

Music in Cultures from Around the World

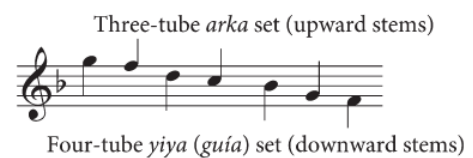
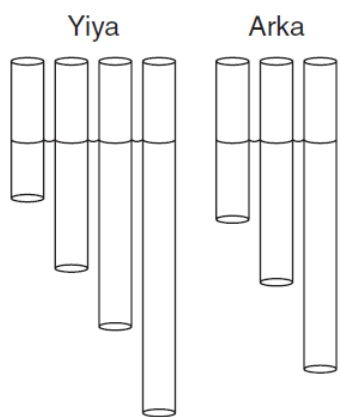
Studying music from around the world not only allows to find out about music and other cultures, but it also makes us rethink our own assumptions about music. We can explore new ways of understanding and engaging with music.

The word 'ethnomusicology' is often used to refer to the study of music in its cultural context. It is particularly associated with researching music in non-Western cultures, but ethnomusicologists can work on any kind of music.



Henry Stobart in the Bolivian Andes.

By researching music of other cultures, we can appreciate the variety of ways that music is bound up with the human experience. For example, Henry Stobart has written about two general categories of music. 'Listening musics' are created and performed for listeners and often come with particular kinds of connoisseurs in mind. We might think of this like the Western concert hall, or North Indian classical music as falling into this category. On the other hand, we can (Stobart argues) think of 'doing musics' where the emphasis is on participation: 'the value of the music lies primarily in the sense of well-being and shared or individual expression it involves, rather than its acoustic result.' As an example, we can consider some of the music of the Bolivian Andes, which is bound up with seasons, rituals, battles and feasts. Much of this music is written for large groups of performers. Some instruments like the panpipe Jula Julas, don't have a full set of notes, so require multiple performers to play a complete melody. Of course, 'listening' and 'doing' musics are not strict divisions but they highlight the different ways we can engage with music in culture.



Julajula panpipe melody showing interaction between paired players of four and three tube instruments

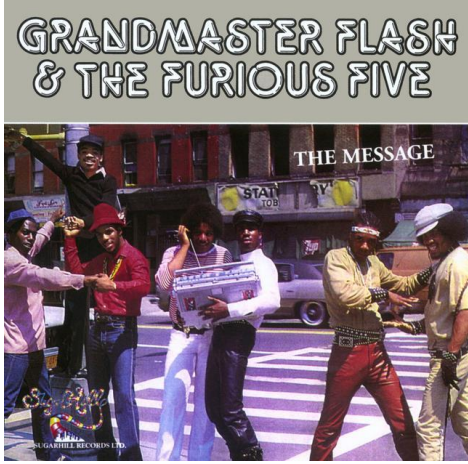


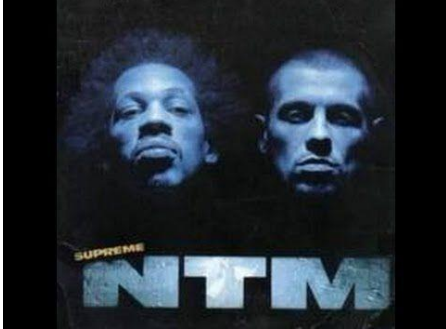
Watch: Henry Stobart [discuss his experiences of music in the Andes.](#)

See Henry Stobart, 'World Musics', in J.P.E. Harper-Scott and Jim Samson (eds), Introduction to Music Studies (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 97–118.

Hip Hop Around the World

Hip hop originated in a specific time and place – late-1970s New York. Arising from the mixing of cultures and shaped by the socio-economic factors of the context, it had particularly distinctive qualities: rapping, DJ's turntablism skills and all of the attendant dancing and artistic culture. Yet hip hop quickly spread far beyond North America. As hip hop moved around the world, it was adapted to the new contexts, while maintaining a link with its origins. It is at once a 'global' music, and at the same time 'local'.

Exploring Global Hip Hop

 <p>USA: <i>The Message</i> (Grandmaster Flash, 1982) – blends social realism with party lyrics. Shows hip hop can be a protest music.</p>	 <p>Japan: Kaku-Sei (DJ Krush, 1999) – Blends traditional Japanese instrumentation with hip hop sampling techniques and backbeat; and uses heterophony (multiple instruments play variations of same material, often out of synchrony with each other).</p>
 <p>Senegal: <i>Bayi Yoon</i> (Daara J, 2010) – Include multiple languages and traditions, aim to educate listeners.</p>	 <p>France: <i>Pour un Nouveau Massacre</i> (Suprême NTM, 1993) – Protests treatment of poor in French suburbs, they also duet with Nas.</p>

Writing task:

Write a short report (two pages) about hip-hop around the world.

In each example, consider what is similar, and what is different, from American hip hop. What does that tell us about the musical context of hip hop in each case? You can also consider the music videos for each group and single.

Think about language, fashion, instrumentation, styles, lyrics, the materials being sampled, and if you can find out, about the politics and history of each group.

Email us your thoughts and we'll also be glad to suggest some additional reading, listening and places to find out more (tim.summers@rhul.ac.uk).