

## Identifying Features of World Music Cultures (from Yahoo NBPTS Music listserv)

### Africa (Sub-Saharan)

1. Functional use of music-*purpose to it, cannot be separated from that context*
2. Improvisatory quality-*occurs spontaneously, no notational system, orally transmitted through imitation*
3. Use of polyrhythms-*foundation, meter is disguised, strata of ostinati each in its own meter, typically 4 over 3 or 3 over 2*
4. Use of Bell as "Time-Line"-*helps keep place, all the other instruments relate to it, most common bell used is the Gankogui*
5. Repetition of short melodic figures-*do not develop or contrast-repeat and vary*
6. Use of responsorial technique-*call and response or singing and instrumental*
7. Singing in tones usually at the interval of a fourth or fifth-*do not conceptualize in harmonies-parallel 4ths or 5ths*
8. The "buzz" effect-*prefer timbres that buzz, including nasal singing*
9. Emphasis on membranophones and idiophones (pitched and unpitched)-*only other melodic instrument is the flute*
10. Use of "blue notes" and microtonal inflections-*flatter sounds (typically 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>)*
11. *Various notes*
  - a. *Dense unison-everyone not perfectly in tune*
  - b. *Not concerned with perfect pitches, but just pitch regions*
  - c. *Often use heptatonic, hexatonic, pentatonic*
  - d. *Balaphon: like a xylophone with gourds underneath*
  - e. *Sanza: "finger piano"*
  - f. *Kalimba: "thumb piano"*

### Native North American

1. Oral transmission techniques-*no theory or notation, some use hand gestures*
2. Brief songs with repetitive musical motives-*98% vocal + accompaniment, only other melodic instrument is the flute*
3. Monophonic texture-*one melody line, no polyphony or harmony*
4. Diversity of scales-*not one is more common than another*
5. Percussive accompaniment-*none chordal-idiophone (rattle) or membranophone (drums), played with sticks or beaters, few syncopations (only in the SW region)*
6. Use of "vocables"-*H, Y, N, S, W followed by a vowel are the most popular*
7. Melodic characteristics of the "tumbling strain"- *start at the highest pitch*
8. Diversity of vocal effects-*to embellish, yelps, throbbing, voice masking, Central Plains region uses falsetto singing*
9. Limited musical material culture-*few instruments, no chordophones except the Apache fiddle, no idiophones except the flute "courting flute"*
10. Musical functions (aesthetic vs. functional factors)-*predominantly to transmit information, no strong aesthetic function*



5. No chordal harmonic structures
6. Emphasis on chordophones and aerophones- *“Tit-zu” Chinese flues*
7. Timbral effects- *nasal and pinched sound*
8. Programmatic

### **South East Asia**

Indonesia (Gamelan ensemble)- *can be played with Orff instruments, like minimalism*

1. Heterophonic texture- *all voices duplicate the central melody, but not at the same time*
2. Principle of Periodicity- *uses cycles, each cycle is between 2 beats of the great gong, but the gong is on the last beat, stress the last beat, not the first.*
3. Emphasis on idiophones- *(metals) knobbed gongs and pots*
4. Use of Slendro and Pelog scales- *Slendro is pentatonic, but breaks octaves into equal parts, totally different tuning. Pelog is heptatonic and sounds similar to the Aeolian mode (minor). These are the only 2 scales used.*
5. Use of cipher notation- *only notate melody, not rhythms*

### **Latin American**

- I. Euro-Latin America (*Iberian*)
- II. Afro-Latin America (*West African*)
- III. Amerindian

Andean Tradition (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Argentina) *trans-national*

1. Oral transmission technique- *no notation*
2. Pentatonic melodies- *or heptatonic, typically minor sounding, melancholy feel*
3. Emphasis on aerophones and chordophones- *“charango” has ten strings, looks like a small guitar*
4. Use of hocketing technique- *two parts needed to make one melody*
5. Prevalence of duple meter with syncopated rhythms
6. Cyclical forms
7. *Assorted notes:*
  - a. *Hvayno (pronounced wino) in 2/4 and Cueca in 6/8 are rhythms and dances*
  - b. *2 aerophones- the vertical fluet “kena” and the “sicus” or “zampona” (looks like panpipes, but 2 rows played by 2 people, these are always shared, if one person played it this would be considered rude)*

### **Various notes I took:**

*Sachs and Hornbostle*

*What is the body producing the sound?*

*Aerophone: column of air*

*Chordophone: string*

*Membranophone: stretched skin*

*Idiophone: self-sounder (maraca, claves, string)*

*Electrophone: electrically generated*

*Corpophone: body percussion*

*Listen for:*

*Instrumentation*

*ON which element of music is it based?*

*Rhythm (e.g. Africa)*

*Melody (e.g. India)*

*Harmony (e.g. America)*

*Prescriptive notation: Western*

*Descriptive notation: describes what was played*

*Heterophony: one voice line with instruments articulating voice part + a little embellishment*

*Monophony: one melody line*

*Polyphony: several melody lines*

*Western music is divided into categories: folk, art (cultivated), pop*

*So is Indian and Chinese music*

*African and Native American only have functional music*

*All Asian cultures divide into Indoor and Outdoor music*