# Worlds of Music

## An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples

Fifth Edition


*Jeff Todd Titon*

General Editor

with

*Timothy J. Cooley*

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# Europe: An Overview

When someone mentions Europe to you, what comes to mind? A particular country such as France or Germany? Maybe a large city such as Vienna, London, Moscow, or Paris? What sounds play in your mind's ear when you think about "European music"? Some of you might think of a symphony by Mozart or Beethoven, a Chopin etude you played in piano lessons once, or the popular singer Björk, the band U2, or even the Beatles. But these last two bands are from Ireland and England, islands off the coast of the continent of Europe. Should they be included in our definition of "Europe"? If Europe is defined as a landmass, the European continent extends from Portugal in the west to Asia in the east. This certainly extends beyond the concept of Europe most of us have. Perhaps a cultural definition of Europe will clarify our position and help us get on with the study of "European music." But what about North America? Isn't there much that is "European" about the institutions and cultural practices of the United States, Canada, and Mexico? Defining Europe as a culture area has its own pitfalls.

The way we conceive of regions of the world rarely depends solely on physical geography; the human capacity for categorization, naming, and dividing inevitably comes into play. Like music, Europe exists as a concept as well as a concrete object—what Benedict Anderson famously calls "imagined communities" (1991). For our purposes, the concept of Europe includes several island nations (Iceland, the United Kingdom and Ireland), and the nation-states on the western end of the European continent from Portugal in the west to at least the western parts of Russia in the east. In the north are the countries of Norway, Sweden, and Finland; in the south are Spain, Italy, and Greece. At the moment of this writing, Turkey is being considered for membership in the European Union; should it be included in our definition of Europe? Of course North America is technically not part of Europe, but in Chapter 1 of this book we read about Euro-American music-culture, sometimes called Western music. Just as we can identify many different music-culture practices in the United States alone, there are literally hundreds of distinct musics in the nations of Europe. Nonetheless, certain ideas about music and certain ways of creating and organizing sounds can be identified as European. The European settlement of the Americas, not surprisingly, results in many shared musical practices there as well, and for this reason in this chapter we will occasionally reference and compare music in North America and Europe.

# Social and Political Organization

We have many ways of understanding the social and political organization of Europe. For instance, we can view Europe as a collection of independent democratic nation-states, but to the extent that this is true, it is a fairly recent phenomenon. For much of its history, most of Europe's population and land was organized into fiefdoms that were often governed by loosely defined kingdoms and later empires. As a way of thinking about Europe as a whole, though, we

might more fruitfully begin by focusing on religion—for its sweeping, long-term influence on the social, political, and musical practices of Europe. Then we will consider the more recent manifestations of nationalism for their influential effect on contemporary ideas about music from various regions of Europe.

## RELIGION AND SOCIETY

The three predominant religions in Europe, though by no means the only religions practiced, are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all monotheistic religions with roots in the Middle East and with significant shared texts (the Torah or Old Testament). Despite what these religions have in common—or perhaps because of this—the differences between them tend to receive emphasis and shape individuals' and society's interactions. Tensions between Christian Europe and Muslim Europe in particular did much to define the politics, societies, and cultural practices of the region in the distant and recent past (Davies 1996:253–58). Divisions between different sects of Christianity are similarly influential in Europe, as illustrated recently in Ireland. Here we will consider how these tensions and ideas of difference have played out in Europe and how they have affected music-culture practices.

Of these three religions, Christianity is the largest and longest established in Europe. Spread throughout Western Europe most effectively by the Roman Empire, Christianity became the dominant religion in all of Europe by the fourth century. For most of its history in Europe, Christianity has been divided into several politically and socially significant categories: Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy (primarily in the east and southeast), and various sects of Protestantism (strongest in northern Europe and the United Kingdom).

Judaism is practiced almost exclusively by ethnic Jews, who over time have formed a loosely linked European community. Jews never obtained a political state within Europe, a quality that they share with European Roma. Both Islam and Christianity, on the other hand, enjoyed the benefits of becoming state religions. Judaism was introduced to Europe as early as 70 C.E. when Jews, forced into diaspora by the Romans after the destruction of the Second Temple, settled in Mediterranean Europe, and in subsequent centuries moved into Central and Western Europe with the Roman Empire. Though several waves of persecution and expulsion diminished Jewish communities over the centuries, significant communities were established by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment era. In most of Europe, the Holocaust nearly annihilated Jewish communities during World War II (Bohlman 2000b:248–49). Some communities are slowly rebuilding, and the influence of Jewish music remains strong in many parts of Europe (Rice 2000:11).

Muslim* communities have flourished in Europe since the Moorish Andalusian Empire (eighth to thirteenth centuries) on the Iberian Peninsula, and the Turkish Ottoman Empire (fourteenth to twentieth centuries) in southeastern Europe. Muslim individuals and communities form important components of most European nation-states today, and Islam is a dominant religion in some countries and regions (Albania and Bosnia, for example). Like Jews, however, Muslims have

*Muslim* is the term used for one who follows Islam.

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FIGURE 5.4

Mosque in Sarajevo. Bosnia. 2004.

been periodically persecuted and driven from Europe. For example, both Jews and the Muslim Moors were expelled from Andalusian Spain in 1492. Muslim communities are historically strong in many Southeastern European nations, such as Bosnia (see Figure 5.4), and communities of more recent immigrants are found throughout Europe.

What effect does religion have on musical practices? Answering this question is difficult, even though the influences are believed to be many, great, and varied. As we can see in Chapter 10, the relationship between Islam and ideas about music is important but contentious for many Muslims. In fact, what may be the most influential sonic production of Islam—the recitation of the Qu'ran (Koran)—is not considered music. Nonetheless, the rules for properly reciting the Qu'ran are reflected in the modal practices of Muslim classical musicians, and these rules also influence vocal ornamentation in some forms of folk music. The Call to Prayer, given five times each day, is part of the soundscape of Muslim communities still thriving in parts of Southeastern Europe, as well as in Muslim neighborhoods in many other European metropolitan centers. Muslims have also influenced European musical instruments. Both the guitar and the violin descended from Middle Eastern instruments. The guitar in particular is believed to be a descendant of the *'ud,* which was probably introduced to Spain by the Moors.

Jewish music and musicians are integrated into the musical practices of many parts of Europe (see Armistead 1979; Bohlman 2000a, 2000b). Jewish music in Europe includes two major traditions, the Sephardic and the Ashkenazic traditions. The Sephardic Jews are originally from the Iberian Peninsula, but were expelled in the fifteenth century. Many moved to the Balkans in Southeastern Europe, some settled in the British Isles or the Netherlands, while others left Europe. The Ashkenazic Jews were most prominent in Germany, Australia, and Eastern Europe. Identity for European Jewry centered on religion, language, and other cultural practices rather than on association with a particular location, country, or kingdom. Yet music expressive of a distinctive Jewish cultural identity developed in response to the inventions of national traditions in the 1800s (Bohlman 2000b:249). Examples include the instrumental ensembles called **klezmer,** which provided music for ritual and secular events both inside and outside Jewish communities. In many parts of

Eastern Europe, Jewish musicians were essential for non-Jewish weddings, and in may cities and regions across Europe, Jewish musicians were among the most highly sought-out musicians until the Holocaust. Wheras a high degree of integration with other European musics characterized the aesthetic of many Jewish instrumentalists, vocal music served to define a specific Jewish identity through the use of language (Yiddish for many Ashkenazic Jews, Ladino for Sephardic Jews, as well as Hebrew from religious and secular texts). "Oifn Pripetshik," discussed later, is an example of a Yiddish language song from an Ashkenazic tradition.

Aligned with the ruling powers that experienced the greatest successes, Christianity has maintained the political advantage in much of Europe. Like mosques and synagogues, Christian churches have served as institutions for spreading sociocultural ideas and practices over wide regions, between kingdoms and across national borders. For example, the official language of the Roman Catholic Church is Latin. Even though Vatican II reforms, instituted in the 1960s, allowed the mass to be conducted in the local vernacular, music with Latin texts is still common in churches around the world. Another example is a particular approach toward ideas about scale and modality (the organization of pitches typically used in a melody; see Chapter 1) that spread across Europe with the church.

Churches also fostered traditions of literacy, including musical literacy. The system of notating music still used in many parts of the world today (the five-line system used in this book) developed in Europe as early as the eleventh century and settled into the form used today in the early seventeenth century. The ability to notate accurately many aspects of music (notably pitch, rhythm, and duration) subtly changes one's conception of music itself and forms one of the ideological divisions between "classical," "popular," and "folk" music in Europe. Notation also facilitates the conception and composition of large-form abstract music (music without texts, for example, such as a concerto or symphony), and to some extent, the phenomenon of harmony discussed later.

In more regionally specific contexts, church traditions encouraged certain types of musical practices. For example, Roman Catholic brotherhoods in Spain have a tradition of snare and bass drum performances reserved for two days of the year during Holy Week, an annual Church holiday including Easter (see Plastino 2001, 2003 for a colorful ethnography and recordings of some of the dynamics of this drumming tradition). The Roman Catholic Church in particular has many holidays and processions that serve as occasions for special music. The Protestant Reformation, beginning in the sixteenth century, divided much of Western Europe into Protestant denominations (mostly in Northern Europe) and Roman Catholic churches (primarily in the south). The Protestant churches created new musical forms, notably chorales that the entire congregation sang. Some of these chorales were based on vernacular texts or common melodic formulas (Schulenberg 2000:74). For an example of a Lutheran chorale, see "A Mighty Fortress," discussed later (Transcription 5.3).

All three of the religions considered here have clearly influenced the music-culture of Europe. However, the greatest and most pervasive influences on musical practices are the social qualities of organized religions. One is the social structure a religion provides for the society as a whole, or in some cases for a

religious community within a society. The second is the influence of the weekly worship services, or in the case of Islam, daily sound-art events such as the Call to Prayer and recitation of the Qu'ran. These musical practices—approaches toward melody, rhythm, formal structure; the instruments used or prohibited; gendered practice imposed on communities; and so forth—feed the societies' soundscape in inescapable ways. Though religions' influences on musical practices are widespread, it would be a mistake to assume that most music in Europe can be labeled exclusively Christian, Jewish, or Muslim. Musical practices tend to be ecumenical and worldly in the sense that they spread freely from mouth to ear around the world, respecting no religious or political borders.

## NATIONALISM AND NATION-STATES

Kingdoms and empires as the predominant social and political organizational units in Europe gradually gave way to the modern nation-states that characterize Europe today beginning only in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Key and early events effecting this change include the 1776 American Declaration of Independence (not in Europe, but a declaration of independence from a European monarchy), and the 1789 French Revolution. The idea of a nation-state differs fundamentally from the idea of a kingdom or empire (and other forms of dynasties) in that the authority resides in the people of the state, rather than in the dynastic rulers of a kingdom. Another difference is that dynasties, like religions, usually claimed to have divine right to rule and govern (White 2000:45–49). Nation-states usually do not claim divine right, though even modern societies today may claim divine authority to support their agendas.

Nationalism as an idea grew out of Enlightenment and Romantic philosophy in Western Europe, including ideas about rational scientific authority, the rights of individuals, and the good of the entire society.* This new way of conceiving of social organization from the people up, rather than from the king, emperor, or God down, required new ways of defining social units. The polity was no longer peoples on the lands controlled by a king, but ideally a group of people meaningfully linked together through cultural practices such as language, music, costume, and religion. Today such social groupings into nations may seem both obvious and problematic. After all, we expect Germans to speak German, the French to speak French, Poles to speak Polish, and so forth. But national languages did not grow out of the soil; they are the products of national education as well as forced resettlements and ethnic cleansings. Still, not all nation-states insist on a unique language. For example, the Swiss speak French, German, and Italian (there is no language called "Swissish"); German is the official language in Austria; and so forth.

The challenges to the idea of "nation" (a significantly united people) and "nation-state" (a political unity with a state) become evident upon even a cursory look at any modern nation-state. One common theme in current theories of nationalism is that nations are not natural, inherent, or immutable but must be

*For theories of nations and nationalism, see Anderson 1991; Gellner 1997; Hobsbawm 1990; Hutchinson and Smith 1994; Smith 1998. For statements specifically on music and nationalism, see Austerlitz 2000; Bohlman 2004; Frolova-Walker 1998.

"invented" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and "imagined" (Anderson 1991). As Philip Bohlman explains (2004:35–80), music has played an important role in creating national myths ever since the rise of nationalism. As a result, many of our ideas about music in Europe are strongly influenced by a belief that music informs us about the essence of a people (a nation), and that as one moves from nation-state to nation-state, one can expect the change to be reflected in the "national" music. To the extent that this is true, it is the result of nationalism—of proactive national imaginations and inventions. In other words, the notion of national musics is itself a human invention, just like all other cultural practices.

Though cultural practices are invented and not necessarily natural, they are nonetheless real. We will consider examples of music that are Polish, Bosnian, German, Jewish, Turkish-Romani, and Bulgarian. Our approach will be to consider the music in its local context, the individuals who created the music, and what we can learn about those people and the place they live from their musical practices.

## The Sounds of European Music

In this book, written for the English-speaking world and marketed largely in North America and Europe, identifying common elements in European music, much of which is familiar to our readers, may seem unnecessary. Yet because ethnomusicologists study all musical cultures, including Euro-American ones, it is interesting to see what happens when we ask the same questions of a familiar music that we ask of an unfamiliar one. Sometimes the results are quite surprising. Taking the four aspects of musical sound introduced in Chapter 1 (rhythm and meter, melody, harmony, and form), we will consider what unique contributions Europeans may have made to the world of music.

### RHYTHM AND METER

Listen again to CD 2, Track 6, paying special attention to the rhythm. The first part featuring men on horseback singing can be interpreted as being in free rhythm, or unmetered. Though repeated listening may reveal a slow pulse, this pulse is uneven and flexible. The second part of this selection, featuring the string band, is clearly metered; that is, there is an obvious pulse beat organized in a repeating pattern. The music is not always easy to hear over the clomping of the horses, cars, wind, and excited wedding guests, but careful and repeated listening will reveal an ostinato (a bass line that is played again and again) by a three-stringed cello-sized instrument called ***basy,*** and a repeating melodic idea played by two lead violinists. If we assign the value of a quarter note to the steady sawing of the *basy*'s bow, and decide that each measure or bar of music receives 2 quarter-note beats ($\frac{2}{4}$ time), we might be able to hear that the pattern repeats after 5-bar phrases. As you try to hear the music in this way, be warned: The violinists and the *basy* player are some of the best from Podhale, and as is the practice there, they never play the same thing twice in exactly the same way. Variation is considered the sign of a true musician in Podhale.