BOOK REVIEW

Catherine Grant (2014). *Music Endangerment, How Language Maintenance Can Help***.** New York: Oxford University Press. 206 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-935218-0 (Paper).

Catherine Grant's book on music endangerment focuses on the possible fragility of some music genres and even complete music cultures, and the potential sustainability of these genres and music cultures wherever they might exist in the world. When music genres or music-cultures are found to be in danger of disappearing, the potential reasons for the pending endangerment and the possible ways of determining the reasons and steps that can be taken to prevent total demise of the genres or music-cultures are discussed in great detail in this book. The author's stimulus for pursuing this topic and writing in some detail about it stems from her active participation in a project on music sustainability directed by the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia from 2009 to 2013 (Grant 2014: xii). In addition, the book, at the very outset, gives the reader a definition of terms such as 'music genre' 'small music genres, 'music culture', while terms such as 'music endangerment' and 'vitality' are examined in detail in the Introduction to the book.

While the first part of this book presents the topic of music genres in danger of disappearing and the possible elements related to language sustainability that may be useable in promoting music sustainability (Introduction and Chapters 1-3), the second part of the book proposes a tool for ethnomusicologists and others to utilize when dealing with music sustainability and the application of the proposed tool in a sample of a specific music genre from Southeast Asia (Chapters 4-6).

While developing a systematic way of determining and dealing with music endangerment, the author has drawn on and referred to many publications on cultural heritage and language maintenance published by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, including *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2003), *A Methodology for Assessing Language Vitality and Endangerment* (UNESCO 2003), *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (UNESCO 2005) and several other documents.

The Introduction and Chapter 1 give substantial background on the topic of music endangerment of genres and the maintenance of their existence in spite of both local and global changes that affect the viability of certain musics as found in the world today. These early sections of the book address the problem of endangerment and why it is important, ethical considerations and the possibility of following the work already accomplished on languages that have been endangered and the application of

resolution processes for languages into the music sphere. In addition, these two chapters address theoretical foundations, documentation, transmission and dissemination, policy and the coordination and evaluation mechanisms that would be potentially viable in a music endangerment situation.

Chapter 2 attempts to give a comparative look at language revitalization among minority groups around the world in comparison to music feasibility and revitalization. The author relies on Schippers work on "Five Domains of Musical Sustainability in Contemporary Contexts" (Schippers, 2010 in Grant 2014: 47), with each section in this chapter addressing a given 'Domain'. These 'Domains' include systems of learning music, the role of musicians within a given community, the social and cultural context of music genres that appear to be in danger of disappearing. Also, the infrastructure of music 'places' is included as a principle Domain which examines the venues for composing, practicing, performing, virtual spaces (computers and other devices), and the making of musical instruments as well, while copyright laws and other legal aspects of music production also come into play as part of the regulation of music genres in this Domain. The media and the music industry comprise the final Domain, which includes the dissemination and commercial facets of music and music making.

Using the five Domains noted in this chapter, a conclusion examines (in the form of a comparative Table) the dynamic connections and the dis-connections between language and music in terms of each of the Domains. The author discovers that the transmission, the social and cultural constructs of which the music is part, and the impact of economic and other policies and regulations provide the strongest of connections between language and music. On the other hand, the place for learning or performing and other similar activities of music, and dissemination and commercial activities tend to show the least of connectivity between language and music.

Chapter 3 addresses ways that we can learn from language maintenance, particularly examining the ways that maintenance of certain endangered languages around the world can be applied to encourage the sustainability of endangered musical genres or cultures. Considering the major gaps on approaches to music sustainability, the author points out and explains the need for systematic ways to identify endangerment, advocacy efforts for revitalization, improvement in knowledge base, the need for deliberation on possible effects of practical strategies to support sustainability and, finally, the need to develop structures or ways to evaluation or carryout the goals of music sustainability.

In proposing a tool for ethnomusicologists and others to utilize in dealing with music sustainability, Chapter 4 presents the author's 'Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework' (MVEF) tool for identifying and assessing music endangerment. This tool emerged from the author's examination of the work sponsored by UNESCO over the years on language vitality done by a group of international linguists who examined endangered languages found around the world. They developed measures to sustain endangered languages in the world, and they issued the document *Language Vitality and Endangerment* (UNESCO 2003).

As is detailed in this Chapter, there are 12 major Factors that comprise the framework for the analytical tool of determining music vitality and endangerment of a given music genre or music culture. These are: 1) intergenerational transmission (of the music genre), 2) change in the number of proficient musicians, 3) change in the number of people engaged with the genre, 4) change in the music and music practices in the past 5 to 10 years, 5) change in performance context and functions, 6) response to mass media and the music industry, 7) infrastructure and resources for music practices, 8) knowledge and skills for music practices, 9) governmental and institutional policies affecting music practices, 10) community memers' attitudes toward the genre, 11) relevant outsiders' attitudes toward the genre, and 12) amount and quality of documentation (Grant 2014:111-125). Within each of these major Factors are graded descriptions to assess each one, the grades ranging, in most cases, from zero to five. For example, in Factor 1 (intergenerational transmission) a grade of 5 would indicate a 'safe' situation in which 'the music genre is performed by all appropriate ages and is transmitted intergenerationally', while a grade of 1 would indicate 'critically endangered' in which 'the music genre is performed only by the very elderly, and then only partially and infrequently' (Grant 2014: 112).

A very useful aspect of this book is the Companion Website in which the reader can access audio and video tracks, photos, and supplemental materials that explain ideas and themes put forth in the text (a user name and password are given for access to the website that was created by the publisher). In the case of the 12 Factors of the MVEF tool, all points are accessible for downloading from or reading on the Companion Website. The author also stresses the point that the 12 Factors (noted above) comprising the MVEF tool should be considered as guidelines and that adaptation and flexibility of the major Factors should be part of any assessment on the endangerment of a given music genre.

The fifth Chapter focuses on using the framework noted in Chapter 4 to demonstrate how the Music Vitality and Endangerment Framework (MVEF) tool can work. The author has chosen the chamber music genre known as *ca trù* of the Viêt (Kinh) peoples of north Vietnam, a genre dating from the 15th century CE. A singer and two additional players comprise the ensemble, and the repertoire was, for centuries, performed for a variety of social and ritual occasions, and even as court music in the given culture group. However, by the mid-20th century this genre became associated with opium smoking and prostitution and by the mid-1970s it was almost extinct (Grant 2014: 128; and Jaenichen 1997: 9 as cited in Grant, 129). As research on this form and its former connection to an ancient music tradition emerged, and as the development of a revitalization effort approved by UNESCO on Vietnamese court music began, a number of initiatives on a revitalization plan took place in the country including the *ca trù,* with emergent connections to a Vietnamese cultural identity.

In this Chapter the author takes the reader through all the 12 Factors of the MVEF tool with regard to the *ca trù*, carefully considering the graded elements in each of the major Factors and with some detailed commentary on the state of condition of the *ca trù* with regard to each of the Factors. In this way, the reader sees a clear demonstration

of how the MVEF tool can work. The explanations given within each of the 12 Factors of the MVEF begin to show the possible vitality of the *ca trù* in the second decade of the 21st century, in which some Factors are quite strong and other Factors of the MVEF are not very strong. The conclusions drawn can help the beholders of the given music genre decide a strategic plan for revitalization of this particular music genre if they so desire.

In the final major section of this book, Chapter 6, the author gives a summary of the importance and the objectives of approaching the topic of music endangerment. The author notes that the track record in stewardship of music genres and music cultures has not been a good model over the past years and decades. Early on in this book the author tells us that "Ethnomusicologists have not yet made a sustained effort to consolidate an experience-base from which to empirically compile a list of favorable conditions for music sustainability, like those proposed for languages" (Grant, 2014:87). However, with the publication of this book and with the creation of the MVEF tool, Catherine Grant has given ethnomusicologists, musicologists and others the beginnings of systematic ways of examining the degree of positive or negative factors that impact music genres that are strongly on the wane in the 21st century. With proposals made in this book, perhaps music scholars now have the beginnings of how to evaluate, understand and deal with music genres that appear to be fading away. The preeminent ethnomusicologist, Anthony Seeger (Distinguished Professor of Ethnomusicology, Emeritus, University of California at Los Angeles [USA], and Director Emeritus, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings) notes in his Preface to this book that 'Grant makes a very important contribution to the emergent field of applied ethnomusicology…this book should contribute significantly to our conversations, our understandings, and to our policies for years to come" (Grant, 2014: Preface viii-x).

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