Axis Mundi, An Intercultural Composition For The Atlas Ensemble

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

AXIS MUNDI, AN INTERCULTURAL COMPOSITION
FOR THE ATLAS ENSEMBLE

By
David Dean Mendoza

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A doctoral essay submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

AXIS MUNDI, AN INTERCULTURAL COMPOSITION
FOR THE ATLAS ENSEMBLE

David Dean Mendoza

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In our time, composers are presented with an abundance of styles and tools with which to compose, as well as many compositional challenges. Intercultural composition is one such challenge. Intercultural music is music that combines, involves, or exists between two or more musical traditions. In the present study of intercultural composition, I have composed Axis Mundi for winds, zithers, strings, and percussion for members of the Atlas Ensemble to be submitted for a reading session during 2016 Atlas Academy. The Atlas Ensemble is an Amsterdam based ensemble whose musicians combine both Western and non-Western musical traditions. Learning about new instruments, their tunings, modes, histories, and cultural history is a difficult undertaking, but is rewarding as it brings about the satisfaction of connecting with fellow global citizens to create something new. My experiences with members of both the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra and the Atlas Ensemble will inform much of this study.

Consequently, this research discusses the processes involved in intercultural music composition, an analysis of Axis Mundi, the issues that emerge when composers incorporate instruments of cultures other than their own. The translation of the title of this composition, Axis Mundi, is “axis of the world.” For many cultures, an Axis Mundi can take the shape of many things, including a large tree, a mountain, a totem pole, or a temple. These axi serve as portals connecting earth, heaven, and hell. I musically
represent these planes of existence as movements. The instrumentation of the work consists of the following instruments: shakuhachi in D, duduk in C, clarinet in A, santur, zheng, harp, bass drum, tam-tam, wood blocks, suspended cymbal, kamancha, kemençe, and cello.
DEDICATIONS

This dissertation is dedicated to my fellow citizens of the world who “live in the whole world of music.”

_We are citizens of the world. The tragedy of our times is that we do not know this._

-Woodrow Wilson
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor Charles Norman Mason and my committee members Dorothy Hindman, Juraj Kojs, and Deborah Schwartz-Kates for their help and support. None of this would be possible had it not been for composer Joël Bons, whose vision of intercultural music has inspired me beyond what I thought possible. I want to thank the staff, performers, and composers of the 2014 Atlas Academy, the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra, and the 2015 Banff Centre’s World Music Residency, some of whom include: Moshe Denburg, Lan Tung, Mark Armanini, Farshid Samandari, John Oliver, Kiya Tabassian, Didem Basar, Dhruba Ghosh, Charbel Rouhana, Miraseed Hoseiny Panah, Yogesh Samsi, and Ziya Tabassian.

I want to thank Hadi Eldebek of the Silk Road Ensemble for his time and our conversations. In addition, I am grateful to Megan Johnson and Caitlin Ferguson of the Banff Centre for facilitating the centre’s first World Music Residency. Audrey Wozniak’s honors thesis entitled *Orientalism, Regionalism, Cosmopolitanism: Musical Manifestations of Cultural Hybridity* has been inspirational in the organization of chapter six.

Lastly, I would like to thank my mother Dr. Jennifer H. Mendoza, and my partner Jeffrey Jean-Francois for their time, love, and support.
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CHAPTER 1: INTERCULTURAL ENSEMBLES

The Atlas Academy

In the summer of 2014 I attended the Atlas Academy in Amsterdam. As a composer interested in combining musical instruments from across the globe, I found it to be a dream come true. One of my motivations to work with the Atlas Ensemble came from wanting to expand my horizons as a composer writing for bowed strings. For many years I had wanted to write for a mixed Western and non-Western bowed string ensemble – a new type of string quartet. While researching these “fusion ensembles” I discovered the Silk Road Ensemble, and the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra, but at that time I could not find an ensemble that offered reading sessions to composers. I continued to look and was extremely excited when I came upon the Atlas Ensemble’s website. The homepage included an introductory video entitled *Why Atlas – First Three Chapters*, which included a statement, by the artistic director-composer Joël Bons that described the history and purpose of the Atlas Ensemble and the Atlas Academy. About four minutes into the introductory video, Joël Bons gives this call to action to composers:

> But we, you, composers are the ones who can change this, the only ones. It’s really important that composers bring creativity. Why should a string quartet always be until the end of days two violins, viola, and cello? It could also be *erhu, kemençe*, viola, and cello.¹

I was ecstatic to see that there was an organization that shared my views on incorporating non-Western instruments into Western music composition.

The Atlas Academy is a place where composers can work on sketches and pieces in collaboration with the Atlas musicians, learn about various musical traditions and their instruments, and contribute to the creation of new intercultural repertoire.² Musicians of all instruments who are also interested in intercultural music can participate in a number of jam sessions. Musicologists are also invited to attend, give lectures, or research intercultural topics.³

For composers, the application process includes submission of a project concept. This can take the form of a sketch, experiment, or improvisation. Examples of prior compositions with recordings are also requested in addition to a participation fee. After the proposals are evaluated, composers are contacted to discuss their instrumental choices. Bons’s dream would be to have participants spending “three or four weeks together in a castle somewhere” working together. He also stresses the importance of reciprocal learning.⁴

Bons is also aware of the challenges created by reaching out to non-Western musicians. “When I started this it was very naïve in a way because we just put these instruments together and it was a great risk. It was the most risky project we ever did.”⁵ From my experience, the Atlas staff goes to great lengths to accommodate the needs of both the composers and the musicians. Lunch and break times provide time for social

---


³ Ibid.


⁵ Ibid.
interaction between the participants, staff, and musicians. At the end of this introductory video, Bons asks us to reconsider the practice of only writing for Western instruments. “I think it’s amazing that we still in the West only use Western instruments. Why is that?”

My hope is that these intercultural sessions of reciprocal learning will dissolve the fear composers might have in learning other musical traditions.

**The Atlas Ensemble**

Many composers incorporate non-Western timbres and styles into their music. However, the likelihood of a composer finding an ensemble that uses a diversity of instruments from various parts of the world is rare. Fortunately, ensembles such as the Atlas Ensemble, the Silk Road Ensemble, and the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra have emerged. All three were formed relatively recently, between 2000 and 2001. The table below gives the full instrumentation for the Atlas Ensemble.

---

6 Ibid.
Table 1.1 The instrumentation of the Atlas Ensemble

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Bons formed the Atlas Ensemble in 2001. The travels his parents took in the 1970s inspired him to explore music beyond Europe, and as a result he discovered many non-Western instruments. At a certain point he asked himself “Why do you always write for Western instruments?” Then, as an experiment, he organized a festival of plucked instruments from various parts of the world. He speculated:

Ok, how would they sound together? It sounded amazing. Why? Because of course they all descend from the *ud*, because they all have the same blood, the same bones but they are all different. Then I thought, this is actually something you can do with all families. Why not have an

---

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
orchestra with three flutes from different cultures? And the same for the oboes, so that became the Atlas Ensemble.\(^9\)

After many years of development Bons and his colleagues have produced and maintained a one-of-a-kind ensemble for composers. While the objective of the Atlas Ensemble is intercultural dialogue between various musical traditions, Bons is also sensitive to the issues raised when cultural encounters take place. The two chief objectives of the Atlas Ensemble “are the promotion of exchange and cross-pollination of traditions and achievements of the art music of different cultures, and the development of new repertoire.”\(^10\) At the same time the ensemble “is committed to respecting and preserving the invaluable trove of musical traditions, and to protecting them against the ever-looming threat of musical globalization – the downside of current artistic developments.”\(^11\) Consequently, Atlas is committed to both fusion and preservation. The artistic leadership is committed to a vision of the future that sees diversity not as a threat, but as something to be embraced. Musicians and composers are encouraged to share and collaborate in order to find something new. Different scales, musical-theoretical ideas, and instruments are worth celebrating, and just like foreign food, there are few obstacles preventing a person from hearing foreign musics.

The organization is also concerned about the negative effects of musical globalization – interpreted as the homogenization of music. It states in the mission

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\(^9\) Ibid.


\(^11\) Ibid.
statement that it is essential to preserve a non-globalist approach.\textsuperscript{12} Anthropologist Bob W. White warns that this type of bridge building can be “fragile and dangerous.”\textsuperscript{13} Exploitation, misunderstanding, and violations of cultural rights often spawn criticism from anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. Atlas recognizes this dangerous playground and warns composers that the intercultural approach, while rewarding, is also challenging in this regard. Bons advocates for composers to engage musicians in an equally balanced exchange. He also questions the entire process and leaves the participants to decide for themselves whether the Ensemble is “legitimate” or “naïve?” By asking these questions, Bons shows an awareness of the issues raised by those who would be critical of such an endeavor.

\textbf{The Silk Road Ensemble}

In 1998, Cellist Yo-Yo Ma formed the nonprofit organization entitled the Silk Road Project. The Silk Road Project is “a collective of rooted explorers, inclusive independents, storytelling musicians, passionate learners, connected nomads, and cultural entrepreneurs.”\textsuperscript{14} The organization has been affiliated with Harvard University since 2005. To help facilitate the goals of the project, the Silk Road Ensemble was formed in 2000.\textsuperscript{15} According to Yo-Yo Ma, the ensemble “is a lab of very creative musicians who love to work together, have independent lives, but choose to come together for

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{14} “About Us,” SilkRoadProject.org accessed September 26, 14, http://www.silkroadproject.org/about-us/

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
performance to create new works to do teaching and to engage in cultural entrepreneurship.”

Yo-Yo Ma says that one of the best things the Silk Road Ensemble has done is to “drive fear away.” He says that, “classical music and world music are actually generally not thought of as being aligned. In our minds we think they are completely aligned.” According to kamancheh player Kayhan Kalhor, the Silk Road Ensemble is “trying to find a common ground between our cultures and instruments.”

The instrumentation of the Silk Road Ensemble is shown below.

Table 1.2 The instrumentation of the Silk Road Ensemble

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Chordophones</th>
<th>Composite Chordophones</th>
<th>Simple Chordophones</th>
<th>Aerophones</th>
<th>Idiophones Membranophones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lutes</td>
<td>Bowed Lutes</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ud</td>
<td>Pipa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutes</td>
<td>Bowed Lutes</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakuhachi</td>
<td>Shakuhachi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaita</td>
<td>Gaita</td>
<td></td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td>Sheng</td>
<td></td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabla</td>
<td>Tabla</td>
<td></td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra

In the Vancouver area, there are many intercultural ensembles. One of the largest ensembles is the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra (VICO), founded by composer Moshe Denburg in 2000. According to its Mission Statement,

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17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

“[The Ensemble will] act as a forum for the creation of a new musical art form, one in which all of Canada’s resident cultures can take part. Through composition, performance, and educational outreach to both music professionals and the general public, the VICO serves as a voice for Canadian composers and musicians of diverse backgrounds, and fosters the creation of musical works that fuse and transcend cultural traditions.”

In 2012, I participated in a workshop with the Big World Band. There, I met composers John Oliver, and Farshid Samandari. I also met Mohamed Assani (sitar, tabla), Hossein Behroozinia (barbat), Hamin Honari (tombak), Guilian Liu (pipa), and Zhimin Yu (ruan). The Big World Band website reads that they “came together in the summer of 2011 to explore our common musical humanity and perform public concerts that increase and celebrate cultural awareness and understanding amongst our ethnically-diverse communities.” The website continues:

The band strives for maximum communication across cultures and the development of a consistent group sound and repertoire. Our mandate is to combine musical instruments and traditions of the world in various new ways to create what we call a “new world music.” Our musical repertoire ranges from ancient pieces, to new recombinations and arrangements, to new compositions. Our goal is to celebrate the meeting of many cultures.

Table 1.3 The instrumentation of the Big World Band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Chordophones</th>
<th>Idiophones Membranophones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lutes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percussion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbat</td>
<td>Tabla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitar</td>
<td>Tombak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruan (zhongruan, daruan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass Guitar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 Ibid.


22 Ibid.
The Vancouver workshop with the Big World Band was an eye opening experience for me. The music critic Alexander Varty writes that

> Whether springing from necessity or desire, intercultural music has become a regional specialty, with new linkings emerging weekly. Even more intriguing, there is nothing exotic about an erhu virtuoso playing with a free-jazz saxophonist, or a conservatory-trained composer crafting scores for Iranian *setar* or Javanese gamelan.

In his article, Varty quoted the guitarist and composer, John Oliver who recently premiered his chamber piece, *Scenes from an Intercultural Marriage* with Taipei’s Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra. “All I can say is that it’s normal,” remarked Oliver. “We’re playing with our neighbors. We’ve got a lot of people living in Vancouver from all points, so we’re just being local, in a sense. It’s an odd thing to say, but that’s the way I feel about it. Working with like-minded people who are interested in going beyond their own specific cultural background—and doing so in Vancouver—seems a logical thing to do.”

The repertoire from both these ensembles range from their traditional arrangements to new contemporary works. The instrumentation varies and includes the standard Western orchestral instruments in combination with the non-Western instruments listed below:

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Table 1.4 The instrumentation of the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Chordophones</th>
<th>Composite Chordophones</th>
<th>Simple Chordophones</th>
<th>Aerophones</th>
<th>Idiophones Membranophones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lutes</td>
<td>Bowed Lutes</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ud</td>
<td>Erhu</td>
<td>Guzheng</td>
<td>Shakuhachi</td>
<td>Tabla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tar</td>
<td>Zhonghu</td>
<td>Celtic harp</td>
<td>Bansuri</td>
<td>Tombak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitar</td>
<td>Koni</td>
<td>Koto</td>
<td>Suona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambura</td>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>Santur</td>
<td>Sho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipa</td>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Đàn bầu</td>
<td>dizi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruan</td>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Yangquin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By attending these intercultural workshops I was able to make new friends and learn how intercultural ensembles work. These composers and musicians encouraged me and gave me resources on orchestration. Most importantly, I learned by doing. I sang Arabic *maqam* tetrachords with *oud* master Charbel Rouhana, listened to how a *kemençe*, *erhu*, and violin sounded together, and I learned from Indian *sarangi* master Dhruba Ghosh how *Raga Bhairavi* unfolds. These new experiences then gave me the confidence to compose *Axis Mundi*. 
CHAPTER 2: AXIS MUNDI: CONTEXT

Personal Background

This doctoral project integrates my interest in incorporating sound worlds of cultures other than my own into my music. While melodic and harmonic material from other cultures such as the Arabic and Balinese has inspired me over the years, what has principally attracted me to music of other cultures is the timbre produced by certain instruments. Some of these instruments are bowed chordophones such as the Chinese erhu, the Mongolian morin khuur, and the Brazilian rabeca. Other instruments such as the Balinese suling, the Korean ajaeng, and the Argentinean bandoneon have also interested me. Through my own curiosity I have been able to learn about, listen to, and purchase several of these instruments with the goal of finding the sound world I desire. This longing to incorporate these sounds into my music has led to my research in related disciplines such as ethnomusicology and anthropology.

Within these fields, the concept of the Other is often discussed.24 The Other is defined as the “non-self who departs from and simultaneously defines the norms of a dominant social order, whether by sexuality, race or ethnicity.”25 Within the scope of my musical background, the practice of embracing, accepting, or having curiosity towards the Other follows in the tradition of the leading innovator of American experimental music, Henry Cowell.26 My first impulse to incorporate foreign instruments into my

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24 I am treating “the Other” as a proper noun. This treatment follows French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s theory of the Other.


compositions came from reading about and listening to composers from the American Experimental tradition such as Henry Cowell, John Cage, Lou Harrison, and Harry Partch. Additionally, other composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and Toru Takemitsu continue to have an effect on me.

**Influential Composers: Cowell, Cage, Harrison, and Stockhausen**

Cowell musically embraced the Other in pieces such as *Homage to Iran* and *Persian Set*. He also learned to play the Japanese *shakuhachi* and was the first recorded American composer to have written for it.\(^{27}\) According to composer and scholar Eric Salzman, John Cage’s twenty *Sonatas and Interludes* “represent the confluence of three ideas that came into American music in the Thirties and Forties: numerology, the dominant use of percussion, and the influence from the East.”\(^{28}\) In 1961, Lou Harrison received a Rockefeller grant to travel to Tokyo as a delegate to the East-West Encounter Conference. Musicologist Leta E. Miller writes “from Japan Lou went to Korea and, in the following year, to Taiwan, where he studied local instrumental techniques as well as the classical literature.”\(^{29}\) Following this he composed *Pacifika Rondo* that called for *sheng* (a Chinese mouth organ), *psalteries*, *p’iri* (a Korean double-reed instrument), *chango* (a Korean hourglass shaped doubled-headed drum), and a *pak* (a Korean wooden

\(^{27}\) Cowell’s work “*The Universal Flute*” was written in 1940 and was “probably the first” work for *shakuhachi* by a Western composer according to Bob Gilmore


clapper) along with Western stringed instruments, celesta, trombones, organ, percussion, and tin whistles.\(^{30}\) Miller describes Harrison’s life as “a series of archeological digs,”\(^ {31}\) but this description could just as easily have been used to describe all of the composers interested in creating culturally hybrid compositions. Miller goes on to write that

> Whenever and wherever he encountered a site of interest on the artistic landscape, he paused for an exploration. The result is more than the simple acquisition of knowledge, however, for Harrison has always found ways of combining his disparate investigation into a new untried synthesis.\(^ {32}\)

Cage called Henry Cowell “the open sesame for new music in America.”\(^ {33}\) Harrison said Cowell “was the central switchboard for two or three generations of American composers.”\(^ {34}\) I agree with composer and author Kyle Gann who writes that “It is not difficult to argue that Cowell was the least tradition-bound, most original musical thinker and theorist of his era.”\(^ {35}\) According to Henry Cowell scholar George Boziwick:

> Henry Cowell had often said that he wanted to live in the “whole world of music.” When he was a child he had been inculcated with a musical worldview that was simple and unassuming. It fostered a belief that all music was of equal value and that a composer could and should integrate

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.


\(^{34}\) Ibid.

components of any of these world musics into his or her own compositions.36

The “whole world of music” concept continues to influence and inspire me to learn music without the boundaries of historical time or geographical space.

My own application of Cowell’s “whole world” concept to my work as a composer includes: learning tenor *viola da gamba*, Chinese *erhu*, and also incorporating interactive electronics, different types of notation, and different forms of improvisation. Although the compositional ideas within American Experimentalism influenced my desire to incorporate non-Western sounds into my music, I was also aware that other non-American composers were looking beyond their borders for new sounds. In a 1989 Peter Heyworth interview with Karlheinz Stockhausen, Stockhausen talks of a new kind of “world music” which infuses a “polyphony” of styles. Stockhausen predicts a new kind of cosmopolitan society, and advocates for openness towards different kinds of music regardless of musical tradition. Stockhausen’s ideas also add to the discussion of sociocultural political issues involved when composing music outside of one’s own tradition. Stockhausen’s main points are: understanding that all of the world’s musical traditions are available to composers, combining different styles of music from different eras can be interesting and exciting, the various cultures of the world are merging and that this will lead to the destruction of barriers and frontiers.37


CHAPTER 3: *AXIS MUNDI*: PROBLEMATIC TERMINOLOGY

There are several common labels used when discussing non-Western music. Some of these terms will be referenced in later chapters and do not represent all of the terms used in describing music of the other, but for the purposes of this dissertation the following represent the most commonly used terms in the United States. These terms include: the Other, Oriental, world music, and non-Western. All of these terms can be problematic, but can also serve the function of clarifying differences between cultures. Instrument historian Jeremy Montagu summarizes the issue of using labels in his book *Origins and Development of Musical Instruments* by writing that the terms Western music and non-Western music are meaningless because both musics have become international.  

All of these terms essentialize music, which according to professor of communication John R. Baldwin, “occurs when one treats a process as a fixed element or a heterogeneous collection as homogeneous.” Baldwin writes that there are two dangers involved when people essentialize another culture

First, scholars often treat cultures monolithically, as if all those of a single nation or even subgroup have the same cultural characteristics. This obscures differences within culture. Second, these definitions can obscure the dynamic nature of culture. For example, an elemental description of a tribe or cultural group and the image of that group (sometimes written years ago) are fixed, frozen in our minds, while the culture itself continues to shift and change.

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Historically, the West has essentialized non-Western music, which has been viewed as unchanging and frozen in time. The pejorative primitive was the antiquated term used to describe non-Western musics originally. For example, nineteenth century composer John Pyke Hullah writes in his book *The History of Modern Music* that “the history of modern music is altogether European. Not that the Orientals have, or have had, no music of their own; but that, as at present practiced, their music has no charm, nor indeed meaning, for us.”

However, there are risks and benefits when people essentialize. Psychologist Susan A. Gelman writes that “Essentialism has many benefits; it provides a framework for making valuable category-based inferences, for example. Furthermore, the many ways in which children essentialize the natural world reveal precocious abilities to categorize and benefit from categories.” The risk of essentializing non-Western music is thinking of it as: primitive, all the same, and always authentic and pure. I have instead taken the view that all types of music developed and contained multiple styles.

**The Other**

As stated before, the Other is anyone who has “the quality or state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation.”

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it was a useful way of describing interest in musics outside my own Western perspective. Othering refers to the differentiating of oneself from the other. The Other was often conceived of as an inferior outsider, but viewed within the framework of interculturalism and cosmopolitanism; the Other and Otherness is something that should be sought after and valued. Interdisciplinary social scientist and musicologist Tim Taylor sums up how the Other has been treated historically.

I would argue instead that there is no such thing as “the musical Other,” that this is an essentialized concept. People in different historical situations have ways of constructing their Others in different ways, which they do in part with music; the music of the Other has not played much of a role in this process until comparatively recently. Others (gendered, racialized, and classed) were no longer construed as existing on some sort of continuum with western subjects, but were instead forced into the subordinate half of a binary opposition.

My intention as a composer is not to force Others onto the subordinate half of any binary opposition. Quite the reverse, I value their musical knowledge and take interest in their lives as fellow global citizens. Paul Griffiths, one of the leading authorities on twentieth-century music, writes that Lou Harrison and Henry Cowell created work that “assigns no particular value to the Western tradition over others from, especially, Pacific Asia.” He goes on to write that

The western hegemony has, of course, also been questioned, more or less explicitly, by the arrival of composers from outside Europe and North America. Toru Takemitsu (b. 1930), for example, has not only used Japanese instruments alongside a standard symphony orchestra but also, and more fundamentally, allowed a Japanese feeling for time, colour and silence into his much larger body of works for western instrument alone,

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complementing, and in many ways confirming, what had been achieved in the other direction by Messiaen, Cage, and Boulez.\textsuperscript{45}

**Oriental**

Oriental, like the term savage or primitive, is an antiquated term referencing an imperialist approach to other cultures. According to intercultural communication professor Steven Rosen, “Orientalism is a total mis-seeing [sic] of the other through a veil of interpretations of reality which are relatively impenetrable and resistant to change. It is a form of ethnocentrism which has evolved into cultural myth, invariant in its imaginings, and imperialistic in its aims.”\textsuperscript{46} The Palestinian American scholar Edward Said writes that the stereotypical vision of the Orient is one that “…had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.”\textsuperscript{47} He further states that

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.\textsuperscript{48}

According to musicologist Bennett Zon, non-Western music was “denigrated, racially abused, or simply ignored ” in the musicological literature from the period of the 1780’s

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
to the 1920’s.⁴⁹ Today the story is very different. Several institutions of higher learning like: The California Institute for the Arts, The University of California Los Angeles, Bowling Green State University, The University of Hawai‘i, and Florida State University take pride in their professional training of practitioners of non-Western music.

**Non-Western**

The term “non-Western” also can be problematic. There are no such things as pure cultures, and to label something as either Western or non-Western can be misleading. Edward Said echoes the fact that stating that “all cultures are involved in one another, none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic.”⁵⁰ In current times, given any culture, the question of what cultural elements have been adopted, translated, appropriated, or cross-pollinated is a difficult one to answer. The forces of globalization upon many non-Western cultures have made differentiating between Western cultural elements and non-Western cultural elements difficult. It can be said that these terms have become meaningless. Ease of travel, information technology and instant communication systems has intensified hybridity between cultures. According to intercultural relations expert, professor Ted Cantle we are now living in a time of super diversity. “The extent of population movement is such that all Western economies are now characterized by some degree of “super” or “hyper” diversity, with cities like London, Stockholm, Toronto, New York, and Amsterdam with

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over 300 language groups.\footnote{Ted Cantle, \textit{Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity} (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.} Because of super diversity, the word Non-Western has the effect of splitting the world into two halves – a Western musical world and a non-Western musical world. According to Cantle, this approach reinforces a “West versus the Rest” mentality that can lead to false assumptions about either a musician’s identity or a musical tradition’s identity – mistakenly creating a binary worldview. Super diversity will inevitably lead to everyone becoming Other.\footnote{The US Census projects by the year 2043 the United States will be a majority non-white nation. Maria Hinojosa, "Behind Every Number, There's A Story," \textit{American By The Numbers}, October 2, 2014, accessed May 23, 2015. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americaby-the-numbers/home/.} In sum, Montagu writes that we are all ethnic, but that the term ethnic is just as problematic as non-Western. He states that:

Today, we are beginning to look askance at ethnomusicology as a term, partly because we are all ethnē; partly because the Greeks used that word often with a suggestion of “foreign,” whereas ethnomusicology is now recognized as an approach to studying all types of music, ours, theirs, and anyone else’s; and partly because ethnic has often come to imply cheap, nasty, and fake when applied to goods in our shops or food in our restaurants.\footnote{Jeremy Montagu, \textit{Origins and Development of Musical Instruments}, 210.}

Despite the terms Western and non-Western referring to artificial geographic locations and artificial identities, this set of labels nevertheless can be useful when trying to explain musical mixture outside nationalist identities and in broad-spectrum situations.

**World Music**

“World music” is a synthetic commercial music category devised in the 1980s to market and sell all different types of traditional musics. Bod White writes that “Despite the growing number of world music sounds, or sounds that signify “world music,” the
music industry’s usual racism, xenophobia, and Euro- and Americo-centrism remain.”

Taylor writes that

As early as the late 1970s and early 1980s some ethnomusicologists were using the term world music to describe all the musics of the world’s peoples. No one then saw it as a phrase with potentially pejorative undertones; it was merely a shorthand way of separating the musics of west and the rest.55

The obvious problem with the term world music is that it is too broad of a term to have meaning. During his lectures at the Atlas Academy, music educator researcher Huib Schippers brought up the controversial example of Indian classical music as being classified as world music while European classical music is classified as classical Music.56 Obviously both are classical art musics and the label “World” has nothing to do with either of these traditions. Taylor also gives an example in his book Global Pop of classical Indian music – a music tradition with thousands of years of history, mistakenly labeled as New Age.57

As previously stated, the labels of oriental, non-Western, and world can be useful so long as one understands the limits of their meaning. Without understanding the limits of these labels one can fall into the trap of a “West vs. the Rest” mindset. This is reflected in the statement, They create world music and We create classical music. Another reason for using the term world has to do with trying to produce something of value for Western


57 Timothy D. Taylor, Global Pop, 5.
global consumption. Bob White writes that “world music is not a problem per se; it becomes a problem when the listener-consumer makes claims about the via music without attempting to go beyond the simple projection of a personal listening utopia.” As a composer, I have no issue with listeners creating their own personal listening utopia that includes a diversity of musical traditions. The problem is, as White points out, that listeners essentialize others as authentic and pure, primitive, and static. This false notion of others can then lead to the discourse of the White Man’s Burden. This nineteenth-century euphemism for imperialism is based on the Rudyard Kipling poem of the same name in which white Westerners are encouraged to take responsibility for educating and enlightening the nonwhites of the world.  

Anthropologist Matti Sarmela defines cultural imperialism as “the economic, technological and cultural hegemony of the industrialized nations, which determines the direction of both economic and social progress, defines cultural values, and standardizes the civilization and cultural environment throughout the world.”

**Binaries and New Forms of Differences**

Now that this troublesome terminology has been acknowledged, the problem becomes what to do with terms like these that create binary oppositions. Taylor writes about the challenges in undoing people’s practice of creating binaries:

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It has become fashionable in some theoretical camps in the last couple of decades to deconstruct binary oppositions, but people still live by them, still construct discourses and practices around them. I would argue that binary oppositions are by far the most salient means by which modern western bourgeois subjects made, and continue to make, conceptions of racial, ethnic, and cultural difference. Simply put, it is because of difference that modern western people can know who they are.\textsuperscript{60}

I agree that these unfortunate binary oppositions seem to be the easiest way of describing the musical other. Although troublesome, not everyone allows this terminology to define who he or she is. For example, Appiah writes that, “identities and cultures are in constant flux, and we must draw on narratives from the past to create the common identities of the future.”\textsuperscript{61}

New forms of difference get generated all the time. There were no Mormons before the late nineteenth century, there were no Scientologists before the mid twentieth century. There were no Punks in 1960. There was no Hip-hop until the 1980s, and these are all important forms of cultural difference that have been generated in the world and appreciated by many people, and have shaped the lives of hundreds of millions of people.\textsuperscript{62}

This new form of difference that Appiah refers to is exactly what I am trying to accomplish with \textit{Axis Mundi}. Ultimately, if there is no such thing as the musical other, as Taylor writes, then there should be no reason why musicians and composers from various musical traditions of the world should be kept from collaborating and working together. I have summed up the binaries of each term in Table 3.1. Both the benefits and risks of

\textsuperscript{60} Tim Taylor, \textit{Beyond Exoticism}, 9.


\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
using these terms have to do with how each of them essentialize, and yet that is also their strength.

Table 3.1 The problematic terminology of describing the Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Oriental</th>
<th>World</th>
<th>Non-Western</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Oriental vs. Occidental</td>
<td>Familiar vs. Exotic</td>
<td>Western vs. Non-Western</td>
<td>Self vs. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

When it comes to labels, throughout my travels I have found it interesting how some non-Western musicians actually prefer and take pride in the non-politically correct label of oriental to that of their own nationality. During one of the Atlas Academy sessions on Arabic Music, the Lebanese instructor told the class to “sing like an oriental.” I was alarmed to hear the word oriental spoken by someone from the Middle East. Could it be that this word was acceptable to him? Consequently during my research, I learned that political correctness and identity politics vary according geographic location, group, and individual. One finds that the label of American Indian is sometimes preferred over Native American. Furthermore, in Canada the term First Nations People is preferred. Therefore, I have come to agree with Appiah’s approach that takes “individuals – not nations, tribes or ‘peoples’ – as the proper object of moral concern.”

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64 The term aboriginal is also used in Canada.

musicians outside my musical tradition, I prefer not to think of them as Other, non-Western, Oriental, or even by nationality, but by their first name. I think of them as fellow global citizens.

Understanding the labels that accompany world music can help the composer unravel the binary oppositions described in Table 3.1. The term Oriental carries with it many connotations of imperialism that should be avoided. Non-Western and world are vague and can mislead people into dividing the world into two halves. All of these terms essentialize musical traditions of the other. The process of essentializing has both risks and benefits. The risks include thinking about a particular group of people as authentic, pure, primitive, and frozen in time. The benefits include finding the essential characteristics of something, thereby helping describe and categorize it. Like other manifestations of culture, musical traditions change and interact with other musics, creating new forms of difference.
CHAPTER 4: \textit{Axis Mundi}: Compositional Challenges

Writing for Non-Western Instruments

I faced three main challenges when composing intercultural music. The first challenge was learning new instrumentation. This involved developing an aural memory of an instrument’s tone color and capabilities. Since I wanted to engage in intercultural dialogue with the performers, my second challenge was trying to understand the basics of the theoretical systems of each musical tradition. This included learning the concept of the \textit{makam}, \textit{maqam}, \textit{mugham}, \textit{raga}, and \textit{dastgah} systems with their own notation systems for microtones and ornaments. The third challenge was negotiating the aural-written divide, often the most difficult task. Since the Atlas Ensemble \textit{kamancha} performer Elshan Mansurov was not an expert in reading Western staff notation, I decided to keep his part simple enough to perform based on an oral tradition. This intercultural dialogue involved meeting one-on-one with Mansurov to discuss the logistics of reading his part.

\textbf{Challenge One: Instrumentation}

Both the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra and the Atlas Ensemble provide documentation for each of the instruments within the ensemble. Information included in this documentation provides instrument tuning, transposition, range, timbre, dynamics, and modal tradition. It was important for me to create an instrumentation guide for the conductor and for myself to describe what variations of particular instruments should be used, to give the tuning systems that would be employed, and to provide descriptions of the extended techniques called for in the score.
The approach I took to composing for each instrument was to listen to its individual character and attempt to write idiomatically for it. With *Phrygia*, my strategy was to write something melodic and sight-readable. This translated to mostly melodic writing with counterpoint.

Example 4.1 Contrapuntal texture from *Phrygia*.

![Example 4.1 Contrapuntal texture from *Phrygia*.](image)

Some of these same types of textures carried over into *Axis Mundi* and can be seen in Example 4.2.
Example 4.2 An excerpt from the third movement, *Heaven*
After becoming familiar with the enormous capabilities of this new ensemble, I felt that I could be more adventurous for this composition. While the pitches and rhythms contained within *Axis Mundi* will not pose a challenge to these excellent performers, I cannot be sure how the musicians will respond to some of the aleatoric sections and extended techniques found in the first movement, *Underworld*. Some of these contemporary notations can be seen in Examples 4.3 to 4.5. The most difficult of musical elements to predict are those of projection and balance.

Example 4.3 Finger tapping sounds for *kamancha*, *kemençe*, and cello

Example 4.4 Air sounds for *shakuhachi*, *duduk*, and clarinet.
Example 4.5 An excerpt of the aleatoric section from the first movement, *Underworld*
With *Axis Mundi*, I wanted to explore other timbres. Like my experience with *Phrygia*, which was scored for *kamanche, kemençe, erhu, violin, viola, cello, bass, and percussion* and where projection and balance worked well, my goal was to find a new type of string septet using a combination of instruments both from Western and non-Western traditions. With *Axis Mundi*, the idea of instrumental fusion is developed and expanded to include not just one family of instruments but three: winds, zithers, and bowed strings. Percussion is also included, and as with *Phrygia*, it is there to provide support and color. The results gained from *Axis Mundi* may then lead to other types of ensembles and perhaps new types of hybrid orchestras.

Figure 4.1 The placement of instruments in *Phrygia* versus *Axis Mundi*

The concept of expanding the instrumentation of orchestras has been documented in other cultures as well. Ethnomusicologist and *pipa* player Dr. Samuel Wong Shengmiao writes that the “modern Chinese orchestra is, in fact, a hybrid formation of Eastern, Western, Middle Eastern, and Asian instruments. Sitting in a fan-like
arrangement with a conductor, this form of orchestra is difficult to categorize. Is it Chinese, or it is multi-ethnic? Why is it called a Chinese orchestra?”

Table 4.1 The instrumentation for *Axis Mundi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Chordophones</th>
<th>Simple Chordophones</th>
<th>Aerophones</th>
<th>Idiophones Membranophones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bowed Lutes</td>
<td>Zithers</td>
<td>Winds</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kemençe</em></td>
<td><em>Santur</em></td>
<td><em>Shakuhachi</em></td>
<td><em>Woodblocks</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kamanche</em></td>
<td><em>Zheng</em></td>
<td><em>Duduk</em></td>
<td><em>Tam-tam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello</td>
<td><em>Harp</em></td>
<td><em>Clarinet in A</em></td>
<td><em>Bass drum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Suspended cymbal</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wind Family

I felt that the combination of Armenian *duduk* and Japanese *shakuhachi* provided a good timbral contrast. I had no previous experience writing for these instruments, but I thought that both of them would blend well with the clarinet. I chose the clarinet in A for its slightly deeper register. This is especially important in the first movement where it plays often in its chalumeau register. For me, the *duduk*'s sound is smooth, dark, and melancholic. The *shakuhachi*, on the other hand, is bright, airy, and meditative. Besides creating a contrast, I chose these particular instruments because their performance practice includes glissandi and pitch bends.

The *duduk* can glissando within an interval of a third and can bend notes. Also, both instruments allow for flutter-tongue articulations. All *duduks* have a range of an octave and a fourth however, large interval leaps are difficult for the *duduk* to execute so

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I wrote more stepwise lines for it. The duduk players can also correct intonation by tightening their embouchures.\textsuperscript{67} I begin the third movement, Heaven, with a slow glissandi, doubled in octaves, in both the duduk and shakuhachi because I imagined it creating an uplifting sensation.

Example 4.6 The opening duduk and shakuhachi glissando gesture from the third movement, Heaven

\textbf{III. Heaven}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example4_6.png}
\caption{Example 4.6 The opening duduk and shakuhachi glissando gesture from the third movement, Heaven}
\end{figure}

The history of the shakuhachi is linked to that of the komusō monks who played it. Composer and ethnomusicologist Mitchell Clark writes that it “was traditionally used in religious practices and is strongly identified with Zen Buddhism. In the late seventeenth century the flute became associated with the priests of the Fuke sect of Zen.”\textsuperscript{68} Clark also makes reference to its secular use in the sankyoku repertoire. “The name of the shakuhachi end-blown flute comes from the length of its standard form, which is one shaku (the traditional Japanese foot, slightly longer than the Western foot) and hachi

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\textsuperscript{68} Mitchell Clark, Sounds of the Silk Road: Musical Instruments of Asia (Boston: MFA Publications, 2005), 58.
Although the shakuhachi has deep roots within Japan, its origins trace back to the Chinese *xiao*.

The traditional Japanese term for this portamento effect is call *meri* and *kari*. *Meri* lowers the pitch by a half step while *kari* raises the pitch by a half step. This *meri-kari* technique is described by Japanese composer Minoru Miki as a breathing technique and is produced by lowering or rising of the performer’s chin.\(^{70}\)

Figure 4.2 *Meri* and *kari* ornamentations for *shakuhachi*

Example 4.7 shows a transition section from the first movement, measures forty one to forty four, where the *shakuhachi* portamentos (*kari* and *meri*) are the only moving melodic line within a texture sustained pitches. This is an example of how stimulating I find sliding tones and how their exectuation effects my choice of instrumentation.

\(^{69}\) Ibid.

Example 4.7 *Shakuhachi portamento* effect *kari* featured in first movement, *Underworld*
The Zither Family

During the academy I was especially impressed by the sounds created by the zither family. I was excited to have the opportunity to write for a section of zithers. The sounds of both the Persian setar (lute) and the Persian santur (hammered zither) had a bright and mellow metallic sound that captivated me. Montagu writes “Sometime around the mid-sixteenth century, people began to strike the strings of the psaltery with light hammers instead of plucking them, so creating the hammered dulcimer. There is still debate whether the Persian santur derives from our dulcimer or the process was the other way around – both seem to have appeared at much the same date.”

Another incredible instrument that I was already acquainted with was the Chinese zheng. This zither, which normally has twenty-one strings, requires the player to wear artificial fingernails “made of bone, shell or acrylic” to pluck the instrument. On the left side of the instrument, pressing downward on the strings can create pitch bends.

Figure 4.3 Zheng performer Ji Wei demonstrates pitch bends.

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71 Jeremy Montagu, Origins and Development of Musical Instruments, 144.
72 Samuel Wong Shengmiao, Qi An Instrumental Guide to The Chinese Orchestra (Singapore: TENG, 2007), 71-83.
One of the effects I used for the *santur* and the *zheng* was playing on the set of strings found behind the bridges. These strings are of indeterminate pitch and can be used to create interesting glissandi. With the *zheng*, Shengmiao describes these effects as “eerie sweeping sounds.”\(^74\) I notated these glissandi with a graphic symbol and written instructions that read *gliss. on left side of bridges*.

Figure 4.4 *Zheng* performer Ji Wei demonstrates glissando on left side of bridges.\(^75\)

Figure 4.5 Glissando graphic representing left side of bridges for *zheng*.

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\(^74\) Ibid., 71.

\(^75\) "Ji Wei Demonstrates the Zheng." *Atlas Ensemble YouTube Channel*
The Bowed String Family

The origin of bowed stringed instruments is a fascinating topic. The modern violin family can trace its roots back to the Middle Eastern *rebec* and the Byzantine *lyre*. Montagu writes that

> Such legends are surely true in essence, that the bow was the earliest of the string instruments, but what we can never know is whether the archer’s bow inspired the musician’s or the musician’s use of a bow led to the archer’s. The most common playing technique is to tap the string with a light stick, and while this could have been an arrow from the archer’s quiver, equally it could have been a stick in the hand of a musician who, seeing a target, launched the first arrow.\(^\text{76}\)

Creating different ensembles of bowed stringed instruments continues to inspire my work as a composer and string player. The beautiful results from *Phrygia* with both the Azerbaijani *kamancha*, and the Turkish *kemençe* gave me the confidence to continue writing for these wonderful instruments.

During my research I found that there were differences in tuning between the Azerbaijani *kamancha* and the Persian *kamancheh*. One factor in how the instrument is tuned is the mode – the *mugam* or *dastgah*. I obtained the *kamancha* tuning information from the Atlas Ensemble and Elshan Mansurov. The Persian *kamancheh* tuning information was obtained by a video interview with Kayhan Kalhor of the Silk Road Ensemble.

Table 4.2 Tuning differences between the Azerbaijani *kamancha* and Persian *kamancheh*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Sounding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="#">Diagram</a></td>
<td><a href="#">Diagram</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During a video interview by the Silk Road Ensemble, Kayhan Kalhor said that the Persian *kemancheh* can “play up to the fifth position comfortably and at any speed.”

Kalhor also gives an account of the origins of the *kamancheh*.

*Kamancheh* literally in Persian means the little hunting bow. *Kaman* means hunting bow and *cheh* is the diminutive for the word. I think as for any other bowed stringed instrument, *kamancheh* was a plucked stringed instrument once. And was played maybe on the lap and after discovering the bow, it became a bowed instrument.

Another important feature of the *kamancheh* is that it is “traditionally played with the performer seated on the floor and – as with the Japanese *kokyu* and Javanese *rebab* – it is the instrument itself that is rotated side to side so that the strings come into contact with the bow, rather than moving the bow along the strings.”

The Turkish *kemençe* is a pear-shaped solid body fiddle that is played on the lap of the performer. The strings are stopped not by the tip of the fingers, but by using the fingernails. This left hand technique is also used by the Mongolian *morin khuur* and the

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Indian **sarangi**. There are many instruments called **kemençe**, but the one referenced in this dissertation is the classical **kemençe** used in Turkish classical music since the mid-nineteenth century.\(^7^9\) The **kemençe** has three strings tuned A₃, D₄, and A₄, and can play double stops, tremolos, glissandi, and other typical articulations found in Western string music. The range of the instrument is from A₃ to E₆. Most important to composers is that the music for Turkish instruments is written a fourth higher than sounding.\(^8^0\)

**Challenge Two: Non-Western Music Theory**

As a composer entering into an intercultural collaboration, I was excited to learn about non-Western music theory. Each of the musical traditions contained within *Axis Mundi* has its own music theory and modal system. Even though I did not use functional Western music theory in *Axis Mundi*, either modes or rhythms, I felt that understanding the theoretical context of the instruments was important. **Phrygia**, for example, brought performers from different modal traditions together with my own Western compositional language. After a successful reading session, I realized that bringing different systems of theory together was not as hard as it seemed at first. Tenzer writes “a longer view, such as the one offered by epistemologist Karl Popper, exhorts us to assume that communication is *always* possible between different cultures, so long as they approach


\(^8^0\) Ibid.
each other openly and do not have unrealistic expectations about how quickly understanding can grow.”

These non-Western musical traditions have deep roots and it would be impossible to master all of them, but the Western composer need not learn all of the details of non-Western theory. There are some basics concepts that have helped me gain some context into the challenge of composing an intercultural piece. These include octave divisions, accidentals, pitch sets, scales, and modes.

Octave Divisions

During my research I found that the various modal systems divide the octave differently, which affects the number of accidentals used. Within the Arabic and Persian systems, the octave is divided into twenty four parts with each whole tone divided roughly into four equal parts of 50 cents each. Composer Moshe Denburg writes, in his Persian Study Guide, that the twenty four equal temperament octave is a theoretical concept, and only a “rough snapshot, and in practice the actual notes played do not conform to the theoretical ideal.” The division of the octave also depends on the instrument. The Persian Tar for example divides the octave into seventeen parts. Figure 4.6 displays how each musical tradition divides the octave.

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The Turkish system theoretically divides the octaves into fifty-three parts, but for the sake of performance stays mostly within twenty-four parts. What is also unique about the Turkish system is that it has names for each pitch within a two-octave span. Figure 4.7 displays the two-octave example from the *Arel-Ezgi-Uzdilek* System.
Accidentals

Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 help to demonstrate the different types of accidentals and microtones used within various modal traditions. Farhat has written that both the *sori* and the *koron*, while theoretically quarter-tones, are closer to unspecified microtones. The Turkish system theoretically divides the octaves into nine parts. Five of these nine parts have accidentals. Unlike the Arabic and Persian systems, finding the exact breakdown in cents between microtones varies. In the Turkish system “The comma is widely used by musicians as a unit of measurement, more or less literally. A singer may complain to the instrumental ensemble that the general pitch level is ‘a comma’ too high for him.”

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According to Signell, “Sometimes, the literal value of the accidentals can deviate at least one comma (23 cents) from common practice.” In my research I have found that the comma (koma) can range from 22.642 to 23.460 cents.

Table 4.3 Accidentals used in Persian Music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approx.</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharps</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Sori</td>
<td>Sharp</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>Koron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Accidentals used in Arabic Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approx.</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
<th>50 cents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharps</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>¼ Sharp</td>
<td>Sharp</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>Flat</td>
<td>¼ Flat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Accidentals used in Turkish music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approx.</th>
<th>23.46 cents</th>
<th>66.765 cents</th>
<th>23.46 cents</th>
<th>66.765 cents</th>
<th>23.46 cents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharps</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>1 comma sharp</td>
<td>4 comma sharp</td>
<td>5 comma sharp</td>
<td>8 comma sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>9 comma flat</td>
<td>8 comma flat</td>
<td>5 comma flat</td>
<td>4 comma flat</td>
<td>1 comma flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

During my residency at the Banff Centre I was able to take a santur lesson and ask questions about the instrument. Through dialogue with traditional santur players, I
was able to develop an interesting tuning that incorporates the Persian quarter flat - koron. Although this tuning is non-traditional, it is based on my observations from the Persian dastgah system where I noticed that A, B, and E were often the notes affected by accidentals. These pitches were either flat or quarter flat korons. The lower staff refers to the left side of the instrument corresponding to the high register. The middle staff refers to the middle register located in the middle of the instrument. The top staff refers to the right side of the instrument corresponding to the low register.

Figure 4.8 The santur tuning diagram for Axis Mundi

Pitch Sets

The Arabic modal system is based upon trichords, tetrachords, and pentachords. A trichord or tetrachord set in Arabic is called jins (set), and a pentachord set is called aqd. The plural for these words is ajnas (sets) and uqud. These three, four, and five note sets combine to help build and define a particular makam. Violinist, vocalist, rababa player and scholar of Arabic music Sami Abu Shumays clarifies this further by writing that
A *jins* can be understood in three ways: 1. As a set of 3, 4, or 5 notes with specific intervals among them, 2. As a collection/repertory of melodies using those notes, and 3. As a particular mood, color, or flavor of melody (this is the more metaphorical, affective way of understanding *jins*). The second component of this definition—*jins* as a collections of melodies—is the most important, contains the most information, and is the primary entrance for learning *jins* and *maqam*.

Figure 4.9 represents the *ajnas* that were taught to me by Lebanese oud player Charbel Rouhana at the Atlas Academy and at the Banff Centre. Shumays write that

Different Arabic music references define sets slightly differently. As with *maqams*, many sets are too archaic or rarely used. There is also disagreement about the length of each set (3, 4, or 5 notes), and some references simplify and standardize every set as a tetrachord.

As a learning exercise during both the Atlas Academy and at the Banff residency, the class improvised music using these tetrachordal sets. From this activity, I learned that a large number of musical ideas could come exclusively from four notes.

Figure 4.9 Arabic *ajnas* and *uqud*—sets of trichords, tetrachords, and pentachords

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The Turkish system also uses tetrachords and pentachords. Signell writes that Turkish theoreticians were familiar with Greek music theory and that “It is no surprise then, that a cornerstone of their analysis of the *makam* system is the idea of tetrachords.”

Figure 4.10 Turkish tetrachords and pentachords

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**Scales**

Within both the Arabic and Turkish system pitch sets combine to form scales. These scales represent only part of what a mode, or *makam* is. The other part is defined as a system with “a set of compositional rules.” Türk music expert Bülent Aksoy writes “In theoretical terms, *makam* is defined first by its scale, that is, the tones or notes which lend themselves to the *makam* in question.” Like the Western melodic minor scale, sometimes the accidentals of a particular scale will change depending on whether the melodic motion is ascending or descending. Farraj and Shumays write that

It's possible and often practical to view a *maqam* as a collection of sets, as well as a collection of notes. Each *maqam* is made up two main *ajnas* (sets) called lower and upper *jins*. The lower *jins* is used to group or classify the *maqam* in a family.

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Figure 4.11 Examples of Arabic *maqam* scales

![Diagram of Arabic maqam scales](image1)

Figure 4.12 Examples of Turkish *makam* scales

![Diagram of Turkish makam scales](image2)
**Modes**

Signell writes of Turkish *makams*, there are approximately 60-70 *makams* recognized today, each with its own name (*Rast, Bayati*, etc.) and its own distinctive structure.89 Aksoy writes that

Makam is a concept that cannot be defined in a simple, straightforward way. It is a complex phenomenon, especially in Turkish music. Such complexity results from the variety and instability of the elements that shape its very structure.

Theoretical knowledge is only a preliminary framework that introduces a general notion on *makams*, which is a significant starting point. However, music based on the concept of *makam* is primarily a genre that exists through composing and performing.90

After becoming exposed to modal theory, I felt I was not ready to implement it without practicing and making it my own. During my world music residency at the Banff Centre, I composed with traditional modes, but barely scratched the surface of what was possible. With *Axis Mundi*, I did not feel I was ready to fully implement my experience with non-Western modal music. There are also traditional rhythmic cycles and modes that accompany these melodic modes, but I have spent much less time studying and practicing them. Accordingly, the rhythms used within *Axis Mundi* are much more Western than non-Western.

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Table 4.6 A categorization of traditional melodic musical systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Western Modal System</th>
<th>Indian Modes</th>
<th>Persian Scales/Key</th>
<th>Azeri Modal System</th>
<th>Arabic Modal System</th>
<th>Turkish Modal System</th>
<th>Chinese Modal System</th>
<th>Japanese Modal System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Modes</td>
<td>Raga Thaat</td>
<td>Radif Dastghah</td>
<td>Mugham</td>
<td>Maqam</td>
<td>Makam</td>
<td>Pentatonic modes</td>
<td>Pentatonic modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal System</td>
<td>Scales/Key</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenge Three: The Aural-Written Divide**

Within the Atlas Ensemble only a few performers had difficulty with Western staff notation. With the help of a translator, I had a wonderful one-on-one session with the great Azeri kamancha virtuoso Elshan Mansurov. As we talked about his kamancha part, he told me that, while the key was not “kamancha friendly,” the music was idiomatically written. He asked for a MIDI realization so he could practice his part with it. I asked if I could play his instrument to get a feel for it, and he agreed. While nervous at first, I was gratified that he read through my entire part perfectly during the reading session, playing every note as written. I found this to be a rewarding experience.

Composer Moshe Denburg of the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra led a discussion at the Atlas Academy, where he described this bridging of the aural-written divide. He writes about two main approaches to music making, one aural and the other written. He also stresses that each approach has its strengths and weaknesses. Denburg asserts that there is “no reason to keep the traditions completely apart.” Consequently, he has worked to bridge the aural-written divide.

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91 Moshe Denburg, "Bridging the Aural-Written Divide: Strategies for bringing together musicians from aural and written traditions." Lecture, a discussion paper at Atlas Academy, Amsterdam, August 2014.
In my view, the main reason for building such bridges is that it is a great loss to those wishing to work with both traditions, a limitation on composers and musicians, wherever they are from, not to have an answer for this conundrum, an answer that will access the best of both traditions without insisting upon the primacy of one.\textsuperscript{92}

Table 4.7 Moshe Denburg’s Strategies for transmitting composed materials to aural musicians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some Practical Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transmitting composed materials to aural musicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.) Provide a taped vocalized rendition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Provide a MIDI rendition of the piece, with rehearsal letters spoken as an overdub.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) In a percussion part, provide a solkattu (spoken rhythms) type rendition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) Write holding patterns (ostinato)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) Make the aural musician’s part continuous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) Provide a desk mate who can read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) Use various improvisation techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Utilize the musical language, terminology, and notation system of the aural culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Compositional Concerns**

**Western Microtonal Notation**

Composers have the choice of using different types of microtonal notation within the Western tradition. Table 3.8 lists some of the common microtone symbols used in Western music. Additional microtones are listed in Table 3.9. Learning the basics of any modal theory in combination with communicating with individual performers has been especially beneficial in composing for the *kamancha* and the *santur*. Learning these microtones has changed my compositional attitudes towards microtonal music. I no

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
longer view it as sometimes new, strange, or experimental. I now understand it to be normal, natural, and even traditional, because of its context within non-Western music theories. Since I have become familiar with Arabic, Turkish, and Persian microtonal notation, as shown above in Tables 3.3 to 3.5. I see no need for using the Western counterpart, which has now become somewhat artificial in comparison – due to its lack of traditional practice.

Table 4.8 Microtonal accidentals used in Western Music notation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharps</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>¼ Sharp</th>
<th>Sharp</th>
<th>¾ Sharp</th>
<th>Natural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Other quartetone accidentals used in Western musical notation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharps</th>
<th>¼ Sharp</th>
<th>¾ Sharp</th>
<th>¼ Sharp</th>
<th>¾ Sharp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>¼ Flat</td>
<td>¾ Flat</td>
<td>¼ Flat</td>
<td>¾ Flat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tuning

Many composers might have a preconceived notion that tuning an ensemble of diverse instruments presents insurmountable obstacles. It turns out that the issue of tuning did not present the challenges I had at first anticipated. One reason for this is that some of the instruments have been modified to play in equal temperament. Secondly, the musicians within the ensemble tend to adjust their pitch to fit with the dominant tuning
system, much like a violinist adjusts to the tuning of the piano. I observed this ability to match pitch during my first reading session with a subset of the Atlas Ensemble.

In Phrygia, I orchestrated a section where the kemence, kamancha, and erhu were asked to play in unisons and octaves. The result was perfect intonation. Not only did the performers play in tune with each other, but also with the rest of the ensemble.

Example 4.8 An excerpt from Phrygia for string septet and percussion showing kamancha, kemence, and erhu (top three instruments) scored in octaves and unisons.

Nevertheless, one should be aware of the standard temperaments because as Miki points out below, some instruments are unsuitable for modulation that use equal temperament. In terms of Japanese tuning, Miki writes that

All of the instruments in a Western orchestra have been developed to uniformly produce equal-tempered chromatic scales. Asian instruments could take the same path, but in doing so they would lose their original
characteristics. It is necessary to create contemporary music for Japanese instruments that incorporates their original characteristics.\textsuperscript{93}

It is completely unsuitable for Japanese instruments to modulate according to Western functional harmony. Instead, the \textit{shakuhachi} is able to produce delicate microtonal inflections. The \textit{shamisen} and \textit{koto}, besides their ability to produce subtle intervallic nuances, are also able to manipulate reverberating pitches and produce a combination of tone colors.\textsuperscript{94}

From reading Miki, I was unsure of the level of chromaticism to use in the melodic writing. In his guide for writing for \textit{shakuhachi}, Moshe Denburg writes “Presently, with some effort, a well-trained performer can produce nearly all of the chromatic pitches within the standard range.”\textsuperscript{95} To be safe, I decided to stay mostly within a standard D pentatonic scale and restrict myself primarily within a two-octave range.

Figure 4.13 The \textit{shakuhachi}'s} standard D pentatonic range

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{shakuhachi.png}
\caption{The \textit{shakuhachi}'s} standard D pentatonic range}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Other Forms of Notation}

During my participation in the 2014 Atlas Academy, I found that most composers used Western staff notation. However I found it to be more effective to augment traditional notation with non-traditional notation such as: graphic notation, proportional


\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 3.

notation, and written directions. In addition to using different types of notation, I also found it useful to use a digital realization of the music, (i.e. in a midi version). For this project, I used my experience with the Atlas Ensemble and applied a combination of these types of notation. Example 3.2 shows how I combined improvisation with senza misura. The directions read, “If kemence player has difficulty reading the given solo he or she may freely improvise or may improvise from makam kürdi. The conductor should then signal a cut off and cue entrance to rehearsal letter C.”

Example 4.9 Written directions used in Phrygia to communicate traditional improvisation within a senza misura section.

Most performers in the Atlas Ensemble read Western staff notation. However, the subject of writing for musicians that do not read Western music was addressed in an Atlas Academy lecture entitled Bridging the Aural-Written Divide: Strategies for bringing together musicians from aural and written traditions. These strategies included providing a digital realization, using traditional notation, and singing the part to the performer. In the case of Indian music, using the traditional solfège of India, called

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96 John Lely and James Saunders categorize these types of notation, which developed in the 1950’s, as verbal notation, event scores, prose scores, text scores, and instruction scores.
sargam, can also be a helpful guide. Figure 4.11 displays the C Major scale with corresponding Indian solmization.

Figure 4.14 Indian sargam solmization

Non-Western Conceptions of Sound

Cultures continue to influence each other in terms of composition and music theory. Noteworthy to the composer is that traditional Japanese music makes use of non-musical sounds. “Imitating the sounds of Japan’s natural environment is a fundamental precept in composition and performance. The non-musical sounds produced by the instruments are also considered an integral part of the music. With the works of John Cage, this approach influenced contemporary composition on a global scale.”\(^97\) The music of John Cage exemplifies how the East has influenced Western contemporary art music.

Future Explorations in Intercultural Music Theory

The diverse instruments demonstrated at the Atlas Academy not only inspired me to compose new works, but also added to my understanding of instrumentation and orchestration. Thanks to the many intercultural ensembles, such as the Atlas Ensemble, awareness for non-Western instruments has increased. English language documentation

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of these instruments in the form of books, guidebooks, video tutorials, and websites has recently appeared. Western composers can now learn about the historical origins, instrumental ranges, tuning, and where to purchase a good instrument. The Internet has also become a great resource for lessons. Lessons for instruments such as the duduk and morin khuur can be found on YouTube. The Atlas Ensemble has also provided instrumentation video guides for each of its non-Western instruments. Along with these resources, books such as QI: An Instrumental Guide to The Chinese Orchestra, by Samuel Wong Shengmiao, and Composing for Japanese Instruments, by Minoru Miki, give instrumentation facts, guides to ornamentations, illustrations, musical examples, and recordings. Shengmiao writes that his book “will bridge a knowledge gap fuelled by language and cultural difference.” The student of, and English translator of Miki’s Composing for Japanese Instruments writes

I hope that this book helps to promote Japanese instruments as vital media for cross-cultural composition in the twenty-first century, giving English-speaking composers and ethnomusicologists the technical and practical resources to explore the possibilities of these wonderful instruments, leading to a body of new and innovative repertoire for traditional Japanese instruments.

The Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra has been working on an Orchestration Manuel entitled Orchestrating the World. It has yet to be completed, but the study guides they have produced and posted to their website are numerous and impressive in their detail.
CHAPTER 5: AXIS MUNDI THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Concept

The goal for the large-scale design of this work was to find a universal subject that linked diverse cultures together. Through my research I discovered that the axis mundi or world axis fit the description for intercultural exchange well. New World Encyclopedia defines the axis mundi as:

a symbol representing the center of the world where heaven connects with the earth. Different cultures represent the axis mundi by varied symbols such as a natural object or of a product of human manufacture. The axis mundi features prominently in cultures utilizing shamanic practices or those with animist belief systems. Yet it also appears in the most technologically advanced cultures – wherever the impulse persists to link a tower with the idea of a “world center.”

This idea inspired me to musically represent these planes of existence as movements. The term axis mundi instills the image of many different objects including a large tree, a mountain, a totem pole, or a temple. The image of an axis can represent a portal between the earth, heaven, and hell. As with most of my music, the form has emerged from working with the musical materials rather than pre-existing combinations of phrases, transitions, and solo sections. Axis Mundi is divided into three movements. I chose to start this musical journey in the underworld, then travel to earth, and finally emerge into heaven. I thought it was important to end the piece with a joyful ending. To depict the ending of the third movement, I chose to use clusters from the C diatonic scale.

Example 5.1 A harmonic reduction of the last five measures of first movement

Movement I Underworld: Overview

The first movement Underworld begins with non-pitched sound and noise effects gradually fading into layers of pitched materials. These pitch layers build upon each other until a climax is reached in measures thirty-seven to thirty-eight. The tutti climax is constructed from clusters of fast improvisatory atonal gestures labeled as “atonal flurries.” From this climax, pitch layers return and finally transition back into non-pitched sound-and-noise-effect gestures. Within this movement I experiment with thick polyphony, improvisation, new types of notation, and extended techniques. The form is diagramed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 The formal outline of the first movement Underworld

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>11-23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25-36</td>
<td>37-38</td>
<td>39-44</td>
<td>45-51</td>
<td>52-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise and sound effects</td>
<td>Pitch clusters</td>
<td>Improvisatory cluster “swells”</td>
<td>Thick polyphonic section</td>
<td>Climax “Atonal Flurry”</td>
<td>Transition back to pitch clusters</td>
<td>Pitch clusters</td>
<td>Coda return to noise and sound effects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall shape

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Pitch clusters</td>
<td>Non-sustained clusters</td>
<td>Layers of sustained pitch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improvised—non-improvised—improvised</td>
<td>Low—High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For me, the underworld represents a world without melody. Therefore, I designed this movement to be devoid of traditional melody. Instead, I imagined unusual sounds. Most of these sounds are fixed in traditional notation, but others are improvised. To establish this dark sound world, I begin the movement by using the sound of the harp’s half pedal to create a loud, low-pitched, ringing, buzzing sound of a minor second.

Figure 5.1 Notation of harp half pedal from the first movement, *Underworld*

I learned about this half pedal notation by studying the score and listening to the performance of the solo harp piece *Rokudan* (1989) by Japanese composer Toshiro Mayuzumi (1929). This score also features harp body slaps which I also incorporated into the first movement.

Example 5.2 Excerpt from *Rokudan* featuring half pedal and harp body slap notation

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Movement I Underworld: Senza Misura

The Senza Misura section at rehearsal number two is noteworthy because it is improvisational and without tempo. The conductor, along with the change from low to high pitch frequencies in the wood block, signals to the performers each fifteen-second section. With each additional fifteen-second interval, the strings add a pitch to improvise upon. The zithers are told to add new chords but are not told the specific pitches. Instead, their notation only indicates dyads within high, medium, and low registers. X-shaped note heads within improvisation boxes indicate this type of improvisational notation. The directions read, “Zither performers will choose a set of arbitrary chords. They will improvise upon these chords within a specified time span. Each box will add a new chord.” Combined with this additive feature are alternating dynamic swells. When the zithers are added into the texture their dynamics are opposite those of the strings. As the strings crescendo the zithers decrescendo creating the sound of alternating timbres.

Since I have not specified how to improvise, the non-Western performers may choose to improvise using rhythms within their modal traditions. I imagine it will depend on how those performers listen to each other in the moment of performance.
Example 5.3 Improvised section at rehearsal number two from the first movement

Senza Misura

Conductor will indicate rehearsal number with his/her fingers.

Zither performers will choose a set of arbitrary chords. They will improvise upon these chords within a specified time span. Each box will add a new chord.

Wood Blocks
tremolo

Performers will improvise from given pitches.
Movement I Underworld: Oscuro

After this improvised section, a thick polyphonic texture follows, where the timbre of each instrument is mixed in a “blur” of sound. I describe this texture as oscuro - dark. For me, the low harp cluster creates an unsettled atmosphere. Throughout this section, the zheng has slow moving half step pitch bends that create microtonal inflections. These smooth legato pitch bends are set against the fast tremolos of the hammer dulcimer-like sound of the santur, and the metal on metal articulations of the tam-tam being played with a triangle beater. In addition to the overall low register of the section, all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale are used. This dense ten-measure oscuro section is given direction by the dynamics used. It begins with a soft piano that gradually reach forte in measures thirty-three and thirty-four.
Example 5.4 The polyphonic section at rehearsal eight
Movement I Underworld: Extended Techniques

To create the atmosphere of the underworld I used extended techniques that create “unsettled” feelings. The harp was the instrument that I felt could best convey these feelings. These harp techniques include: harp half pedals, pedal glissandi, string scrapes, palm slaps (on strings), and harp body slaps. In addition, air sounds, wind and string glissandi, and bass drum tremolos create a sound world with no stability where everything is in flux and nebulous.

Another extended technique used was one borrowed from composer performer Ken Ueno. His work *blood blossoms*... for amplified sextet makes use of a special notation he calls an atonal flurry. This flurry is intended for bass guitar and is notated with headless rhythms with directions that read “highly chromatic improvisation on specified rhythms. Stay within high range of instrument – 12th fret E and higher. No repeated notes, or patterns.”

Figure 5.2 Ken Ueno’s atonal flurry instructions from *blood blossoms*...

Another of Ueno’s techniques takes the shape of a graphic of unspecified register or rhythm. Its description reads “improvisation on natural harmonics. Fast constant

\[100\] Ken Ueno, *...blood blossoms...for amplified sextet* (New York City, NY: Project Schott New York, 2002), performer instructions.
motion, with irregular rhythms, some repeated notes. Start \textit{pppp} and work up to \textit{fff} around 1'15” and work down to silence without slowing down stream of attacks. Sul ponticello throughout.”\textsuperscript{101}

Figure 5.3 Ken Ueno’s notation for his bass cadenza within \textit{...blood blossoms...}

From these notations I created my own atonal flurry with instructions that read: “play highly chromatic fast improvised rhythms.”

Figure 5.4 Climax of the first movement (winds only) with atonal flurry notation used

\textsuperscript{101} Ken Ueno, \textit{...blood blossoms...for amplified sextet}, program instructions.
Table 5.2 Extended techniques used in the first movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winds</th>
<th>Air sounds, multiphonics, glissandos, atonal flurry, pitch bends, different types of vibrato</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Zithers | Zheng: gliss. on “wrong” side of bridges.  
Santur: gliss with hands, gliss on the sides of the instrument, atonal flurry  
Harp: harp half pedals, pedal glissandos, string scrapes, palm slaps (on strings), harp body slaps. |
| Percussion | Use of triangle beater on tam-tam, atonal flurry |
| Bowed Strings | Highest note, finger tapping, glissandos, atonal flurry |

**Movement II Earth: Overview**

I designed the second movement *Earth* to represent tranquility. This was accomplished with slow tempos and a series of lyrical melodies. The movement begins with sustained pitch clusters that function as an introduction. The emphasis is on the combined sound of the ensemble rather than any particular instrument. I would describe the substance of the movement as series of solos with an earthy atmosphere. The first of these solos focuses on the *duduk*’s melancholic timbre. The orchestration is thinned out to create the third section, *Misterioso*, which is a zither trio of a solo santur, zheng accompaniment, and harp tremolo pedals points. Finally, the fourth section contains a short *shakuhachi* solo which functions as a transition to a recapitulation of the static melodic lines heard from the first section.
Table 5.3 The formal outline of the second movement *Earth*

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A₁</td>
<td>Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-27</td>
<td>28-45</td>
<td>46-94</td>
<td>95-104</td>
<td>105-111</td>
<td>112-116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Delicato</em></td>
<td><em>Arioso</em></td>
<td><em>Misterioso</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td><em>Duduk</em> solo</td>
<td><em>Santur</em> solo</td>
<td><em>Shakuhachi</em> solo</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Coda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Movement II Earth: *Delicato and Arioso***

The second movement opens with a soft bass drum tremolo and harp harmonics. Winds and strings enter in staggered succession. Sustained rhythms and the slow tempo of 42 beats per minute create an atmosphere of tranquility. Example 5.3 shows the reduction of the first four measures of the introduction. The full orchestration is shown in Example 5.4. In measure two, the winds introduce the pitches D, E, and G, and gradually by measure four all of the pitches from the C diatonic scale sound.

Example 5.5 Reduction of the introduction from the second movement
Example 5.6 The sustained sonorities in the opening of the second movement
Movement II Earth: Pitch Choices

For me, the C diatonic scale created a common scale that all of these instruments could play in tune. With Phrygia, the common scale was D Phrygian. The instrumentation of Axis Mundi presented me with a more complex mix of instruments and my solution was to minimize the number of accidentals. For example, the D minor pentatonic scale produced by the shakuhachi and the zheng has a greater chance of being in tune with the A Aeolian scale produced by the duduk. The only instrument that I specifically tuned not to follow this logic was the santur. The reason for this was to purposefully introduce microtonality when needed, for example, the santur solo in measure forty-six. The only pitches from the santur to deviate from the C diatonic scale are the low and mid register Bb and the high register A koron, B koron, and E koron. Reference Figure 4.8 for santur tuning. The kemençe and kamancha posed less of a problem because they are more flexible fretless instruments. Nevertheless, the kemençe’s open strings are A and D while the kamancha’s open strings are B and F# which project tonal centers towards the sharp side of the circle of fifths. Through my experience, the monotony of any diatonic scale can be reduced or eliminated by the use of sliding tones, ornaments, change of mode, or rhythmic variation.
Figure 5.5 The C diatonic scale as a common denominator between instruments

Movement II Earth: Duduk Solo

A duduk solo follows the introduction. The construction of this melody gives an insight into the fundamental process of how I compose. Most of my compositions are melody-based, and start from collections of pitches that get grouped together to form phrases. Figure 5.5 shows the series of steps I take when composing a melody. The first step involves improvising at the piano with a single pitch or group of pitches. An additive process follows. During this improvisation, I let my ear guide my hands through a series of melodic intervals at the piano. I chose pitches that I feel work well together and check their progression by singing through them. Keeping the instrument in mind, I then use my ear to find other pitches until an aesthetically pleasing series of notes emerge. I then write these notes in a style similar to plainsong notation. At this point, I only have a general sense of specifics such as: dynamics, rhythmic duration, articulation, or ornamentation.
Figure 5.6 The three steps in composing the *duduk* melody.

Step 1 Using ear to determine pitch content

Step 2 Using ear to determine durations

Step 3 Finding strong and weak parts of phrases to determine meter

After the composition of the melody is complete, I then proceed to compose the harmonic context. Similar to how the melody was constructed, I use my ear to find chords that support the pitches. This process is done at the piano. With the *duduk* solo, there is an emphasis on lesser harmonic motions to VII and III. It is not until the last three measures that a chord with dominant function appears in the form of a V of iv.
Example 5.7 A harmonic reduction of the *duduk* solo.

![Musical notation]

**Movement II Earth: The *Santur* Solo**

A two-measure transition leads into the next section of the movement that features a *santur* solo. This section provides a contrasting texture and meter with flowing melodic lines and tremolos. The zither family up until this point functions as background color or harmonic support for other voices. This section has three layers, a solo melody (*santur*), secondary counter melody (*zheng*), and a tremolo pedal point texture (*harp*). While tonal centers shift from D to F, the *zheng* keeps to its original D minor pentatonic tuning. The microtones played by the *santur* provide another beautifully dissonant top layer.

Example 5.8 Excerpt of the *santur* solo showing the zither family

![Musical notation]
Movement III Heaven: Overview

Just as in the second movement, the third movement starts with the slow tempo of quarter note equals sixty-two. The B section *placidamente* is a four-part texture orchestrated in octaves that is then followed by a *senza misura* shakuhachi solo. This solo line is then contrasted with a tutti cluster of pitches that alternate dynamics giving the music a sense of motion that I associate with ocean waves – entitled *quasi il mare*.

Finally, like the prior two movements, the introduction functions as a recapitulation that leads into a coda. The formal outline is illustrated in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 The formal outline of the third movement *Heaven*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A₁</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>9-40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42-47</td>
<td>48-55</td>
<td>56-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Maestoso</em></td>
<td><em>Placidamente</em></td>
<td><em>Senza Misura</em></td>
<td><em>Quasi il Mare</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Melody Counter Melody Bass line Accompaniment</td>
<td><em>Shakuhachi Solo</em></td>
<td>Cluster</td>
<td>Recap of Introduction</td>
<td>Coda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Movement III Heaven: *Maestoso*

The third movement *Heaven* begins with sustained pitch layers in the strings and winds. Slow moving glissandos played by the shakuhachi and *duduk* create an uplifting motion of heavenly ascension. The *santur* creates another layer with a sustained tremolo. The *zheng* and harp give the passage direction with quarter notes that sometimes alternate and sometimes play in unison. The first measure contains all of the pitches present in the C scale. Although a C centered tonality may be present in the first two measures, this
shifts with the cello playing open string fifths G – D in measures three to four. The C# played by the kemence also in measures three and four disrupt any sense of key along with the D and F octaves reflecting a D minor tonality in the zheng. The tam-tam’s part was mainly used for color and to mark the downbeats of the alternating time signatures.
Example 5.9 The opening *Maestoso* section of the third movement
Movement III Heaven: *Placidamente*

This section is organized around a melody performed by the *shakuhachi* and *kamanche*. From this melody I composed a bass line and a countermelody. This three-part polyphonic sketch was then orchestrated in octaves in the strings and winds. The reason for this doubling was to add support and aid in projection. It also creates unique timbres when the *shakuhachi* is paired with *kamanche*, *duduk* is paired with *kemençe*, and clarinet is paired with cello. The zithers, which play chords, scales, and tremolos, function to provide color and accompaniment.

**Table 5.5 Orchestration of *Placidamente* section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Melody</th>
<th><em>Shakuhachi and Kamanche</em> (in octaves)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Melody</td>
<td><em>Duduk and Kemençe</em> (in octaves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass line</td>
<td>Clarinet and Cello (in octaves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary accompaniment</td>
<td><em>Santur, Zheng, and Harp</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glissandi and pitch bends are ubiquitous throughout this movement, and as well as throughout the work. The first movement contains fifty-six instances of glissandi / pitch bends. The second contains thirteen instances, and the third contains twenty-three instances. I can trace the use of glissando in all of my current compositions from 2007 onward. Intriguingly, I am not sure if this influence is from contemporary Western music, or from non-Western musics – perhaps both. Example 5.10 below shows glissandi in both the *kamanche* and *shakuhachi* parts.
Example 5.10 Excerpt from the *placidamente* section of the third movement.
Movement III Heaven: *Senza Misura*

There are many musical qualities within the traditional *shakuhachi* genre that inspired me to compose for it, especially its meditative character and freeness of rhythm. The *shakuhachi* solo at measure forty-one is notated proportionally. Pitch and pitch order are given, but the performer is free to interpret the durations. However, I provide some guidance to the performer by using solid lines that give a general sense of duration. The ornamental tradition of the *shakuhachi* includes: grace notes, trills, slides (*meri* and *kari*), slap tongue, flutter tongue (*tamane*) and different types of air notes (*muraiki*).

System one of Example 5.11 stays within the lower octave, or *otsu*. Systems two through five explore pitches within both the lower and upper octave, or *kan*. The partial third octave, called *dai-kan*, is from C5 to C6 and is difficult to play at fast tempos. The high F (F6) requires the performer to rest the shakuhachi on his or her leg. This is indicated with a plus sign in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 The *dai-kan* or partial third octave of the *shakuhachi*’s register.

I have also incorporated the Japanese notational symbol for expressive bursts of air sounds, or *muraiki*. The graphic represents the dynamic contour and air speed for this type of gesture. Different shapes indicate different contours.
Figure 5.8 The traditional notation for *muraiki*.

Example 5.11 The *shakuhachi* solo from the third movement

![Musical notation](image-url)
Conclusion

I am pleased with *Axis Mundi*. It reflects my preferences for contrapuntal textures, modal melodies, glissandi, mixed meters, and diverse instrumentation. Even though there are ancient symbols associated with the title, such as: temples, totem poles, minarets, obelisks, and mandalas, I feel it is a contemporary piece of music that reflects music of our times more than looking back to the past. My choice of diverse instrumentation was not to evoke exotic sound worlds, but instead take the listener on a present-day journey of inclusiveness.

Despite the slow tempos of all of movements, I. q=60 *Larghetto*, II. q=42 *Delicato*, III. q=62 *Maestoso*, I think the piece does a good job of not getting monotonous. Monotony is avoided by the alternation of *tutti* and *solo* sections and between different types of textures. For example, the slow introduction of the second movement q=42 is contrasted by a faster *Arioso* section q=72 that is then contrasted by a trio of zithers playing in a different meter. Additionally, the transitions smoothly guide the listener through different sections. Finally, the extended techniques are thoughtfully used within a programmatic context and not conceived of as complexity for the purpose of complexity.
CHAPTER 6: *AXIS MUNDI*: SOCIOCULTURAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS

The Overarching Framework of Hybridity

In this chapter I discuss four frameworks with which cultural encounters concerning musical hybridity can be described and analyzed. These frameworks and their modes of interaction can be understood under the general concept of hybridity. From its inception, I conceived of *Axis Mundi* as a hybrid composition. The term hybrid is defined as “something heterogeneous in origin or composition.”\(^{102}\) The word hybrid originally comes from the field of biology, and refers to the offspring of two different kinds of plants or animals. Hybridity is used here as a synonym for mixture. *Axis Mundi* is a mixture or hybrid of Western and non-Western compositional ideas and instruments.

The biggest challenge to sorting out cross-cultural analysis has been navigating the sizeable amount of vocabularies used by different academic fields to describe interactions between cultures. Sometimes the terms contained within these vocabularies overlap and are interchangeable, and at other times describe different phenomenon depending on what field uses them. For example, pluralism is frequently interchangeable with multiculturalism. Furthermore, some terms do not have concrete definitions.

To be clear, this paper addresses learning and exchange, which is interculturalism, not transculturalism. Transculturalism is a complete synthesis of two or more cultures whereby “identification of a single originating culture is problematic.”\(^{103}\) Appropriation

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is defined here as “unfair use, unauthorized taking, or theft.”

Professor of Communication and Director of the Project for Advanced Research in Global Communication Marwan M. Kraidy writes that many scholars consider hybridity to be “natural, commonplace, and desirable in intercultural relations, and therefore noncontentious.” Meanwhile, scholars such as Tim Taylor, Bob White, and Steven Feld have been more critical, writing that hybridity is nothing more than record companies’ promotional strategies. For White, hybridity emphasizes the music’s hybrid status more than the quality of the music itself. Hybridity is evoked to get consumers interested in having the “best of both worlds.” Lastly, White writes that hybridity is the “protagonist of an epic myth of the future: a world without racism, without hate, and with a multitude of colors living together in harmony and style.”

What follows is a discussion of four different frameworks of hybridity and modes of interaction. These frameworks divide into two basic parts, positive and negative. These positive and negative descriptions refer to the relationship each framework has with the Other. The division also refers to how cultural rights are respected and negotiated. The negative framework of hybridity revolves around cultural imperialism with its roots in colonialism and orientalism. The positive framework of hybridity revolves around interculturalism and transculturalism. Interculturalism has roots in cosmopolitanism and intercultural communication. The highly complex framework of

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104 Ibid., 475.
106 Ibid., 191.
107 Ibid., 191.
transculturalism has roots in both the negative framework of cultural imperialism and positive framework of cosmopolitanism. Scholars who study these frameworks generate discourses with other related frameworks to produce, over the course of time, new frameworks. For example, some of these new frameworks include neocolonialism and new-orientalism. Likewise, there is no single philosophy of cosmopolitanism, but instead a plethora of cosmopolitanisms. See figure 6.1. Arrows between frameworks indicate dialogue and connection between them.

Figure 6.1 The frameworks and modes of interaction of hybridity in music

The main reason for including a chapter on the sociocultural political analysis of *Axis Mundi* is to address concerns that can be summed up by composer and ethnomusicologist Michael Tenzer who writes “What is difference? Is difference a right, and to what extent? How can differences coexist?”

World music provides contradictory answers to these questions. On the one hand, it covers, when it doesn’t facilitate them, practices that lead to

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the leveling of differences, to the reification and commercialization of the Other and its images; it has opened the door to new forms of piracy and despoilment. On the other hand, it has provided new means of expression and creation that show how the interaction between human begins, collaboration, and real knowledge of and respect for the Other lead to novelty and creation.

For this reason, world music, more than other forms of music, demands critical examination. It is important to distinguish recycling from creation; it is necessary to detect plundering and to denounce it; and it is equally essential to better understand the workings of the mixtures and fusions that have made world music successful and have led to undeniable esthetic achievements.¹⁰⁹

I agree with Tenzer that there are differences in how composers engage with other musical traditions, and that it is important to make the distinction between cultural theft and respectful exchange. To determine this, I will discuss the frameworks of: Hybridity as Cultural Imperialism, Hybridity as Cosmopolitanism, Hybridity as Interculturalism, and Hybridity as Transculturalism. I define these frameworks as the ideologies and philosophies that guide musicians and composers into musical encounters.

**Hybridity as Cultural Imperialism**

Cultural anthropologist Matti Sarmela defines cultural imperialism as “the economic, technological and cultural hegemony of the industrialized nations, which determines the direction of both economic and social progress, defines cultural values, and standardizes the civilization and cultural environment throughout the world.”¹¹⁰

There are scholars in the field of ethnomusicology and anthropology who often view intercultural encounters with skepticism. They view cultural encounters through the lens

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 398.

of orientalism and colonialism which they view as older versions of globalization. They are fixated on power relationships, and focus on the negative aspects of globalization. For example, in his book *Beyond Exoticism*, Timothy Taylor writes that his “book is not a survey. It is, rather, a study of the three main systems of domination and exploitation – colonialism, imperialism, and what we now call globalization – and ideologies produced by them that foster appropriations of music and representation of nonwestern Others.”\(^{111}\) Anthropologist Bob White in his book *Music and Globalization* writes “Encounters occur on the terrain (or at least on the terms) of the powerful, who mostly ignore the privilege that allows them to play by rules of their choosing.”\(^{112}\) Professor of communication studies J. Macgregor Wise writes that there are two points of view in the critical scholarship of world music. Products of cultural encounters take the form of either exploitation or resistance. Therefore he concludes “discourse about global music has been dominated by discussions of cultural imperialism which tend to oversimplify the situation.”\(^{113}\)

As a composer, I have experienced both negative and positive reactions regarding the act of borrowing from and exchanging with other cultures. I have also heard of many stories from colleagues who have shied away from using material from other cultures because they did not want to get involved with the “politics.” It is unfortunate that the debate between various ideologies has inhibited composers from learning about and incorporating musics other than their own.

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Cultural imperialism derived from orientalism and colonialism represent the most common tool used to evaluate cultural encounters across many academic fields including music. In this framework, globalization is often viewed as a newer form of colonialism, and neo-orientalism as a newer form of orientalism.\footnote{Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Margaret Kohn "Colonialism", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/colonialism/}. The lens of cultural imperialism is used to view the processes of globalization as a threat to indigenous groups and traditions.\footnote{An indigenous group is defined as “descendants of people who inhabited a geographic region before its colonization or annexation.” Andrew N. Weintraub, and Bell Yung, ed., Music and Cultural Rights, 6.} A composer who wishes to enter into an intercultural encounter will likely been seen by scholars as exploiting indigenous musicians for their cheap labor and creativity, as exploiting the Other creatively, culturally, and financially. Within this framework there exists a conception of the Other as inferior and primitive, while at the same time upholding the Other as authentically primordial. Cultural imperialism has its roots in orientalism, and this then provides the environment with which to create the category of world music. Edward Said defines orientalism as,

A collective notion identifying “us” Europeans as against all “those” non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.\footnote{Edward Said, Orientalism, 8.}

There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power.\footnote{Ibid., 36.}
From these definitions we can see the common themes and connections between both colonialism and orientalism and how they have worked their way into the discourse of world music. The genre of world music, like the discourse of orientalism, fragments traditional musics by packaging together pieces of traditional musics regardless of geographical space or historical time. This genre is a synthetic category of music that more often than not is guilty of perpetuating orientalism.

One common critique of world music is that it is marketed and advertised as authentic, pure, or primitive music for Western consumers who have the privilege to be curious of Others. The music is designed to sell in mostly Western markets and so non-Western elements are “sanitized” and “repackaged” to meet the needs of its consumers. According to Wise, the danger of world music is that “It caters to middle-class aural tourism, problematic (at times racist) desire for authentic, tribal, or primitive music (which frames these musicians and peoples as primitive, primal, as well), and (to much less extent) immigrant or expatriate communities.”\textsuperscript{118} The negative side to this aural engagement is that it has the potential to give consumers an unrealistic representation of the Other.\textsuperscript{119}

Timothy Taylor gives an example of how this repackaging works. In Peter Gabriel’s \textit{Passion} album, the song \textit{The Feelings Begins} features an Armenian \textit{duduk} player who, according to Taylor, is forced into playing in an unnatural \textit{4/4} meter. For Taylor, the \textit{duduk}’s natural and traditional way of playing is free and without meter. For Taylor this “repackaging of time marks one of the most salient impositions of Western

\textsuperscript{118} J. Macgregor Wise, \textit{Cultural Globalization}, 79.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 79.
concepts on the musics of other cultures.”120 Paul Simon’s 1986 *Graceland* album is ubiquitously used throughout ethnomusicology literature because Simon is accused of stripping non-Western music from its traditional context.121 Simon was also accused of unfair compensation to the non-Western musicians who worked with him on the album.

Classical music is not exempt from criticism. As recently as 2014, the Silk Road Ensemble was criticized as using the “ideology of collaboration” as a justification for sanitizing non-Western sounds.122 Ethnomusicologist Andrew Weintraub and professor Bell Yung among others have written about composer David Fanshawe’s *African Sanctus*, where he recorded traditional Arabic chanting without the participants’ knowledge and later digitally transformed these recordings from their original context. Since the piece had over a thousand performances and was financially beneficial to the composer, scholars raised ethical questions about his recordings as representing “an aural sort of imperialism that exploited indigenous musicians.”123 Professor of ethnomusicology Carol A. Muller writes “It's an extraordinary collection of music and images, but there is an edge to everything he did. There is a level of complete arrogance, a kind of colonial mind-set, that you can go to Africa and make these recordings and use them at your own


121 Ibid., 81.


Fanshawe argued that if he had not recorded these musicians, then the music would be lost forever. He maintained that he was not exploiting but preserving indigenous music. “I've tried to make recordings in remote places that preserve the music honestly. I've paid the musicians what I can,” he told the St. Petersburg Times in 2000. “All I can say is that if I hadn't recorded this music, or taken these photographs, nobody else would have.”

Fanshawe describes how he obtained his compositional material thusly:

The raw material for this section [the Credo] I discovered quite by accident one moonlit night when I was riding my camel across the Marra mountains in West Sudan. I left the camel and climbed a steep mountainside drawn by strange utterances which excited me beyond words. On top of the mountain under a full moon I saw four men on a prayer mat. They were in a trance swaying backwards and forwards reciting the Koran in a strange mixture of local dialects and Arabic. I recorded them for half an hour and they never knew I had been there.

Some scholars treat Fanshawe’s account of the how he got his material as an example of cultural imperialism. Composer Felicia Sandler has studied this case and concluded that with regards to individual rights Fanshawe invaded the privacy of the performers and did not respect their rights. She asserts some violations to cultural rights. First, Fanshawe disregarded the rights of performers to determine how their music would be used. Second, there was no discussion on how royalties would be distributed.

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124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
According to Weintraub and Yung, cultural rights were first mentioned in several declarations including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant of Economic, Social, Cultural Rights of 1966, the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights of 1966, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003.\textsuperscript{129} Weintraub and Yung define cultural rights as rights that “give groups the ability to preserve its culture, to raise its children in the ways of its forebears, to continue its language, and not to be deprived of its economic base by the nation-state in which it is located.”\textsuperscript{130} Ethnomusicologist Ricardo Trimillos has defined these rights more precisely by adding “cultural rights are rights of any given group to access, steward, and control their music.”\textsuperscript{131}

Table 6.1 displays three levels of agency. For example, the right to access music of the Other is less intrusive than the right to control. These cultural rights and intangible cultural heritages need to be in the minds of composers working with different musical traditions.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{129} Andrew N. Weintraub, and Bell Yung, ed., \textit{Music and Cultural Rights}, 2.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 11.
\end{flushleft}
Table 6.1 Trimillos’s schema of cultural rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less Intrusive</th>
<th>More Intrusive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Right to access</strong></td>
<td><strong>Right to steward</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to perform</td>
<td>Right to critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to observe</td>
<td>Right to advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to research</td>
<td>Right to transmit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to inform</td>
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<td></td>
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**Cultural Imperialism: A Critique of the Discourse of Privilege**

This dissertation addresses the mixture of various “high art” musics. Since there is a potential for unequal exchanges between Western and non-Western peoples, white American privilege will be addressed. Classical music is often thought to be a privileged art form. However, this is not always true. One example of classical music being accessible to people of lower economic means is the state-run Venezuelan classical music program *El Sistema*. This music education system gives both the rich and poor the opportunity to learn classical music. Its founder José Antonio Abreu has said that “I’ve dedicated all my efforts to [allow] the poorest, the ones most excluded, [to] have access to musical education.” Since 1975 the *El Sistema* programs have spread throughout the world making classical music education accessible to students of all economic levels.

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132 Ibid., 34.

backgrounds. Even before *El Sistema*, public education in the United States has had a long history of offering students of various socioeconomic backgrounds the opportunity to become great artists of classical music. The myth that classical music is only the purview of the rich elite where the composer has ultimate rule has been dispelled.

Still, musicians and composers have used their privilege for economic gain. Wise quoting Lipsitz writes that Paul Simon and David Byrne shouldn’t be criticized for reaching out to world musicians but that they need “a self-conscious understanding of unequal power relations, of the privileges available to Anglo-American recording stars because of the economic power of the countries from which they come.” On the other hand, journalist and writer Conor Friedersdorf’s alternate version of “white privilege theory” is one in which privileged students engage in intercultural dialogue. Friedersdorf does not dispute the concept of privilege; rather his criticism is aimed at how the theory is taught. In his article *The Limits of Talking About Privilege to Teenagers*. Referencing New York City schools, Friedersdorf writes that it is a waste of time for teenagers to talk amongst themselves about trendy theories on what sets them apart from their less privileged New Yorkers. He recommends students get out of the classroom and talk with individuals from different backgrounds who have experienced police abuse and discrimination. “They need to have as many experiences as possible outside the privileged halls of their schools, encountering New Yorkers of all backgrounds. They

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need to discover not just what makes them different, but what they share in common, and what they can learn from individuals who’ve taken different paths through life.”

I think confusion arises when scholars and students distort interculturalism with imperialism, or worse – racism. Appropriation does not equal cultural exchange, and dialogue does not equal exploitation. Shaming people because of their privilege is not constructive and does not contribute to learning about Others. In other words, intercultural dialogue and cosmopolitan ethics can be the solutions to racism and exploitation, not the discourse of privilege. Friedersdorf’s comments support this position, stating “the object ought to be showing young people the world as fully, clearly and completely as possible, and familiarizing them with lots of competing frameworks for understanding it, so that they can grapple toward their own conclusions.”

While researching the topic of privilege, Vancouver intercultural composer John Oliver wrote to me advising me to talk about my own experiences, rather than support a theory of cultural appropriation. Below are excerpts from his email:

People of all colours, including white, are collaborating. Are there older people who have, in the past, behaved in high-handed ways with regard to cultures not their own? Probably. But it's not up to you to solve their problem, but to explain how you are past that.

The crux of the problem is the concept of cultural appropriation. It's based on the notion that someone wants to create a work of art that pretends to be from another culture, like a kind of fraud. But I don't know anyone doing intercultural music who wants to pass off what they are doing as "genuinely" anything it is not. Most are creating new music. If a composer wants to explore the sounds and ideas of another culture, it is because they

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136 Ibid.
are curious and open-minded, not because they are capitalist CEOs mining for gold in a foreign land and underpaying workers there, etc.

As long as the host works to include everyone of every colour in public presentations to the best of their comfort level, then there's no problem. In our practice, we deal with people first, not politics. With artists of all races, artistic integrity comes first (or should). That's what we think about first and foremost.\textsuperscript{137}

It is certainly not for purists, archivists, conservationists, traditionalists, etc.\textsuperscript{138}

The composers I have met truly respect and admire non-Western musicians and their musical traditions. Privilege is real, but not all those that have it abuse it. In my experience, those involved in intercultural collaboration have checked their privilege and replaced it with negotiation, compromise, humility, and hospitality. Anthropologist Bob White has also come to a similar conclusion, writing that the framework of cultural imperialism has become inadequate.

Most scholars who examined the cultural imperialism concept with respect to music, however, ultimately rejected it as inadequate to explain how musics intermingle. It was too “top-down” a model, with its assumption of the wicked West imposing its sounds on the unsuspecting masses of a so-called Third World that was assumed to have neither the knowledge nor the agency to protect itself from foreign assault. Cultural imperialism also was too rigid a model to explain the myriad and complicated ways that cultural forms can mix.\textsuperscript{139}

Ultimately my goal has been to add to the discussion of appropriation and hybridity by advocating for additional frameworks to be used when analyzing cross-cultural music collaborations.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{138} John Oliver, an email message to author, November 23, 2014.

\textsuperscript{139} Bob W. White, ed., \textit{Music and Globalization}, 181.
Hybridity as Cosmopolitanism

The early founder of cosmopolitanism was the ancient Greek Cynic Diogenes of Sinope who was the first person to call himself a “citizen of the world.” The definition of cosmopolitanism I use is taken from University of Cambridge professor Ash Amin who sums up Appiah’s concepts of cosmopolitanism as “the intersection of two things: the obligation towards others who are not like us, and secondly, the respect for lives led in local contexts.” Throughout its history, cosmopolitanism has undergone many transformations. Professor of culture and communication Nikos Papastergiadis summarizes four main principles of cosmopolitanism. He writes that these original Stoic ideas “continue to influence contemporary debates on cosmopolitanism.” First, Greek Stoics defined the idea of community through the incorporation of the whole of humanity. Second, they asserted that human rights were not constrained within geopolitical boundaries. Third, they adopted a non-hierarchical vision of cultural value. Fourth, they encouraged an attitude of self-awareness through genuine curiosity and open exchange with the other. As we can see from these defining principals, curiosity and exchange are considered good things under cosmopolitanism. As Appiah says, cosmopolitanism is a “set of attitudes” that are about “finding other people

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143 The Cynics influenced the Stoics by way of Crates of Thebes

144 Nikos Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 82.
For me, these sets of attitudes are where confusion and debate occur because finding other people interesting and learning about them can be interpreted as appropriation or cultural theft.

Likewise, the word cosmopolitan has been interpreted in many ways. Anthropologist Steven Vertovec and globalization expert Robin Cohen write that

Unlike political nationalism, cosmopolitanism registers and reflects the multiplicity of issues, questions, processes and problems that affect and bind people, irrespective of where they were born or reside. The theory and practice of cosmopolitanism have at least the potential to abolish the razor-wired camps, national flags and walls of silence that separate us from our fellow human beings.

I went to the Atlas Academy with the knowledge of both the cultural and political philosophies of cosmopolitanism. For me, cosmopolitanism is not just a theory, but a mindset or orientation towards the world.

**Types of Cosmopolitanisms and Their Misconceptions**

To simplify various cosmopolitan practices, I will discuss three sets of binary divisions: elite versus working-class, cultural versus political, and rooted versus rootless. Too often cosmopolitanism has been defined as a lifestyle of the privileged rich, who can afford to experiment with the exotic. “In this long history, cosmopolitanism has clearly been confronted by skepticism, opposition, hostility and sometimes active repression. In many settings the terms cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan have been terms of abuse

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145 "Kwame Anthony Appiah, Cosmopolitanism: In Conversation with Ash Amin."

rather than forms of self-identification.”¹⁴⁷ I think the reason why some anthropologists and ethnomusicologists are suspicious of cosmopolitanism is because it shares many of the same traits as globalization. Globalization with its association with the devastation of indigenous cultures is considered the enemy to preservation. Like globalization, cosmopolitanism shares: cross-border activity, interconnection and interdependency, and a conception of the world as a single space.¹⁴⁸

Cosmopolitan misconceptions are not hard to find. For example, Wise in his book *Cultural Globalization* writes of the car as “a self-enclosed mobile bubble of transnational cosmopolitanism” as it reflects a world of poverty.¹⁴⁹ This is a portrayal of cosmopolitanism as detached from social inequality. Another example is Wise’s description of cosmopolitanism as postmodern angst in his description of Paul Simon’s relationship with South African musicians. “[Paul Simon] stripped music and lyrics of their local connotations (about black struggle under a racist government, for example) and used them as exotic accompaniment for his own lyrics about cosmopolitan postmodern angst.”¹⁵⁰ Below are three sets of binary divisions: elite versus working-class, rooted versus rootless, and cultural versus political.


¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 13.


¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 80.
Table 6.2 Binary types of Cosmopolitanisms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Binary 1</th>
<th>Working-Class</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrants, refugees, artists, musicians</td>
<td>Diplomats, lawyers, foreign journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binary 2</td>
<td>Rooted</td>
<td>Rootless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A citizen of the world who balances the local with the global</td>
<td>A citizen of the world who has no local allegiances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binary 3</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A citizen of the world who enjoys cultural diversity.</td>
<td>A citizen of the world who seeks greater cooperation with other citizens of the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working-Class versus Elite

Sociologist Robert J. Holton describes the elite cosmopolitan as someone who is affluent, privileged, traveled, and unaware of or detached from social realities.\(^1\) For these reasons, elite cosmopolitans are often implicated in practices of cultural imperialism. I want to distance myself from these elite connotations of cosmopolitanism. We should not forget that the founder of cosmopolitanism, Diogenes of Sinope, was a beggar, not a banker. Vernacular, working-class, plebian, and subaltern cosmopolitanism all describe a very different picture of how people relate to each other. In a talk with Ash Amin, Appiah made this distinction clear.

Money and privilege make everything easier, but it’s important to stress there are people with a cosmopolitan attitude who don’t have privilege. There are people in refuge camps who have, in material terms almost nothing, who are open to the world in the way that cosmopolitanism

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commends. And similarly there are very privileged people who are profoundly not cosmopolitan.¹⁵²

Working-class cosmopolitan attitudes have been studied by Ethnomusicologist Benjamin Brinner in his book Playing Across The Divide, which analyzes the cosmopolitan attitudes which make up the polymusical relationships between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Brinner’s discusses the Jewish culture as a model cosmopolitan culture. His main points are that Jews have historically lived in a world of hybridity. They have maintained their own culture but have also been “subject to and influenced by the dominant cultural and social regimes of the non-Jewish majority.” This is evident in hybrid forms of expression in linguistic – Yiddish, Ladino, and Judaeo-Arabic are quintessential hybrid languages – and musical domains, as well as in other areas of life.¹⁵³

To support Brinner’s research, these cosmopolitan practices are expressed in the Jerusalem International Oud Festival, where musicians and composers from across the world participate in intercultural exchange. Holten writes that within the elite category “Political activists and lawyers, workers, corporate managers and diplomats are all implicated in cosmopolitanism, for better or worse.”¹⁵⁴ Somewhere in between this divide are people, as previously mentioned, who find others interesting, travel and enjoy exotic cuisines, and who value living in diverse neighborhoods.

¹⁵² Kwame Anthony Appiah, Cosmopolitanism: In Conversation with Ash Amin.
Rooted versus Rootless

The most dangerous misconception is the belief that cosmopolitans deny their connections to family, friends, community, culture, and nation. This is the image of rootless cosmopolitans who have no allegiance to any group. Since they are citizens of the world they get away with answering to no one. There may be rootless cosmopolitans, but recently many scholars have countered this phenomenon with rooted cosmopolitans. Going against this rootless concept is Ted Cantle who writes that a cosmopolitan identity can coexist and cooperate with national and regional identities. Cantle believes that both cosmopolitanism and nationalism can “complement, rather than threaten, each other.”\cite{155}

Therefore cosmopolitans can be patriotic and love their local and national community, but still have a conception of global citizenship. Appiah has said that leaving ones’ local group is not a good idea because doing so can take one away from his or her humanity. The challenge according to Appiah, is learning how to balance local and global obligations.

Cultural versus Political

In 2006, Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz wrote *Two Faces of Cosmopolitanism: Culture and Politics* where he describes two tendencies of cosmopolitanism - the happy face and the sad face. The happy face is the cultural face of cosmopolitanism where different cultures engage in exchanges to create new forms of difference. This face is happy because there has been progress in terms of people working together on cultural projects. The sad face is the political face, or cosmopolitics

\cite{155} Ted Cantle, *Interculturalism*, 182.
that focuses on the large problems of humanity. This face is concerned with global citizenship and human rights, and has goals of bringing the global community together to solve large-scale problems such as nuclear proliferation and climate change. The face is sad because these goals have yet to be realized.

Table 6.3 A summery of Ulf Hannerz’s two faces of cosmopolitanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Cosmopolitanism (The Happy Face)</th>
<th>Political Cosmopolitanism (The Sad Face)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defined as the ability to make one’s way into other cultures.</td>
<td>Defined as civic and humanitarian responsibility that transcends national borders that include global citizenship and human rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned with openness towards divergent cultural experiences that include new people, sights, sounds, and tastes</td>
<td>Concerned with new possibilities of organizing power to solve big problems, for example climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcomes hybridity</td>
<td>Welcomes global interconnectedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My orientation towards cosmopolitanism has been of a working-class, rooted, and cultural cosmopolitan. While I support the goals of cosmopolitics, I believe the best way to make political changes is to start first with the cultural goals of cosmopolitanism.

**Cosmopolitan Contamination**

Appiah has a preference for the word “contamination” as the counter ideal to notions of cultural purity and authenticity. He writes, “the larger human truth is on the side of contamination – that endless process of imitation and revision.” For me,

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156 Ulf Hannerz, *Two Faces of Cosmopolitanism: Culture and Politics* (Barcelona: Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, 2006), 7-26.

cosmopolitanism should be the goal of human endeavor. It is about thinking and caring about people beyond our family, our tribe, our nation, and our race. It is about creating a framework for global citizenship, and it is a global perspective that offers helpful ideas in the fight against racism, tribalism, xenophobia, and Eurocentrism. Appiah’s cosmopolitan contamination represents another interchangeable word for the outcomes of hybrid processes. Other words include cultural synthesis, and cultural multiplicity.

Table 6.4 Interchangeable terms for hybridity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hybridity</th>
<th>Cosmopolitan Contamination</th>
<th>Cultural Synthesis</th>
<th>Cultural Multiplicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Looking back at the tradition of American Experimentalism, examples of cosmopolitan contamination can be found in the works of many composers. In her discussion of cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism in American music, violinist Audrey Wozniak writes that Henry Cowell’s, Charles Ives’s, and Lou Harrison’s compositional “process was not a matter of referring to isolated, compartmentalized, or otherwise “exoticized” musical elements, but rather the creation of a new musical idiom engaging different cultural sources or idioms as equal collaborators.”\(^{158}\) This mirrors, as I have said in chapter one and two with my experience with musical egalitarianism in intercultural ensembles. What Wozniak describes here is Appiah’s “new forms of difference.” \textit{Axis Mundi} represents this same cosmopolitan concept.

Hybridity as Interculturalism

The UK based charity and grants organization, the Baring Foundation defines interculturalism as “a dynamic process by which people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own and each other’s cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change. It recognizes the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome these. It is a process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights.”159 This positive outlook embraces diversity and promotes curiosity toward Others while at the same time valuing both differences and similarities. Cantle, writes that

The concept of interculturalism even as evolved to date, is much more demanding than intercultural dialogue and involves wider community, structural and political processes. ICD has generally been developed as a process by which two or more individuals or communities with different identities interact and build trust and understanding, but it does, at its best, nevertheless contribute to wider processes of change and envisages a society in which people are at ease with difference and see it as an opportunity to engage and develop, rather than as a threat.160

Intercultural dialogue is not without its challenges. A recent UNESCO report on interculturalism points to six reasons why intercultural dialogue fails. Participants fail to recognize: differences and diversity, mutual knowledge about sensitive issues linked to religion, overlapping, multiple, and dynamic cultural identity, human rights, and tolerance of others.161 Finally, the report goes on to write that negotiation, compromise,

159 Ted Cantle, *Interculturalism*, 156.

160 Ibid., 157.

humility, and hospitality are all necessary to enter into meaningful dialogue. Creating a level playing field is also a vital requirement.

*Axis Mundi* with its foundation in intercultural dialogue is the result of the positive effects of globalization. Both the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra and the Atlas Ensemble have embraced intercultural dialogue as a process of connecting and collaborating with Others. Interculturalism is an ideology that recognizes that globalization has become a “permanent feature of society, to be embraced, rather than feared.” Cantle has written that the characteristics of intercultural dialogue (ICD) are about “Creating a culture of openness, challenging the culture of identity politics, bridge building, focusing on what is common between different people, and focusing on words like interdependency, interaction, interconnectedness, internationalism, and integration. The goals of ICD are to “positively envision diversity of all kinds.”

A simple version of this approach includes participants who are different from each other entering into dialogue and learning from one another, as at the Atlas Academy. The framework recognizes that inequalities exist between participants and focuses on addressing them through dialogue. There is a bridge building component within interculturalism that focuses on what is held in common between groups of people to bring them together. Finding examples of intercultural exchange is not difficult. For example in a 2008 interview, Persian *kemancheh* virtuoso Kayhan Kalyor talks about his

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162 Ibid., 45-46.
163 Ibid., 143.
164 Ibid., 143.
165 Cosmopolitan philosopher Kwame Appiah simply calls this conversation.
experiences joining the Silk Road Ensemble. He speaks of sharing, learning, unity, and endless musical possibilities. “Our minds are more in a direction of unity and something we could do together. When you have a number of brilliant musicians, the possibilities are endless, and what happens can be very very extraordinary.”

Several obstacles stand in the way of successful ICD. One of them is a lack of shared space between different peoples. Another is finding starting points for people to begin a dialogue. Similar to cosmopolitanism, the intercultural approach takes a non-essentialist definition of culture and identity, meaning that cultural traits are flexible and “in a state of flux and remaking.” The 2009 UNESCO World Report entitled Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue report supports this definition of culture.

Cultures are not self-enclosed or static entities. They overlap and interact, if only to distinguish themselves from one another. “Cultures are like clouds, their confines ever changing, coming together or moving apart and sometimes merging to produce new forms arising from those that preceded them yet differing from them entirely” Even cultures long regarded as isolated or hermetic can be shown to have had contacts with other cultures in the form of economic or proto-political exchanges.

**Interculturalism versus Multiculturalism**

The Council of Europe and the European Commission have promoted intercultural dialogue as an important tool to mediate misunderstandings between different cultural groups. In this way, intercultural policies are starting to replace

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167 Ibid., 156.

multicultural policies. Another definition of interculturalism comes from sociologist and historian Gérard Bouchard who defines interculturalism as the rejection of multiculturalism. The shift from multiculturalism to interculturalism addresses the concepts of engagement and identity. The goal of multiculturalism is focused on the respect of cultural diversity, but it also reinforces differences so much so that it strengthens walls between majority and minority communities.\textsuperscript{169} This is evidenced by German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s 2010 statement that multiculturalism has failed. “The approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side-by-side and to enjoy each other has failed, utterly failed.”\textsuperscript{170} Although interculturalism, like multiculturalism, recognizes and values differences, interculturalism also aims to search for similarities in order to create “long-term change in both relational and institutional arrangements.”\textsuperscript{171} The long-term outcome of interculturalism according to Cantle is community cohesion by way of dialogue. “Interculturalism is clearly aligned to community cohesion, which relied upon more deliberative programs to tackle inequalities, promote diversity and belonging as well as developing trust and understanding through interaction.”\textsuperscript{172} The Council of Europe has maintained that “interculturalism is about explicitly recognizing the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase interaction, mixing and

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 153, 157.


\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 158.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 158.
hybridization between cultural communities, while also about addressing cultural conflict or tension (religious customs, women’s rights and so on) openly though public debate.”

The long-term result of multiculturalism is that it has created isolated communities of Others who do not get the opportunities afforded the majority. Multiculturalism’s concept of separate but equal is not equality. Even though both multiculturalism and interculturalism value cultural diversity, each considers it differently.

Table 6.5 Interculturalism vs. Multiculturalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiculturalism</th>
<th>Interculturalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture is viewed as static.</td>
<td>Culture is viewed as flexible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact between cultures is limited.</td>
<td>Contact between cultures is encouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates social fragmentation</td>
<td>Facilitates social cohesion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these larger sociological and political concerns are beyond the scope of this dissertation, the field of music composition will increasingly encounter cultural differences between Western and non-Western composers and performers. I experienced this first hand during my various residencies. One of my favorite experiences while at the Banff Centre was participating in the celebration of the Persian New Year, or Nowruz. I learned that one of the traditions of Nowruz is to build a small bonfire and jump over the flames. As we took turns jumping, the oud player of the Silk Road Ensemble, Hadi Eldebek, sang and played. This night of merriment was one of the many immersions I shared with musicians and composers of different cultural and religious backgrounds. These experiences helped solidify my optimistic perspective towards intercultural music.

173 Ibid., 154.
I agree with Bons who defends the intercultural process by saying “I think there’s nothing wrong with it. Especially when the other person also wants to take part in it. There is an evolution and the people who still think about colonialism are actually behind, I think. The way you collaborate is a kind of model for how the society ideally could be.”

Both VICO and Atlas have recognized inequalities between the performers and composers involved and have sought to equalize the relationships. When I asked erhu virtuoso, VICO member, and Atlas participant musician Lan Tung about these power issues she replied. “Wow, we are way beyond that! No, this question does not come up. The musicians are not forced to do this. They have a choice of what to do. They are busy working musicians. The Chinese musicians are sometimes a lot richer than most North American musicians.” If what Lan Tung is saying is correct, then the Atlas Academy could represent a situation where the roles have reversed, where the non-Western musicians are exploiting mostly Western trained composers. Instead, what I think has happened is a case of abundant caution in avoiding the criticism that all too often accompanies intercultural encounters. As a composer participant, even though I came with a fully finished piece, I was not guaranteed a performance. I was not financially compensated for the expenses incurred on the trip. In addition, no royalties were paid, and recordings were restricted to personal use only. Lastly, I believe it is a good idea for composers collaborating with the Others to reference Trimillos’s table of cultural rights (see Table 6.2) when engaging in intercultural dialogue.

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174 “Why Atlas? The First Three Chapters

175 Lan Tung, an email message to author, November 23, 2014.
Both interculturalism and cosmopolitanism share many of the same characteristics. Both ideologies believe that cultural diversity is a positive phenomenon. Both promote the idea that we as citizens, whether on the national, international, or global level, need to cooperate. Both believe that the positive effects of globalization should be embraced, and that communication between “us” and “them” is necessary. I agree with Cantle that people need cultural navigation skills and a willingness to be more open to the world. The ethics of cosmopolitanism as described by Appiah are defined here as the respect and balance of both the differences of the Other and the freedom of artists of all kinds in the creation of hybridity, or what Appiah refers to as new forms of difference.

**Hybridity as Transculturalism**

Many scholars believe that transculturalism and cosmopolitanism are one and the same. Communications professor Lucia-Mihaela Grosu writes that “The concept of transculturalism is, also known as cosmopolitanism, is becoming more and more appealing to critics.” Cultural theory scholars Virginia Milhouse, Molefi Asante, and Peter Nwosu define transculture “as a form of culture created not from within its separate sphere but in the holistic forms of diverse cultures.” These scholars also compare the concept of transculture to other cross-cultural concepts such as interculturalism,

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internationalism, and postmodernism because all of these acknowledge that there are multiple ways of knowing, behaving and communicating.\(^{179}\)

In short, every culture becomes a transculture as it progresses through time. This definition of culture is similar to the ones used by cosmopolitan scholars. Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz, who considered transculturalism not an end result but a future project, defined the word transculturalism in 1940.\(^{180}\) This mirrors the same definition used by Kwame Appiah who writes that cosmopolitanism is “not a solution but a challenge.”\(^{181}\) The history of these compatible terms are listed in table 6.5. All of these terms recognize that people switch between multiple identities that include: religious, linguistic, local, regional, national, and international. According to historian Donald Cuccioletta, transculturalism leads towards a cosmopolitan citizenship.\(^{182}\)

Table 6.6 The compatible terms of the positive frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Cosmopolitanism</th>
<th>Transculturalism</th>
<th>Interculturalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of origin</td>
<td>Fourth Century BCE</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>Diogenes of Sinope</td>
<td>Fernando Ortiz</td>
<td>Edward T. Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Philosopher</td>
<td>Anthropologist and ethnomusicologist</td>
<td>Anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{179}\) Ibid., x.  
Modes of Cultural Interaction

From these frameworks, modes of interaction provide more detail about how hybridity functions. There are many modes of interaction, but some of the most common include: cultural dominance, cultural imposition, cultural appropriation, cultural borrowing, cultural exchange, and cultural multiplicity. These modes can help to further clarify questions a composer may face when using elements outside his or her own culture. Is the composition a case of cultural borrowing? Is it appropriation, misappropriation, synthesis, eclecticism, cross-cultural fertilization, misrepresentation, or de-territorialization? Is the composition creating an exploitive cultural playground, or is it a positive intercultural dialogue? This debate is summed up best by Marwan Kraidy who writes, “Discourses of cultural mixture have historically served ideologies of integration and control – not pluralism and empowerment.”  

Composers today, whether they like it or not, have to face the past sins of colonialism, orientalism, and cultural globalization.

UNESCO’s Three Modes of Cultural Interaction

UNESCO’s 2009 World Report defines three main modes of cultural interaction. According to the report, “Knowledge of the forms of cultural interaction in a country, subregion or region is an asset for identifying ways and means of facilitating intercultural dialogue.”  

UNESCO defines three types of modes: cultural borrowing, cultural

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exchange, and cultural imposition. These modes are fundamental tools composers can use in describing their intentions and encounters with other cultures.

Table 6.7 UNESCO’s three modes of cultural interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Cultural Imposition</th>
<th>Cultural Borrowing</th>
<th>Cultural Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>Occurs when a culture is imposed upon another</td>
<td>Occurs when the cultural practice of one population is assimilated by another in recognition of its perceived advantages over the one it has previously employed</td>
<td>Refers to an interaction which is mutually beneficial to both cultures involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
<td>War, and processes of colonization including slavery</td>
<td>A culture that borrows technology from another culture</td>
<td>One culture that trades or shares knowledge with another culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the scholars discussed here present critically engaged analysis of cross-cultural communication and interaction. One such scholar, Richard Rogers, attempts in his article on the *Review and Reconceptualization of Cultural Appropriation* to categorize the different forms of appropriation. Although written in 2006, it bears similarities to the 2009 UNESCO World Report. Two features from Rogers’ analysis need to be discussed.

First, similar to the UNESCO report, for Rogers cultural exchange best describes musical collaborations, which for him also includes borrowing. Rogers defines cultural exchanges as generally balanced, reciprocal, and voluntary.\(^{186}\) Second, Rogers defines

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\(^{185}\) Ibid., iii.

\(^{186}\) Ibid., 478.
appropriation very broadly as “use,” where I define it as cultural theft. My definition of appropriation is analogous to what he defines as cultural exploitation.

Table 6.8 Rogers’ definitions of cultural dominance, exploitation, and exchange

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Appropriation</th>
<th>Cultural Dominance</th>
<th>Cultural Exploitation (Cultural Appropriation)</th>
<th>Cultural Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td>The use of elements of a dominant culture by members of a subordinated culture in a context in which the dominant culture has been imposed on to the subordinated culture, including appropriations that enact resistance.</td>
<td>The appropriation of elements of a subordinated culture by a dominant culture without substantive reciprocity, permission, and/or compensation.</td>
<td>The reciprocal exchange of symbols, artifacts, rituals, genres, and/or technologies between cultures with roughly equal levels of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power (Agency)</strong></td>
<td>Unidirectional Dominant and subordinate</td>
<td>Complex Dominant and subordinate</td>
<td>Generally Equal Voluntary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to transculturalism is the mode of transculturation, which is defined as a process of interconnecting and entangling multiple cultures so that their distinctions and boundaries are removed. According to Ortiz, who analyzed the racial and cultural relationships among black and white Cubans, the phases of transculturation occur when master and slave come into contact. These five phases include enslavement, compromise, adjustment, self-assertion, and finally integration. Ortiz defines the larger concept of transculturation as “a set of ongoing transmutations; it is full of creativity and never ceases; it is irreversible. It is always a process in which we give something in exchange

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**Conclusion**

The process by which *Axis Mundi* was composed is cultural exchange. I have borrowed the instruments of other cultures because I have perceived the advantages in them. Their beautiful timbre and modal language are musical elements I admire. The exchange occurs when I interact with non-Western musicians in order to obtain information relating to instrumental techniques and their cultural-musical practices. Similarly, according to the framework of the Atlas Academy, they learn to perform and engage with contemporary Western “art” music.

Are intercultural interactions always free of complications? Probably not. A flow chart of musical hybridity is shown in figure 6.2. Intercultural interactions, with its modes of learning and exchange represent a possible pathway into more complex forms of musical hybridity leading into transculturalism.
Figure 6.2 Hybridity in music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HYBRIDITY IN MUSIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation towards the &quot;other&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Imperialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neocolonialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmopolitanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Imposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Appropriation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Borrowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture defined as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency (Power Relations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbalanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal or Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Rights Ethics Phases of Transculturaiton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural rights are not respected or negotiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortiz's Five Phases of Transculturaiton and other complex processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applah's Cosmopolitan Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Differences and Respect for Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimillo's Cultural Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access perform observe research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steward critique advocate transmit inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control display create change suppress own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Multiplicity Cultural Synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contamination (Healthy Hybridity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Forms of Difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 7: THE FUTURE OF HYBRIDITY IN MUSIC

This dissertation posits a foundation for future explorations in intercultural composition. The history of composers who have engaged in musical exchange is substantial. The American Experimentalists are one such group that has demonstrated a positive engagement with their fellow global citizens. Understanding that individual and cultural identities are overlapping, multiple, and dynamic are essential. Terminology need not be a deterrent. The oppositional binaries of oriental vs. occidental, Western vs. non-Western, and Self vs. Other, represent Western concepts that have both risks and benefits. When engaging with Others, openness, humility, and compromise are indispensable.

I have outlined three challenges that composers face when composing for non-Western instruments. These challenges include: new instrumentation, non-Western music theory, and the aural-written divide. Today there are several ensembles that can help guide composers wishing to explore and incorporate different musical traditions that include the Atlas Ensemble, the Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra, and the Silk Road Ensemble.

When composers follow their creative instincts by incorporating instruments from musical traditions other than their own, they ought not become victims to zealous scholars who habitually interpret encounters through the frameworks of appropriation. As Appiah writes, these cultural critics “are aiming at the wrong targets.”\footnote{Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Case For Contamination." The New York Times.} To prevent misunderstandings, creative artists of all types should be aware of different modes of
interaction, and frameworks of cross-cultural collaboration. My intentions to compose intercultural music came from the desire to preserve the musical traditions of these cultures, create increased awareness of these wonderful instruments, and to collaborate to create new hybrid compositions.

The ethics of exchange are important. Who has the right to access, perform, alter, exchange, or appropriate musical traditions? Ethnomusicologist Juniper Hill writes, “Folk and traditional music are often considered to “belong” to a community.” At the same time, Appiah counters by saying that “Cultures are made of continuities and changes, and the identity of a society can survive through these changes. Societies without change aren’t authentic; they’re just dead.”

As a Western outsider, I feel that my right to access, engage, and exchange with other musical traditions is legitimate for the following reasons: First, the accusation of appropriation, as discussed earlier, is an incorrect analysis of Axis Mundi. The instruments used in the work are not unauthorized or taken without permission. The collaborative relationship between the musicians and myself is neither one of resistance or exploitation. Second, no musician performing Axis Mundi is being asked to become a musical ambassador of his or her respected tradition. These musicians can bring that knowledge with them, but as the composer, I am not requiring it. It is not my intention to “exoticize” these instruments by using them as “sonic signifiers” of a world music.

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192 Ibid.
sound. My intention is to bring all of the world’s instruments together. Third, any and all other concerns about rights to create, control, access, own, perform, transmit, critique, change, research, and so forth are negotiated in the open and respectful framework of intercultural dialogue. Keeping this in mind, as intercultural music develops, it is imperative to understand that composers cannot collaborate with cultures; they can only collaborate with individuals who themselves have a multiplicity of identities.

My motivation for working with the Atlas Ensemble as stated earlier had nothing to do with either finding or using music that was authentic or primitive. Through my experiences with the Atlas musicians, no part of my composition was sanitized or repackaged. My goal was to express my own individual voice through instrumental timbres that spoke to me as an artist. Intercultural encounters should not become dangerous playgrounds, but instead should be sandboxes, which provide opportunities for those involved to become bi-musical.

These various frameworks can help musicians, ethnomusicologists, scholars, and composers have a better understanding of the history, philosophy, and terminology of what they are getting themselves into when they engage with music of the Other. If composers safeguard themselves with the knowledge of the sociocultural and political issues involved, they will be more likely to freely create using whatever musical language they want to speak. Cosmopolitan ethics and intercultural dialogue have given me the tools to explore deeper into the world of music composition. I believe that hybridity in music, whether in the form of cosmopolitan contamination, intercultural interaction,

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193 Hill writes of “exoticized but familiar instruments and sounds as sonic signifiers of world music that are recognizable in the transnational commercial world music market.”
cultural borrowings, and exchanges will continually bring positive changes to the field of composition. My experiences working with intercultural ensembles has forever changed the way I think about music composition. My understanding of music theory has developed beyond the confines of the Western world, and has opened up new dimensions of timbre, microtonality, rhythm, and form. Resistance, exploitation, strategic anti-essentialism, appropriation, or grand myths of global harmony were not to be found in the residencies, workshops, or collaborations I participated in. Now that I have discovered these musical traditions, I feel inspired to compose and part of a global community of musicians. Perhaps this is what Cowell’s living in the whole world of music feels like
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Appendix A

Score

Axis Mundi

For winds, zithers, strings, and percussion

2015

David Dean Mendoza
Axis Mundi

For winds, zithers, strings, and percussion

I. Underworld 4:30
II. Earth 5:20
III. Heaven 6:00

Total duration: 15:50
Instrumentation

Winds:

Shakuhachi in D

Dukuk in C

Clarinet in A

Zithers:

Santur

Zheng

Harp

Percussion:

tam-tam, suspended cymbal, woodblocks, bass drum

*tam-tam will use traditional beater and triangle beater

*5 woodblocks notated as below

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{woodblocks.png}} \]

Bowed Strings:

Kamancha

Kemençe

Cello
**Shakuhachi in D** – The Japanese *shakuhachi* is an end-blown flute written in C and plays a minor pentatonic scale. Half-hole fingering will produce chromatic pitches and a higher third octave can be realized, but is difficult to play.

Duduk in C – The *duduk* comes in many keys, but I have chosen the one is C. All *duduks* have a range of an octave and a fourth. The lowest note requires the knee to support the *duduk* and therefore time is needed to prepare this pitch.

**Santur** – The *santur* is a Persian zither. It has nine bridges and has a range of three octaves. It is plucked with a set of two *mezrabs*. The *koron* (flat quarter tone) symbol is used. Below is my specific tuning.
Zheng – The Chinese zheng has a range of four octaves and will be set to a D minor pentatonic tuning.

Kamancha – An Azerbaijani kamancha will be used for this composition. It has four strings and is tuned with the intervals fifth, fourth, fifth. It is a transposing instrument and the open strings are B3, F#4, B4, F#5.

Kemençe – The Turkish kemençe is a three-string instrument that is written a fourth higher than sounding. The open strings are: A3, D4, and A4.
Extended Techniques

All Players

Atonal Flurry:

highly chromatic fast improvised rhythms.

Wind Players

Air Notes:

Players should blow air through their instrument on any arbitrary note. This is indicated with cross noteheads

arbitrary air sounds

\[ \text{ff} \]

Shakuhachi:

*Murai ki* – strong air sounds mixed in with pitched notes.

*Meri* – downward pitch bend

*Kari* – upward pitch bend
Tamane: this is the same as flutter tongue

Slap tongue: This is indicated by accented noteheads.

    Slap tongue

    \[
    \begin{array}{c}
    \text{\textbf{Slap tongue}} \\
    \end{array}
    \]

Multiphonics: This is indicated in standard notation

Clarinets in A:

Multiphonics: This is indicated in standard notation

Zithers Players

Santur:

Glissando on side of instrument: Performer is to use the mezrabs (plectrums) to gliss on the strings right above the tuning pegs on the sides of the instrument. Square noteheads are used to indicate this

    \[
    \begin{array}{c}
    \text{Gliss. on left side of bridge} \\
    \end{array}
    \]

Santur will also use hands to gliss over the entire range of instrument.

Zheng:

The performer is to glissando on the left side of the instrument. This is indicated with square noteheads.
Harp:

**Half pedal**: (*pédale entre deux alterations*) for example C1/2#, the pedal is in between natural and sharp positions creating a buzz effect which is similar to “sons métalliques.”

\[ C1/2\# \]

**Harmonics**: Harmonics are written where they are played, not where they sound.

**Pedal Glissando**: (*glissando de pédale*) The performer plucks only the first note and moves the pedal just after the pluck creating a glissando.

**Harp body slap**: (*Les mains frappent la table*) The performer is to slap the soundboard with a flat hand creating a percussive effect.
Clusters: *(frapper violemment les cordes indiquées avec la paume)* The bass wires are slapped with the palm of the hand forcefully. Let strings vibrate.

String Scrape: The performer will use his or her fingernail to glissando over the entire length of the string starting at the lower end.

Ad libitum: *(Jeu repide ad libitum)* Play very quickly at performer’s discretion.

String Players

Atoll flurry – glissando improvisation on specified rhythms.
Fast high register natural harmonic glissandos – strings will quickly gliss. in the high register of their instrument.

Finger Taps – rapidly tap with fingertips on the body of the instrument near the bridge.

Highest Note – play the highest note possible on the highest string

Percussion

Tam Tam:
player will use a metal triangle beater to scrape tam-tam.
Axis Mundi

C Score

I. Underworld

David Dean Mendoza

Shakuhachi in D

Duduk in C

Clarinet in A

Santur

Zheng

Harp

Percussion

Kamancha

Kemanca

Cello

=60 Larghetto

misterioso di molto

arbitrary air sounds

misterioso di molto

arbitrary air sounds

misterioso di molto

arbitrary air sounds

Gliss. on left side of bridges

misterioso di molto

Slap body of harp

misterioso di molto

highest note

highest note

highest note
Gliss on the side of the instrument near tuning pegs with mozarab.
gliss. with the fingernail over the entire length of the string.

*misterioso di molto*
With hands gliss. over entire range of the instrument.

tap finger tips on body of instrument near bridge
To tam-tam with triangle beater
Shak.

Duk.

Cl.

San.

Zh.

Hp.

Perc.

Kam.

Kem.

Vc.
Zither performers will choose a set of arbitrary chords. They will improvise upon these chords within a specified time span. Each box will add a new chord.
Slap palms against wire strings
\( \bar{=} 42 \text{ Delicato} \)

Shak.  
Duk.  
Cl.  
San.  
Zh.  
Hp.  
Perc.  
Kam.  
Kem.  
Vc.  

\( \sum \sum \sum \sum \)

\( \bar{=} 42 \text{ Delicato} \)

bass drum  

to tam-tam
=52 Più mosso

Shak.

Duk.

Cl.

San.

Zh.

Hp.

Tam-tam

Perc.

=52 Più mosso

Kam.

Kem.

Vc.
III. Heaven

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