead serpent cannot see; the dead serpent cannot drink; cannot breathe, cannot bite!
¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, la culebra . . .* ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, no se mueve . . .* ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, la culebra . . .* ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *¡Sensemayá, se murió!*	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, the serpent . . .* ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, is not moving . . .* ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, the serpent . . .* ¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé! *Sensemayá, he is dead!*

Figure 1. Guillen's "Sensemayá." English translation by Roberto Márquez (*The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* 2009:221-222).

Musico-Literary Analysis of "Sensemayá" and *Sensemayá*

Borges's theory of translation provides a fruitful approach for placing Revueltas's *Sensemayá* and Guillén's "Sensemayá" in comparative dialogue with one another. Revueltas's work represents a process of transforming and recreating Guillén's poem while remaining faithful in conserving the emphasis of Guillén's work; however, the current scholarship on this subject, as initiated by musicologist Peter Garland and further developed by Zohn-Muldoon (1991; 1998), construe this process to be more of what Borges discourages—that of interpreting *Sensemayá* as a literal translation of "Sensemayá." Both musicologists argue that Revueltas maintains all the details of the original while taking some liberty to transform the poem into an orchestral piece.

The basis of this argument stems from Peter Garland's 1991 research, which draws on the fact that two versions of *Sensemayá* were originally written: the first score, composed in May 1937, is scored for chamber orchestra and is more sparse and open-textured; the second score, completed in March 1938, is for a much larger ensemble (Garland 1991:181). Referencing the original handwritten manuscript of the first version, Garland points out the two places in the score where Revueltas himself penciled in the text of the poem underneath the musical themes that correspond to them. The first example (Figure 2) shows the handwritten notation reflecting the syllabic characteristics of the poem's refrain, "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!" In the second example (Figure 3) Garland shows a similar case with the poem's line "La culebra tiene los ojos de vidrio" ("The snake has eyes of glass") handwritten below the equivalent musical notation.

In both examples, Garland compares the unpublished version scored for chamber orchestra with the published final version scored for a larger orchestra. From these findings, Garland concludes that "the whole structure of *Sensemayá* falls into place quickly, and with surprising similarities and structural affinities with the poem. The text-music relationship is indeed more literal than simply an 'evocation'" (1991:132). Garland interprets the literal text-music relationship as the equivalence of syllables and rhythmic notation. He discusses a third instance where the title word "Sensemayá" can be rhythmically identified in the tom-tom and bass drum, which, played in the first measures, provides one of the keys to the entire rhythmic identity of the piece.

Similar to the other two cases, Garland highlights a syllabic relationship with rhythmic notation to show how Revueltas may have applied this

Figure 2. *Sensemayá*, "Mayombe" theme from version one (manuscript) starting at rehearsal no. 6, measure 5; and from published score, rehearsal no. 11, measure 2, strings (Garland 1991:182)

Figure 3. *Sensemayá*, theme/section corresponding to stanza from version one, starting at rehearsal no. 7, measure 5 in the trumpets; and from the published score, starting at rehearsal no. 13, measure 2 (brass) (Garland 1991:184)
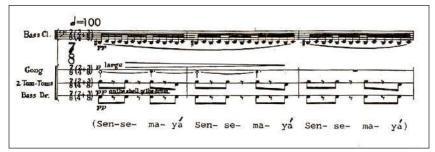
Figure 4. *Sensemayá*, opening measures: "sensemayá" theme articulated in tom-tom part (Garland 1991:184)

concept in *Sensemayá*. As played by the tom-tom and bass drum, each syllable of "sensemayá" is represented by single eighth notes.

Although Garland makes a convincing case about these two specific instances where Revueltas's may have conducted a more literal translation from text to musical notation, Garland is too quick to argue that the rest of the orchestral piece follows this mimesis. Garland does not provide evidence of any additional handwritten notes, which leads me to surmise that Revueltas perhaps was not as concerned with this literal text-music relationship as Garland suggests. Revueltas may have taken these specific poetic motifs as points of departure for recreating the poem according to his creative preferences and skill. His translation is one that does not concern itself with maintaining all the details of the original, but rather exercises his compositional techniques to produce a recreation of the poem.

Similarly, Zohn-Muldoon also takes Garland's literal text-music relationship, but he expands the interpretation of the orchestral piece to suggest that it also projects the stanzaic structure, dramatic and symbolic meaning, and atmosphere of the text. He suggests that *Sensemayá* was designed as a song:

> In fact, it seems to me almost inconceivable that a composer of Revueltas' stature would have gone through so much trouble in faithfully setting every word of the text had his compositional intent been solely to obtain and justify a melodic contour and sectional divisions. It is a far more congruous proposition to assume that both the compositional process and the musical material in *Sensemayá* are designed, as in a song, to forcefully project and expand the meaning of the text. (1998:143–144)

To an extent, Zohn-Muldoon embraces the notion that Revueltas takes the musical and artistic license to recreate and expand the meaning of the poem. He goes through a series of interpretations discussing how Revueltas renders the performance of the snake rite musically: the opposing forces of man (embodying good) and the snake (embodying evil) represented by the woodwinds and low brass instruments; the agonizing climax of killing the snake as manifested through the inclusion of loud noise (gongs and cymbals); the pitch continuum (the glissando in the strings); and its general harmonic stasis and repetitive melodic fragments (Zohn Muldoon 1998:146). In short, Zohn-Muldoon believes the orchestral piece tells the story of the snake rite, where the music instruments "sing" the text of the poem underlined with "cinematic procedures in order to comment or depict events narrated in adjacent stanzaic passages or events implied between the stanzas that precede it and follow it" (1998:144). But his interpretation of how Revueltas expands the meaning of the poem fundamentally relies on this literal text-music translation. Zohn-Muldoon attempts to finish the work that Garland initiated, assigning every word to notation in order to support his argument that the poem can be construed as a song form.

Zohn-Muldoon assigns the text to sixteenth notes with the implication that the trombones "sing" the verses; however it remains questionable
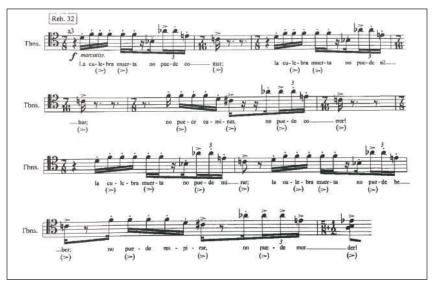

Figure 5. Stanza 6, rehearsal no. 32 (Zohn-Muldoon 1998:142)

whether Revueltas would have composed such a simulacrum of text to music. Because the tempo of the piece is marked at one hundred beats per minute, these words would be recited and sung at an inconceivably fast rate. The final syllable of the words "sil-bar," "co-mer," "mi-rar," be-ber," and "mor-der" are delayed and implanted in the next measure, creating awkward and choppy phrasing. It construes a musical inconceivability and unsoundness of assigning the text to these notations, and singing this text aloud could sound awkward and choppy.[4]

Zohn-Muldoon attempts to be highly exact in matching syllables to notes. When considering the musical conceivability of this, it leads to the conclusion that Revueltas was inevitably subsumed and swallowed by the text's functions. Zohn-Muldoon's analysis upholds the historicity and sacredness of the original that he construes Revueltas to also remain beholden to.

Garland and Zohn-Muldoon's analyses suggest an exact text-music relationship that could recall Borges's short story "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" (1944). Borges shares Novalis's idea that a translator is allowed to transform the original, but he remains indifferent to Novalis's view that the translator should act in the writer's spirit (Kristal 2002). For Borges, the translator should not be held to the demand that they should merge with the original writer's spirit. Borges's indifference to Novalis's view is illustrated in the short story when Menard considers becoming one with Cervantes; however, he soon rejects the idea and continues with his project of producing a work that becomes identical to pages found in *Don Quixote*. Ultimately, Menard continues as himself and not as Cervantes (Kristal 2002:31). The literal text-music analysis that Garland and Zohn-Muldoon conduct implicitly positions Revueltas as beholden to the spirit and essence of the author Guillén. With this interpretation, Revueltas appears to have little or no creative license to change and transform the poem in new ways.

But the question still remains: Why would Revueltas choose to conduct this literal syllabic-musical note translation with the moments "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" and "La culebra tiene ojos de vidrio," as evident in the original manuscript? Garland and Zohn-Muldoon's literal text-musical note analysis provides little speculation as to why this is so, primarily because their scholarship misses the careful attention and analysis that the poem itself merits. Both musicologists take the text and content literally without recognizing the fundamental ideophonic, musical, and rhythmic forms of the poem that are crucial in the understanding of it

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4. This analysis came out of a discussion with Steven Loza, UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology, in May 2013.

and the Afro-Cuban snake rite that it poeticizes. To argue that Revueltas saw the poem as mere "text," as Garland and Zohn-Muldoon posit (1991; 1998), is to ignore the poetic devices that enliven a musical experience in the poem; these provide a new layer of understanding to the translation process. This recreation also needs to take into account the aesthetics of the poem itself—aesthetics that Revueltas translates and recreates in his orchestral piece. I attempt to deepen the analysis of the poem and focus more closely on the poem's musicality and the poetic devices with which it is imbued. My hypothesis reconfigures the two moments illustrated in the original manuscript to determine how and why Revueltas translates this in his orchestral piece.

Listening to "Sensemayá"

Returning to Eugenia Revueltas's article, let us revisit the moment in 1937 when Guillén recited "Sensemayá" aloud in La Casa Kostakowski. As Eugenia Revueltas states, Revueltas "no perdía una palabra y estaba atento a su lectura" ("Revueltas did not miss a word and was attentive to his reading") (2002:180). What is key is that Revueltas heard this poem recited, suggesting that Revueltas may have also identified the rhythmic, metric, and accentual characteristics of the poem. In the recording of Guillén reciting "Sensemayá," there are more clues as to what this experience may have been like for Revueltas.

In the 1960s Nicolás Guillén recorded a vinyl record, *El son entero en la voz de Nicolás Guillén*, where he recited "Sensemayá" and twenty-two other poems from his various published works.[5] Published in Buenos Aires by Collección Poetas, this album is part of a series that also recorded the Spanish poets Federíco García Lorca's and Juan Ramón Jiménez's poetry. Spanish poet Rafael Alberti Morello, a personal friend and political compatriot of Guillén, served as the author of the album's back cover.[6] He describes Guillén's published works, highlighting Guillén's commitment to voice the social and political struggles in Cuba and of the greater Caribbean

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5. This vinyl recording, *El son entero en la voz de Nicolás Guillén*, should not be confused with *El son entero* (1947), a collection of poems that Guillén published in Buenos Aires.

6. For a more intimate understanding of the friendship Guillén and Alberti shared, Centro Virtual Cervantes has posted online personal epistolary correspondences between the two poets (1959–1964): http://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/alberti/sobre_poeta/sobre08.htm. *Epistolario de Nicolás Guillén* (2002) by Alexander Pérez Heredia and *Rafael Alberti en Cuba* (1990) by Angel Augier study this relationship between the poets in more detail.

through poetry and song. Additionally, Alberti sheds light on the musicality of Guillén's voice:

> Canta Nicolás Guillén con milagrosa facilidad. En todas las épocas de su poesía la universalidad de voz alcanza a representar todos los hombres, pues puede oírse de diferentes maneras: atendiéndose a su profundidad o su gracia, bailando o doliéndose. Cuando es la propia voz del poeta la que dice sus hermosos versos pocas veces alcanzara la poesía tan alto nivel de belleza. (Alberti, *El son entero en la voz de Nicolás Guillén*)

> Nicolás Guillén sings with miraculous ease. Throughout the eras of his poetry, the universality of his voice has come to represent all men that can be heard in different forms: speaking to its profundity or its grace, dancing, or in pain. When it is the poet's own voice who recites his beautiful verses, poetry shares in the rare moment of reaching a higher level of beauty.[7]

Guillén recites the entire poem in a consistent and precise tonal, rhythmic, and metric form. This can be most explicitly heard in the "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!" and "Sensemayá" poetic motifs. Guillén consistently and precisely recites the accented stresses of these lines, which are underlined by the 8-meter count.

As Guillén recites the "Mayombe— . . ." motif, he also maintains a consistent variation in tone that rises in pitch in correspondence with the stressed accents on the word. Moreover, for "Sensemayá . . ." Guillén's pitch rises and falls in alternating lines: in the line, "Sensemayá la culebra," he rises in pitch with the "yá" syllable and falls with "la culebra." In the following line, "Sensemayá," he maintains a single pitch for the "sen-se-" and then falls in pitch for the "yá." This is repeated for the remaining six lines of this stanza. The poem maintains this rhythmic and pitch pattern that Revueltas could have recognized and may have led him to handwrite these particular motifs in the manuscript.[8] Listening to the poem recited by Guillén allows for the analysis of the musical, rhythmic, ideophonic, and tonal facets that are necessary for a critical evaluation of why this particular poem is set to music. Listening to Guillén's recording is a critical first step towards understanding the musical and rhythmic intricacies of this poem.

The *son* rhythm specifically is one of the driving aesthetic principles in Guillén's poetry. In a 1930 interview, Guillén correlates rhythm to the formation and understanding of the black Afro-Cuban:

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7. All translations from citations in Spanish are my own.
8. As discussed in Peter Garland's 1991 article.

1	**2**	3	**4**	5		1	2	**3**	*Meter: 8*
May	<u>**OM**</u>	be—	**BOM**	be—	/	May	om	<u>**BÉ**</u>	*Accent Stress: 2, 4 /3*

1	2	3	**4**		1	2	**3**	4	*Meter: 8*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>	/	la	cul	<u>**EB**</u>	ra,	*Accent Stress: 4 /3*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>						*Accent Stress: 4*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>	/	con	sus	<u>**OJ**</u>	os,	*Accent Stress: 4 /3*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>						*Accent Stress: 4*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>	/	con	sus	<u>**LEN**</u>	gua,	*Accent Stress: 4 /3*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>						*Accent Stress: 4*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>	/	con	su	<u>**BO**</u>	ca,	*Accent Stress: 4 /3*
Sen	se	ma	<u>**YA!**</u>						*Accent Stress: 4*

Figure 6. Accent stress: Guillén's "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!" and "Sensemayá"

El negro cubano—para constreñir más nuestro pensamiento—vive al margen de su propia belleza. Siempre que tenga quien lo oiga, abomina del son, que hoy tanto tiene de negro; denigra la rumba, en cuyo ritmo cálido bosteza el mediodía africano. . . . El ritmo africano nos envuelve con su aliento cálido, ancho, que ondula igual que una boa. Es nuestra música y esa es nuestra alma. (Augier 1965:94-97)

The black Cuban—to compel our thinking more—lives at the margins of his own beauty. Always when someone has to listen to him, he detests the *son*, which today carries so much blackness; he denigrates the *rumba*, in whose warm rhythm the African yawns at noon. . . . The African rhythm wraps us up in its warm, extensive breath that undulates like a boa. It is our music and it is our soul.

For Guillén, rhythmic communication represents the embodiment of a persecuted but resilient civilization, which defines Cuba socially, politically, and historically. In addition to this aesthetic principle, Guillén also incorporates the five-beat clave rhythm into several of his poems through five-syllabic lines. Poems such as "Son número 6," "La guitarra," and "Tú no sabe inglé" (Figure 7) incorporate this five-beat accentuated *son* pattern in particular stanzas of each poem.

"Son número 6"	**"Son number 6"**
Adivinanza	Riddle
de la esperanza:	of hope:
lo mío es tuyo	what's mine is yours
lo tuyo es mío;	what's yours is mine;
toda la sangre	all blood
formando un río.	forming a river.
"Guitarra"	**"Guitar"**
El son del querer maduro,	The son of mature desire,
tu son entero;	your complete son;
el del abierto futuro,	that of the open future,
tu son entero;	your complete son;
el del pie por sobre el muro,	that of one foot over the wall,
tu son entero . . .	your complete son . . .
"Tú no sabe inglé"	**"You don't know English"**
Vito Manué, tú ni sabe inglé,	Vito Manué, you don't even know English,
tú no sabe inglé,	you don't know English,
tú no sabe inglé.	you don't know English.
No te enamore má nunca,	Don't ever fall in love again.
Vito Manué,	Vito Manué,
si nos abe inglé,	if you don't know English
si no sabe inglé.	if you don't know English.

Figure 7. All three poem excerpts are found in an anthology of Guillén's works: *El son entero: suma poética* 1929–1946 (1947/1982). "Guitarra" and "Son numero 6" are found in *El son entero (inédito)* (127-128, 134). "Tú no sabe inglé" is found in *Motivos de Son* (1930:23). English translations from Spanish are my own.

In "Son número 6" the entire stanza strongly accentuates this five-syllable rhythm, while in "Guitarra" the repeating alternating line "tu son entero" accents this five-syllable rhythm. In the third poem, the repeating line "tú no sabe inglé" carries this recurring rhythmic motif.

Guillén's commitment to the social injustices faced by the Afro-Cuban community contributes significantly to the aesthetic decisions he undertakes to revive and reimagine the subjectivity of the black community; the most prominent means to channel this subjectivity is through "African rhythm." Kubayanda pulls from Guillén's own proclamations and interprets the "Sensemayá" rhythmic structure as the artistic cross-fertilization of language, polymeter, polyrhythm, and cross-rhythmic patterns. The African-Caribbean drum serves as myth, metaphor, and the aesthetic principle of Guillen's Spanish-Yorùbá poem (Kubayanda 1993:90-91).

It is important to note, however, that Kubayanda and Guillén himself fall into the trap of essentializing the concept of African rhythm and suggesting a positive myth of what "blackness" and "African" constitutes. Since the 1990s, ethnomusicological scholarship has shifted to critically challenge the theories and conjectures made about African rhythm—a form of study that has not produced a common analytical practice or metalanguage so far (Agawu 2003). Kubayanda's conjectures draw primarily from ethnomusicologist Arthur Morris Jones's theories and terminologies to describe rhythm and related phenomena, which have often overcomplicated African rhythm in unproductive ways (Agawi 2003). According to Agawu, the lack of productive engagement in producing a core of organizing principles regarding African rhythm and music has "in turn facilitated the propagation of certain myths, including notions such as polymeter, additive rhythm, and cross rhythm, among others" (2003:72).[9] As a result, these concepts have proven unsupportable as models in the repertoires they have been applied to, while perpetuating myths that have persisted in popular imagination and scholarly writing (72). It is more fruitful to analyze the exact rhythmic and metric devices Guillén employs in his poem that resist blanketing over-statements of "African rhythm" or "drum poetry," and at the same time to reconfigure our understanding of Revueltas's musical translation of an already inherently musical and rhythmic poem.

The poem's aesthetic principles play with the classic Spanish meter and rhyme schemes in such a way that it would be false to categorize it as a poem of verso libre, or free verse (verses with different numbers of metric syllables and irregular rhyme) as Kubayanda proposes (1993). Guillén's poem instead simultaneously conserves and resists the classic meter and rhyme schemes in Spanish poetry in an attempt to create a new poetic principle—that of stressed accents in a consistent pattern throughout each stanza. The poem calls for an examination of the rhythmic and accentual devices that constitute the main organizing principles of the poem. The poem carries out four-, six-, eight-, ten-, twelve-, and even seven-syllabic meters that are organized irregularly in the poem; the rhyme scheme upholds rima abrazada (enclosed rhyme [ABBA]), and rima cruzada (alternating rhyme [ABAB]) that are organized within each stanza. Nevertheless, the alternating forms of rhyme and meter manage to maintain the consistent accentual rhythmic form that unify the poem. Figure 8 demonstrates the breakdown of the consistent accentual

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9. Agawu lists thirty-eight terms that have been commonly used to describe rhythm and related phenomena (2003:72).

and rhythmic characteristics in Spanish, Yorùbá, and the ideophonic language—despite the varying forms of meter and rhyme.

The poem's hemistiches are positioned according to the natural pauses and tempo of reciting the poem out loud, an essential device that serves as the basis for the placement of accentual stresses in each verse. Traditionally, hemistiches are utilized in verses of nine or more syllables per verse to create a natural pause for breath and to divide the verse in two parts of equal syllabic counts. Guillén's verses also call for a hemistich in each verse, although they do not create the equal set of syllabic counts as in a classic Spanish poem. When looking at the poem in its entirety, "Sensemayá" appears to have an irregular placement of hemistiches; however, when considering each stanza individually, the placement of the hemistiches serves a logical function in the recitation of each stanza. For example, in stanza three the hemistich falls after "La culebra" and "caminando." It preserves the consistent four-syllabic unit in the decameter verse that is countered in the following six-syllable unit. But as mentioned before, the hemistiches are positioned so as to keep the unifying rhythmic patterns of each stanza.

The two main and repeating rhythmic motifs in the poem that Revueltas actively translates in *Sensemayá* are the repeating Yorùbá "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" stanzas and the ideophonic "Sensemayá" stanzas. Their constructed accentual stresses on 2, 4 / 3 and 4 / 3 create a consistent rhythmic pattern that Revueltas could have recognized when listening to Guillén's recitation. The final stanza of the poem represents the unification of these two repeating motifs. It simultaneously creates a perfect metric and rhythmic unity—the stanza's meter remains in eight, while the rhythm has an alternating pattern of 2, 4 / 3 and 4 / 3. The final stanza represents the ultimate unity and harmony at various levels: the unity of languages (Spanish, Yorùbá, and ideophony); the unity of rhythmic and accentual form; the unity of meter; and as Kubayanda suggests, the ideological unity of Creation and the Absolute as manifested through the snake itself (1993). When placing the poem in the Afro-Cuban consciousness that Guillén adamantly commits to in the 1930s, the poem would render a constellation of the histories, poetic traditions, and languages.

Moreover, the ideophone employed in the word "sensemayá" is a vivid representation of the stress placed on the accentual and syllabic characteristic of the poem. The ideophone is an idea in sound specified as an onomatopoeic word. It is used not only to express or describe a sound, but also a motion or action, a condition or state, or even an abstract idea

Rhyme	Stanza	Accent Stress	Meter
-	¡Mayombe—bombe— / mayombé!	2, 4 /3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe— / mayombé!	2, 4 /3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—/ mayombé!	2, 4 /3	8
A	La culebra tiene / los ojos de vidrio;	3, 5 / 2, 5	12
B	la culebra viene_y / se_enreda en un palo;	3, 5 / 2, 5	12
B	con sus ojos de vidrio, en / un palo,	3, 6 / 2	10
A	con sus ojos de vidrio.	3, 6	7
C	La culebra / camina sin patas;	3 / 2, 5	10
D	la culebra / se esconde en la yerba;	3 / 2, 5	10
D	caminando / se esconde en la yerba,	3 / 2, 5	10
C	caminando / sin patas.	3 / 2	7
-	¡Mayombe—bombe— / mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—/ mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—/ mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
E	Tú le das con el hacha, / y se muere:	3, 6 /3	10
F	¡dale ya!	3	3
E	¡No le des con el pie, / que te muerde,	3, 6 /3	10
F	no le des con el pie, / que se va!	3, 6 /3	10 (9+1 agudo)
-	Sensemayá, / la culebra,	4 /3	8
-	sensemayá.	4	4
-	Sensemayá, / con sus ojos,	4 / 3	8
-	sensemayá.	4	4
-	Sensemayá / con su lengua,	4 / 3	8
-	sensemayá.	4	4
-	Sensemayá / con su boca,	4 /3	8
-	sensemayá . . .	4	4
G	La culebra muerta / no puede comer;	3, 5 / 2, 6	12 (11+1 agudo)
H	la culebra muerta / no puede silbar;	3, 5 / 2, 6	12 (11+1 agudo)
H	no puede caminar /	2, 6	6
G	no puede correr.	2, 6	6 (5+1 agudo)
H	La culebra muerta / no puede mirar;	3, 5 / 2, 6	12 (11+1 agudo)
G	la culebra muerta / no puede beber;	3, 5 / 2, 6	12 (11+1 agudo)
H	no puede respirar,	2, 6	6
G	¡no puede morder!	2, 6	6 (5+1 agudo)
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
-	*Sensemayá, la culebra . . .*	4 /3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
-	*Sensemayá, no se mueve . . .*	4 /3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
-	*Sensemayá, la culebra . . .*	4 /3	8
-	¡Mayombe—bombe—mayombé!	2, 4 / 3	8
-	*¡Sensemayá, se murió!*	4 /3	8 (7+1 agudo)

Figure 8. Breakdown of consistent accentual and rhythmic characteristics

(Kubayanda 1993). Phonological ideophones are usually monosyllabic or disyllabic words with duplicated identical sounds; due to their rising and falling glides or tones, and their rhythmic repeats, they can be effective for musical reproduction and poetic communication (Kubayanda 1993). The sound symbol of "sensemayá" echoed before and after the death of the snake poetically represents this phenomenon of sound and rhythm, creating the hissing ideophonic sound of the snake.

The predominant rhythmic characteristic in "Sensemayá" as demonstrated above leads to a clearer understanding of why Revueltas would be inspired to include the two motifs "sensemayá" and "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" as integral and driving components in his piece. As I will demonstrate in the next section, Revueltas's specific decisions related to meter and rhythm, such as setting the piece in 7/8 time with other overlapping time signatures, will have more parallel resonance with the rhythmic structure of the poem—a telling point of recreation and transformation from poetry to music than has not been previously examined.

Variations of Rhythm in *Sensemayá*

In the comparative study of aesthetic values between Stravinsky and Revueltas, Charles K. Hoag (1987) examines the form of ostinato and static repetition as the viable compositional devices that both Stravinsky and Revueltas, a knowledgeable follower of Stravinsky's work, employ. In Stravinsky's attempt to break from the European art music of linear progression and logical development as was characteristically known in Germanic and other western genres of music (Bartlett 2003), he became increasingly interested in other viable alternatives of non-European music—including jazz—that ultimately leads to his experiments in meter, rhythm, tonality, stress, and dissonance most poignantly observed *The Rite of Spring* (Gloag 2003). This trend carried forward in Revueltas's interest in non-European forms, as seen in *Sensemayá* (Hoag 1987).

As Hoag examines, one of the two main motifs, "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé," is primarily carried out by the all-pervading 7/8 bass ostinato, complete with the final accent on the seventh beat and reinforced by claves. Hoag continues that the second rhythmic pattern based on the same phrase of "Mayombe . . . " is heard over the bass ostinato one measure after rehearsal number 11 in the upper strings, and heard once again after

Figure 9. *Sensemayá*, main motif (Hoag 1987:174)

Figure 10. *Sensemayá*, rehearsal no. 11 (Hoag 1987:174)

number 12, this time two beats earlier in the measure (174).

Hoag concludes that these two juxtaposing rhythmic patterns are heard throughout the work. He continues to examine the other comparative moments in *Sensemayá* with *Rite of Spring*, including octatonic and pentatonic melodies, trichords, harmonic rhythm, and chromatic sonorities. But I would like to meditate on one moment in Hoag's article relevant to this poetic and musical analysis.

Hoag is too quick to presume that "what was a regular, common octosyllabic line in the poem has now become a 7/8 bass ostinato in music" (174). As examined before, this motif, although octosyllabic, is more accurately analyzed in its stressed accents. "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" carries a 2, 4 / 3 accent scheme that could very well omit the first syllabic value of "May" in the first "Mayombe"—making it a seven-syllabic line. Again, Revueltas heard this poem recited out loud, which suggests that the accentual stress on the second syllable in this line would have prominently outshined the first syllable, creating a possible diphthong effect. Revueltas's hand-written notation of this motif in the manuscript and the ongoing repetition of this motif as rendered as the pervading bass ostinato suggest that Revueltas was more aware of this rhythmic component in the poem than previous scholarship suggests.

Eduardo Contreras Soto (2000) discusses Revueltas's formation of rhythm as it relates to the closing section of *Sensemayá*, noting a characteristic pattern of Revueltas's compositions that is particular to *Sensemayá*. Revueltas groups rhythmic patterns by first introducing them in the piece one after the other—without melodic or harmonic development—only to then reintroduce them later in the piece to create sonorous density and contrapuntal spontaneity. This spontaneity can be attributed to the accumulation and buildup of these rhythmic patterns throughout the piece (Soto 2000:74). The culmination of contrapuntal rhythmic textures and sounds is observed in *Sensemayá*, where each section of the orchestra interprets a different rhythmic pattern at the same time in the final section of the piece (Soto 2000).

Additionally, Revueltas plays with time signatures more explicitly from rehearsal number 28 to rehearsal number 35 (Revueltas 1949/1938). The time signatures 7/16 and 7/8 alternate between rehearsal number 28 to rehearsal number 33, where different instruments are assigned to play in either one or the other time signature. This creates a rhythmic alternation that echoes the accentual structures in the poem's stanzas. To create even more dramatic contrasting variations between meters, the section from rehearsal numbers 33 to 35 convulses between 5/8 and 9/8, offseting the rhythmic patterns. The strings, brass, and woodwinds play equal sixteenth note phrases, which are then followed by glissandos from the strings and the gongs. By creating these irregular meters, the downbeat of each measure strays away from a sustainable and consistent beat; this harkens back to the unstressed beats, the differences of stanzas, the visually and audibly uneven lines, and the repeats of the poem.

The end of the orchestral piece (Figure 11) also speaks to this final dramatic trajectory of music, dance, and rhythm all operating simultaneously. Revueltas expands on this culmination beyond the two rhythmic patterns presented in the poem ("Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" and "sensemayá"). He recreates this in six different rhythmic patterns, presented separately in the beginning of the piece and grouped together in the final measures. The piccolos, oboes, English horns, French horns, clarinets, and first violins are grouped to play long tones in the upper register while the trombones also carry long tones with more varied syncopation. The flutes and bass clarinets play trill-like sixteenth notes; the bassoons, bass, timpani, glockenspiel, and piano play consistent eighth notes; the gourd and tom-tom play sixteenth notes interspersed with eighth notes; and finally, the second violins, violas, and trumpets play

Figure 11. Rehearsal no. 37 from *Sensemayá* musical score (1949)

the main theme that ties the poem to the orchestral piece: the rhythmic translation of "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé." In creating these six rhythmic patterns, Revueltas presents a process of translation as recreation that omits many details to conserve the emphasis of the work with added interpolations. The rhythmic complexities herald back to the accentual characteristics of "Sensemayá"—most specifically the "mayombé" meter— but expand and transform this to embed similar and divergent overlapping rhythmic patterns that are also unified in the poem.

The Tonalities of Yorùbá

The final section will speak specifically to the pitch and tone in the "Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" motif that Guillén renders in his poem. A critical approach suggested by Agawu considers the tonal and accentual dimensions of language as another point of musico-literary comparison (2003:108). In this case, this approach can be applied to the Yorùbá language incorporated in the poem. An array of scholars including Klaus Wachsmann, David Locke, John Miller Chernoff, and Gerhard Kubik have argued for the direct link between African music studies and the language map of Africa; however, this was an assertion that has led to little active study of these languages (Agawu 2003:107). Agawu underlines the importance of studying African languages for any serious study of African music (most fundamentally for songs). For Agawu, scholars also ought to consider language study as a gateway to understanding the tonal, accentual, acoustic, and phonological levels inherent in the language.

The refrain of "mayombe—bombe—mayombé" derives from Yorùbá, the liturgical language of the religion Palo Monte Mayombe. Notwithstanding many variables affecting African religions in the Caribbean, the Yorùbá language provided the central structural text within which various ethnic and cultural messages could be retained (Murrell 2010:9). Revueltas's handwritten notation of this very motif, which assigns specific tonal and musical notations to the words, suggests that he could have recognized— and therefore translated—the cultural significance of the mayombero, as well as the literary significance of the mayombero as the primary protagonist in the poem to kill the snake. Just as important, Revueltas translates the musicality of this phrase as it is inherent to Yorùbá language.

The pronunciation of words in Yorùbá language depends on tonal and pitch differences where a different pitch conveys a different word

meaning or grammatical distinction. This pitch differentiation is marked by Àmì ohùn tone marks that are applied to the top of the vowel within each syllable of a word or phrase in a primarily tri-tonal mark variation, *do-re-mi. Do* represents a low falling tone depicted by a grave accent; *re* represents mid range with a flat tone, depicted by an absence of any accent; and *mi* is high with a rising tone, depicted by an acute accent. An example would be "Bàtà" (*dò dò*), defined as "shoe," and Bàtá (*dò mí*), a type of drum (the drum performed in the snake rite). Understanding tone marks is essential to properly reading, writing and speaking Yorùbá—although some words may have similar spelling, they may have very different meanings based on the tone marks.

"Mayombe—bombe—mayombé" would be pronounced in a primarily mid-range and flat tone (given the lack of accents) until the acute accent on the final "mayombé," which creates a higher-pitched tone at the end. Additionally, the assonant repetition of "ombe" in all three words creates a consistent musical and rhythmic pattern—a pattern that is inherent in the language. This phrase alone carries a melodic, tonal, and rhythmic quality—a musical phrase that Revueltas must have also recognized.

This musical notation enlivens and strengthens the musicality of the phrase where the "yombe" is stressed more explicitly. This is achieved not only by the accent marks, but also by the longer tonal emphasis on this

Figure 12. *Sensemayá*, rehearsal no. 11 (Hoag 1987:174)

assonant sound, as exhibited in the longer eighth note form in contrast to the shorter sixteenth note forms. The final "mayombé" is rendered in a more quickened pace—in accented sixteenth notes—that accelerates the syncopation and rhythm of the phrase. By reimagining and recreating this into actual musical notation form, I would suggest that Revueltas goes so far as to enhance the original text form. Because of the inherent musical quality of the tonal language of Yorùbá, this can be even better understood when expressed musically. Thus, the recurring musical theme—introduced by the violins in the beginning measures and played throughout the piece

by the violins and trumpets—suggests that Revueltas remained faithful to the original while transforming it according to his musical intuition.

Conclusion

Thinking through these focused examples of both Guillén's poem and Reveultas's piece through the framework of translation theory, I have attempted to create more fluidity between these two works. Considering translation as recreation and transformation allows us to conceptualize and analyze this moment of intuitive inspiration that artists of different media experience when sharing their work. When Guillén read "Sensemayá" aloud to Revueltas, it is of little doubt that the musician was inspired by this powerful poem. But by moving beyond the moment of inspiration and considering Revueltas as a translator of Guillén's poem—and considering Guillén a translator of the snake rite—we begin to shed light on operative aesthetic, social, and political contexts in which a composer and a poet work when translating from one system to the other. Looking at the details of the poem and orchestral piece reflects my aim to dissolve the walls that isolate these art forms, instead building the bridges that are necessary to better understand how these two art forms carry more aesthetic and formulaic overlaps. Guillén and Revueltas are both poets and musicians, and their collaborations make these emerging channels visible.

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