

FIFTH WORLD MUSIC: A Perspective on So Called Ethnic Music In Between Pop Culture and Cultural Change

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to explore the history and progresses of what has been called world music. It would be fair to say that most of the people know the term “world music”. Synonyms of other popular definitions, such as ethnic music or world beat, this label has defined since its first appearance both in the academic world and in the music industry, for all kinds of music that could sound exotic or non-western. Although world music is a problematic concept, since its creation it has developed and has been critically scanned to question whether the label can be used as a valid definition and instrument or has to be seen as one of the most underhanded creations of modern colonialism. In the pages that follow I'll try, with the help of scholars like Victor Segalen, Henry Spiller, Veit Erlman and Alan Lomax (to name some), is to draw a historical line starting from the concept of primitive music as present in the works of musicians of the classic tradition, continuing with the terms of world music, fourth world music, neo geo, and to finish, to examine the latest definitions of fifth world and outernational music and post-geographical sounds. The present paper does not come from an anthropologist, a critic of culture, a musicologist or any similar figure but from an enthusiast of those subjects, so it should be taken as a possible perspective to be analyzed critically, and eventually developed in much more serious terms in the future. At the end of this paper you will find a list of artists, records and labels that, in my opinion, may help understanding the themes that are analyzed here.

Keywords: world music, music industry, artist, records, labels

INTRODUCTION

It would be fair to say that most of the people know the term “world music”. Synonym of other popular definitions such as ethnic music or world beat, this label has defined, since its first appearance both in the academic world and in the music industry, all kinds of music that could sound exotic¹⁸ or non-western.

¹⁸ From now on it is useful to know that I use the term exotic in its etymological definition of foreign. Every misuse in on purpose to highlight the ambiguity and parodistic use of the term.

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PRIMITIVE MUSIC, EXOTICISM AND THE EXOTIC: from Debussy to exotica

Music has always had a taste of exotic. As something that has been part of the daily life of different communities and social groups divided by position in space and time, music always inspired fascination for its capacity to express beauty and emotions but also for its intrinsic mixed implications of remoteness and locality, otherness and identity.

This is especially true if we think about the discovery of the music of other populations after the beginning of colonialism. For the first time, thanks to the firsts travel reports, explorers and missionaries, audiences, musicians and composers of the classic traditions had the possibility to compare themselves with other styles of music, instruments, rules of composition and execution. While some people, although amused by something completely different and coming from afar, were usually annoyed by those instruments and melodies¹⁹, artists composers and painters were baffled and inspired by these *souvenirs* from the new worlds, often depicted as tropical paradises in which ancient tribes used to officiate their rites or golden ages where magic and local wisdom were routine and man was still in contact with nature not suffering the alienation of modern civilization²⁰.

Artists like Claude Debussy or Erik Satie (to name just two of the most known) were directly influenced by these new musics and were among the firsts to be inspired and implement ideas and methods of composition in their works.

¹⁹ Spiller 2004

²⁰ Gauguin 1901

At the basis of the structure with which the West²¹ was representing music was the dichotomy between classical (western) tradition and primitive/savage (eastern) music.

To go more in detail, Indonesian music must have been a real inspiration for Debussy, when HE first heard gamelan at the Exposition Universelle of Paris in 1889²². Analysis such as the ones of Kiyoshi Tamagawa and Brent Hugh show how the exploitation of devices like heterophonic texture (even if only emulated), pedal point and ostinato in works like "Prelude" from *Pour le piano* or "Pagodes" prove the deep effects gamelan had on the French composer²³. Anyway, if we take a look at his writings regarding the episode, the most interesting element has to be found in an exotic and totally fantastic characterization of gamelan and its music:

"[gamelan] consists of the eternal rhythm of the sea, the wind in the leaves, and a thousand other tiny noises, which they listen to with great care, without ever having consulted any of those dubious treatises"²⁴
and also,

"If one listens to it without being prejudiced by one's European ears, one will find a percussive charm that forces one to admit that our own music is not much more than a barbarous kind of noise more fit for a traveling circus."²⁵

From what we have been able to read, what Debussy found inspiring was the attitude and philosophy behind the gamelan; especially the fact that it was untouched by European rules and tradition and that the musicians could play without having ever consulted any type of treaty or manual.

Obviously, Indonesian music, and gamelan in particular, although in a very different way, are strongly regulated and structured by rules and tradition. The reason why Debussy was likely to think about gamelan music in those terms was that he was profoundly influenced by the ethnocentric and eurocentric perspective on which the distinction classical music/primitive music was founded²⁶. Even if it's true that he generally rejected the orientalist visions to be found in earlier Romantic-era composers²⁷, Debussy's thought was affected by a fictional world created on the basis of his own (and of its time's) expectations regarding the other and the exotic in the way that we already presented.

With his *opera* and interpretation the French composer was at the same time participating and producing the very first idea and semantic universe of exoticism.

²¹ With west I intend principally the states that took part in the colonial enterprise and the U.S.A.

²² The first time Debussy saw a relatively small group, to witness a full ensemble he will have to wait the Exposition of 1900.

²³ Hugh 1998

²⁴ *Ibidem*

²⁵ *Ibidem*

²⁶ The category of primitive music can be seen also in the works of Jaap Kunst, who was almost writing in the second half of 20th century (Kunst 1949).

²⁷ To be honest I don't recall where I read this. I lost it in the papers, articles and books I have been reading for this work.

It would be interesting, as a counterpart, to analyze shortly the much more near-time phenomenon of exotica: a genre of music born in the United States at the end of the fifties and popular until the end of the sixties, also called by some lounge music. This kind of music, named after Martin Denny's album of 1957²⁸ was part of a more wider type of subculture called by the most Tiki culture; which involved polynesian-style clothes, clubs, aesthetics and a fetish for the tropical and the exotic.

Mixing different elements, instruments and styles of musics from tribal Africa, south-east Asia, insular Oceania, latin America, Amazon basin and the Andes with jazz, exotica was trying to draw musical impressions of tropical, afar regions of the world. This effect was produced also utilizing suggestive album titles like *Voodoo*²⁹ or *Ritual of the savages*³⁰. In the words of Martin Denny exotica is "*a combination of the South Pacific and the Orient...what a lot of people imagined the islands to be like...it's pure fantasy though.*"³¹

The interesting fact here is that exotica, differently from Debussy's and the Romantic-era composer's music, acknowledges the idea of the fake, the erroneous and the component of cultural appropriation to make them constituents of exoticism intended as the feeling of something other than oneself with the addendum of "*coconut trees and torrid skies*"³². Moreover, it tried to summon exoticism as something capable to evoke feeling of the ancient and antique, as ethnic music is often capable to recall the pseudo-historic sound of pastness³³

At the same time, as Francesco Adinolfi asserts in his book *Mondo Exotica*, after WWII people found in insular Oceania and other far lands the symbol of freedom of costumes, post-bellum psychic relaxation and the satisfaction of all desires³⁴.

What I want to highlight here is that in the genealogy and genesis of exoticism and its feeling (and so the subsequent legitimation of exotic and primitive music) comes from a reflection of personal aesthetics, desires, yearnings and expectations regarding what Antonin Artaud called the *Great Other*³⁵ and from which the other is essentially excluded. At that time, in the west, reading indigenous categories and concepts was done principally by assessing them with westerners' own categories and interpretative framework, making the former disappear totally under the latter in the name of some non-identified form of orientalism³⁶

²⁸ It is said that In 1955 Si Waronker (Liberty records co-founder) wanted to find a term that would capture the spirit, and help to sell such music. This story has it that Si was doodling and had written down the word "exotic" when he casually added an "a" to the end. He liked the sound of it so much that it went on to become the title of Denny's first album on the Liberty label.

²⁹ Richard Hayman 1959

³⁰ Martin Denny 1951

³¹ Philip 1999: 76

³² Segalen 1978: 14

³³ Erlmann 1996: 483

³⁴ Adinolfi 2000

³⁵ Artaud 1938

³⁶ Edward Said asserts that orientalism is a term utilized by the west to legitimate its patronizing attitude toward Asia, Africa and the Middle East (Said 1978)

This first form of exoticism will meet a first change with the emerging of modern ethnomusicology, the advent of folk and world music and the logic of advocacy.

FOURTH WORLD MUSIC: FROM WORLD MUSIC TO POSSIBLE MUSICS AND NEW GEOGRAPHIES

The idea of the exotic and exotic music (the concept that almost half a century later will be called world music) was soon developing thanks to the work of what lately will be called ethnomusicologists and anthropologists. Efforts like the ones of Alan Lomax in the U.S.³⁷ or Roberto Leydi³⁸ and Diego Carpitella³⁹ in Italy as ethnomusicologists and directors of the research and production of folk music records respectively on Columbia records and Albatros records were an important part of the politicization of the concept of folk music.

Alan Lomax's deeds are particularly interesting because of his early activity in the field of production of folk music (almost ten years before the one of Roberto Leydi) and thought that are almost coeval to the birth of the term world music; birth which, at least in part happened thanks to the academic.

In particular, in the words of Brian Eno:

“[He later] turned his intelligent attentions to music from many other parts of the world, securing for them a dignity and status they had not previously been accorded. The "World Music" phenomenon arose partly from those efforts, as did his great book, *Folk Song Style and Culture*. I believe this is one of the most important books ever written about music, in my all time top ten. It is one of the very rare attempts to put cultural criticism onto a serious, comprehensible, and rational footing by someone who had the experience and breadth of vision to be able to do it.”⁴⁰

Maybe, the most important track that will be followed by world music's later intellectual movement⁴¹ is the idea of “One world”. Alan Lomax was among the firsts (to avoid the ever-present trope of the firsts) who stressed the concept of what today has been called multiculturalism. The ethnomusicologist believed that folklore, intended as any form of creativity, flourishes in local environments thanks to a constant and reciprocal interchange with other cultures and forms of locality.

This was one important step that shows how the focus regarding other forms of expression that were not the hegemonic ones coming from the industrialized west. We witness a shift in the paradigm of dealing with music and thought that made

³⁷ Alan Lomax, anthropologist and ethnomusicologist is known for his studies on folk and african american music and for his classification of popular chants: the cantometrics

³⁸ Roberto Leydi and Diego Carpitella were two of the most famous italian ethnomusicologists in history. They are known for their researches on italian forms of music and folklore in between puglia, Sardinia (Carpitella) and Lombardia (Leydi).

³⁹ Lomax will collaborate with them for his latest phase of studies regarding the italian folklore.

⁴⁰ Eno 1997

⁴¹ I talk about movement literally, intending intellectual as well as political and organizative movement. 25 Simon Reynolds, personal communication

authorities and personalities take a position of advocacy, trying to be the voice of those forms of expression and let autochthonous categories and definition of what their folklore (and in this case their music) was emerge, trying to give it concreteness and dignity as proper forms of culture.

Finally we arrive to the birth of the term world music and its historical implications. Originally known as obscurity music in German record stores²⁵, the latter term is generally believed to have appeared because, as Philip Sweeney states in his *Virgin Directory of World Music*, of a group of

“promoters and broadcasters met in the summer of 1987 in an upstairs room of a North London pub, “the Empress of Russia”, to come up with a term to promote “ethnic”, “folk,” and “international” recordings. After much discussion they chose the term “World Music,” which was soon picked up by the media and became the standard term for this music in the international record industry. In May 1990, *Billboard* magazine established a bi-weekly “World Music” chart, which lists the top fifteen selling albums in this “new genre.” It appears on the same page as the “New Age” chart under the heading of “Adult Alternative Albums.” The fact that *Billboard* established this chart suggests that the term had firmly established itself in the marketplace.”⁴²

Even if that may be true, to be precise, the original term has been born in the academic ambience almost thirty years before thanks to the ethnomusicologist Robert Brown⁴³.

Robert Brown had followed the seminal program of ethnomusicology directed by professor Mantle Hood⁴⁴ in the 50s and, as one of the founders of the Wesleyan University program, ten years later applied the term to describe the combination of performance study of non-Western music with traditional ethnomusicological studies, offered by the institution.

Lately, from the 70s, universities and cultural organizations – starting from the American Society for Eastern Arts – would start offering teaching programs focused on world music. Soon old terms as “savage”, “primitive”, “exotic”, “Oriental”, “Far Eastern”; were replaced by more welcoming labels such as “folk”, “non-Western”, “non-literate”, “pre-literate”; and obviously “world”⁴⁵

Of course, since world music is eminently a mass and pop phenomenon, its history would not be complete without taking a peek into major musicians partaking to the whole thing. Individuals like David Byrne, Peter Dinklage, Ryuichi Sakamoto and obviously Jon Hassell⁴⁶ have played a significant role in making world

⁴² Rahkonen 1994

⁴³ Robert Brown is also known for his recordings in Indonesia.

⁴⁴ Mantle Hood was the ethnomusicologist that coined the term *bimusicality* with this notion he referred to the fact that to understand the musical culture of a social group, an anthropology should learn the music or an instrument practically, just like a second language.

⁴⁵ Myers 1992: 11

⁴⁶ Even more interesting is the fact that Eno, Hassell, Gabriel and Byrne collaborated several times in different occasions and formations.

music known to a much wider audience; some with their activity and their labels (Luaka Bop for David Byrne, Realmusic and WOMAD festival for Peter Gabriel) and some with their theoretical contribution (the ideas of fourth world music and neo geo). I find particularly interesting that those personalities really took active part and contributed critically in shaping the term and its musical content.

David Byrne in his article *MUSIC: Crossing Music's Borders In Search Of Identity; 'I Hate World Music'* argues that world music:

"It's a way of relegating this "thing" into the realm of something exotic and therefore cute, weird but safe, because exotica is beautiful but irrelevant; they are, by definition, not like us. Maybe that's why I hate the term. It groups everything and anything that isn't "us" into "them [...]" It's a none too subtle way of reasserting the hegemony of Western pop culture [...]" The fact is, after listening to some of this music for a while, it probably won't seem exotic any more, even if you still don't understand all the words [...]" Thinking of things as exotic is only cool when it's your sister, your co-worker or wife; it's sometimes beneficial to exoticize that which has become overly familiar. But in other circumstances, viewing people and cultures as exotic is a distancing mechanism that too often allows for exploitation and racism."⁴⁷

A second important statement in Byrne's article is that no such thing as authentic music exists. The musician asserts that the concern of authenticity is something with which the west is obsessed⁴⁸. Of course no such thing as authentic music is possible because every type of music is an hybrid crafted in the meeting of cultures that do not live in complete isolation and because in some cases, as anthropology already knows, authenticity and ethnicity can be created⁴⁹.

An interesting alternative (and a different concept) in respect of the term world music was given by Jon Hassell and, ten year later, in a similar form, by Ryuichi Sakamoto.

Jon Hassell is a very known musician: student of Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pran Nath, got in touch with an entourage of figures where the prominent names are La Monte Young and Terry Riley and collaborated with musician and friend Brian Eno on more than one of his most acclaimed releases⁵⁰.

Behind the notion of fourth world music obviously lies the idea of a fruitful contamination between everything the musician studied and got from all the aforementioned experiences. In his words, when asked to talk about fourth world music in a very known interview:

"The exotic is central to me. I don't understand why the 'exotic' doesn't have the automatic appeal for everyone that it does for me. In fact, I think it does

⁴⁷ Byrne 1999

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*

⁴⁹ Just as a reference, Kecak dance in Bali, was invented in the 1930 by a German Coreographer (Clifford 1988)

⁵⁰ The album was written by Hassell and produced by Eno but the musician needed money and to credit Eno as cowriter was a perfect marketing move.

but it's just not acknowledged. I put that experience first and foremost. It's not as though I have a 'real life' with glimmers of exoticism [...] it's more, 'If something really feels good, then why don't you do it all the time instead of only doing it on Saturdays?' Fourth World is an entire week of Saturdays. It's about heart and head as the same thing. It's about being transported to some place which is made up of both real and virtual geography. [...] I thought I was more successful in trying to create something that COULD HAVE existed if things were in an imaginary culture, growing up in an imaginary place with this imaginary music. [...] Fourth World means: get yourself a world vocabulary; use it with subtlety and a keen sense of surprise; follow pleasure; trust your intuition (after you're sure you know what that is)."⁵¹

We have to admit that everything sounds a bit abstract and difficult to grasp. We can argue that the entire concept lies around the fact that exotic and world music should be defined on the basis of that instinctive feeling present in every kind of spiritual, folkloric music – which is basically also the reason why people are attracted to it; an innate feeling of total contentment⁵². Everything that tries to be called exotic music should try to pursue that typical *rasa*.

Also, to explain it with a popular scheme:

- First World – the European and American tradition
- Second World – the Soviet Union
- Third World – anything outside of these two
- Fourth World – a place that was essentially part of the Third World where spirituality and tradition still existed⁵³

While this definition is surely suggestive because it tries to change the perspective from an aesthetic one based on art to an aesthetic one (in a more phenomenological and literal sense) based on sensations and feelings. Of course the problem with this kind of definition is still that of essentializing the exotic and make world music a *new age cliché*, so excluding everything more secular than musics and melodies connected with a culturally developed sense of the sacred. World music and exoticism, if we want to understand them completely in their complexity, are evidently more than that.

While Jon Hassell showed an almost philosophical approach to world music, Japanese composer and musician Ryuichi Sakamoto, with his album *Neo Geo*⁵⁴, tried a more down-to-heart and practical approach pushing the melting pot even further and assessing that the “new geographies” would come from a complete mix of traditions and means⁵⁵.

⁵¹ Hassell 1997

⁵² Behind the notion of fourth world music also lies the fear, shared with Byrne, of the “banalization of the exotic” - i.e. world music becoming a mass market with a consequently dumbing-down of different and specific musical genres.

⁵³ *Ibidem*

⁵⁴ Supposedly standing for new geographies.

⁵⁵ Sakamoto 2000

Ultimately the notion of world music, even if sometimes a useful political tool able to dignify and valorize different musical approaches, still raises doubts in merit⁵⁶. The question of advocacy is still problematic for it puts western hegemonic figures in a privileged position, talking in the name of other communities and people and moreover, still utilizing incorrect terms like non-literate or non-western, making the west the perspective point from where we should look at reality. Last, it is still difficult to distinguish between the genuine need of making room for new undefined music and the research by the mass music market to find a safe and captivating name to sell their products.

Veit Erlmann, in his *The Aesthetics of the Global Imagination: Reflections on World Music in the 1990s*, partly tries to solve these problems and shed a light on a possible solution. In the article Erlmann points out:

“World music is a new aesthetic form of the global imagination, an emergent way of capturing the present historical moment and the total reconfiguration of space and cultural identity characterizing societies around the globe. Here my argument differs substantially from other, more familiar readings of the phenomenon that leave considerable space for the interpretation of different kinds of world music as an assertion of a politics of difference-of nation, community, and, most notably, race - and of the local, as resilient articulations of opposition against Western hegemony: it maintains that synthesis is the central category of this global aesthetics in the making. Although representing no particular global cultural or political entity as such, world music offers the panoramic specter of a global ecumene, of a totality long deemed lost by contemporary critical thought. [...]. I propose that an aesthetic theory of world music shift the focus more toward problems of the construction of historicity or the changes in mimetic representation in the electronic media.”⁵⁷

Veit Erlmann is saying that world music is, basically, an aesthetic category that does not represent singular localities, nations, cultures or communities but on the contrary portrays localities, nations, cultures and communities as a totality in their synthesis and interaction; in the creation and representation of one's own identity and historicity. Beyond that, the scholar mentions how world music is itself a possibility for the west to associate itself with otherness, and that done, remodel its image localizing and diversifying itself and at the same time to counterattack and weaken hegemonic order and market logic simply by making the ambiguity created by those internal differences an advantage and so creating a proper language difficult for totalizing concepts to grasp⁵⁸. In this way, shock of continuous dislocation, “*the tropes of locality, authenticity, and identity, increasingly originate from within a total*

⁵⁶ Erlmann and Spiller already point out how the term world music can be tautological from the moment that all the music in the world is world music.

⁵⁷ Erlmann 1996: 468, 470

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*

*hyperspace whose rules and codes may still be enigmatic at numerous levels and thus defy conventional modes of analysis*⁵⁹

To sum everything up: if something is clear is that, first, a new and more complete theory of world music needs to encompass all the possible variables of the mix, making difference and microvariations part of the wider scheme that defines the genre and not obstacles to its ultimate comprehension. In this sense, locality, transculturality and multimusicality should ultimately find a definite framework where all the different elements that make up the essence of what is generally called world music can combine freely without generating general confusion and embarrassment. Second, the lesson given to us in different ways by the age of exotica, Victor Segalen and Jon Hassell is that the exotic has a distinct taste and shape that reminds us of certain environments, sensations, events and objects in space and time that are culturally constructed and inscribed in our personal history and in our minds. If according to Segalen the only thoughtful way to perceive the real exotic is to strip it of all the superfluous⁶⁰, I try to contend, in part with Jon Hassell, that the constructed and nonessential part that makes the exotic *our exotic* is, by phenomenological means, something specific that we should cultivate and use, perceive and enjoy. A psychic asset that talk about us and that must be taken in account and eventually developed.

Third and last, while is surely true that *“talking about music is like dancing about architecture”*⁶¹, an important issue is the needed shift from the principle of advocacy to the one of empowerment: a process that implies creating procedures and theories to let communities develop autonomy and self-determination for a conscious and responsible safeguard and progress of their own interests. These three parts of the problem – the first two particularly speculative and the third highly political – will be the focus of the last section.

SO WHAT'S NOW?: Quinto mondo, outernational tunes and post-geographical sounds

Until this point we have tried to show a bit of the much longer history of world music, trying to demonstrate how this particular musical aesthetic that originates in local music and different types of folklore was the result of a net of forces and ideas coming from the academic world as much as from relevant figures of the music market and popular musical landscape.

Of course there would be much more to say, both on the side of the academic development of the modern and contemporary ideas regarding what in this chapter has been called world music and on the reason why, recently is regaining the reputation of pop/mass phenomenon. In general we can just suppose that contemporary artists and labels such as Damon Albarn or Sublime Frequencies and Awesome Tapes From Africa, with their research and the help of the internet may have reached a wide audience thanks to new means and “old-school hardcore

⁵⁹ *Ibi*: 484

⁶⁰ Segalen 1978

⁶¹ This is a famous quote credited to Frank Zappa.

digging". Unfortunately there is no space for this here, and for this reason, at last, we'll try to take a peek in what is happening now and how peoples, social groups, cultural organisations and artistic collectives are creating and shaping new categories and figures to face new phenomena appearing in the vast landscape of ethnic music.

It is useless to say that technology has changed completely our way of dealing with music. Discovering, listening, creating and sharing music is something totally different from what it was, for example, ten years ago.

If the cassettes represented a not negligible variation in the process of music democratization and free fruition – specifically for the possibility of copying or assembling, bootlegging and sharing albums and compilations illegally over and over again with a very low budget – what is not stressed enough is that this was the principal way western music was entering the life of people in the “third world”. I think it's interesting to show how:

“In the early 1980s, a research project known as the "Music Industry in Small Countries" (MISC) was undertaken by two Swedish ethnomusicologists Roger Wallis and Krister Malm. They published their results in a book titled *Big Sounds from Small Peoples*. Dr. Malm, who is the director the Swedish *Musikmuseet*, gave a report at the 1983 International Music Council of UNESCO World Congress, held that year in Stockholm. At one of the plenary sessions which I attended, he said that they had become interested in how widely distributed the music of the Swedish band ABBA had become and said, "We found cassette tapes of the ABBA band in every country of the world, except Vietnam." At this, the delegate from Vietnam arose and said, "We have ABBA tapes in Vietnam too!"⁶²

This little story reveals how pervasive western music and culture has been over the borders while music from over the borders was getting problematized in the west. If we think about it, the obvious question that everyone should have thought about before is: what were all the rest of the people in the “third world” doing and thinking while the “first world” was trying to define world music?

The answer to this is that most probably they were trying to emulate Elvis Presley or Mick Jagger or Michael Jackson and they didn't ever think about the possibility of something like world music and had no concerns about cultural appropriation or the quest for authenticity.

It's useless to say how internet is nowadays playing a crucial role, replacing the royal deeds of cassettes. The most incisive fact for our dissertation is that the net, with the help of capitalism and the decentralization and multiplication of powers, is making the world a post-geographical reality changing all concepts connected with the ideas of geographically localized spaces and institutional entities. This is not to say that locality is simply disappearing but it is clear that now, at least in some cases,

⁶² Rahkonen 1994

many bands and musicians reject the notion of locality when having to characterize their works, or make of locality something completely unrelated to their homeland and cultural roots. In this case borders and states are concepts that confuse more than clarify. Music is one of those cases and for this cases the term outernational music seems particularly appropriate.

With outernational music, one wants to underline the complex net of influences and impulses that make something local not easy to put in the “folk” chart and the fact that the music itself do not fit the regular character of a certain type of national music⁶³ – to be precise, canons that, even if indigenous are always concern of the west. Contemporary music based at the peripheries of western world it's often hard to define as world music also because, more and more often, is trying have an enhanced political engagement, having to face contemporary global issues concerning migration, race and international relationships. Examples as electro-shangaan, somalian funk, electro-chaabi, romanian prog and cumbia digital fit perfectly within the occasion.

Moreover we are witnessing more and more an age in which cultural appropriation (both good and bad) is in musicians' daily agendas: people discover and implement in their works new music traditions to experiment, try to apply known techniques to new instruments or try to play new things with instruments they already know; always in between mimetic emulation, a research based on feeling and sensation and natural adaptation. Another possibility is the one, for musicians, to invent new ethnicities and fake their identity to play around the idea of the exotic. Here we are already talking about what we have sometimes regarded as fifth world music or quinto mondo.

Quinto mondo or fifth world music is a concept still in its embryonic phase developed by me and musician and colleague Matteo Pennesi: founders of a small cassette label named Artetetra. Since three years we try to promote exotic music for the sake of the exotic and for the love of exotica, world music and contemporary experimentations on the themes.

Quinto mondo music was born as a joke and quite randomly, to stress that the music we were searching was Jon Hassell's work but on the internet (in fact a more disillusioned and ironic version). Lately, reflecting on the history of world music and its implications, we found that maybe it could have had sense to think about this wave of new music in these terms.

To start, Quinto mondo, in italian, comes also from a famous genre of b-movies called *mondo movies*⁶⁴. In those kind of films, pseudo-documentaries and exploitation movies, the focus was around shocking, sensational and bewildering footages: from tribal rites to executions to slightly erotic and kinky scenes. Of course some of the footages were true and some were fake, but the interesting thing is that reality, both daily and uncommon reality, in those movies was exoticized. The flicks

⁶³ This is taken from an articol by romanian music blog The Attic.

⁶⁴ The first example is the italian *Mondo Cane* by directors Paolo Cavara, Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prospero.

had as side effect, in their bizarre way, to rend familiar the unfamiliar and unfamiliar the familiar.

At the same time, with fifth world, we'd like to recall Jon Hassell's work and think about ethnic experimentation as a constant mix of means and themes in which the intellectual part of our brain plays only a minor role and in which the sensation and the element of the exotic may be pursued and maintained on purpose as a main feature of the musical research. I believe this to be an interesting approach because, if what Byrne points out is true, that is that if someone listens to something exotic few times it won't seem exotic anymore, to preserve the sensation of the exotic is a challenge that requires musical research, adaptation and explorations in a field one should know really well and that presents rules and structures; even if not as strict, even if not as defined. At last it's important to remember that in the modern globalized world westerners take as much from musicians over their borders as much as the seconds take from the firsts; so instituting a dialectic cycle in their praxis in which the boundaries of authenticity and geography will more and more be an unlikely scenario to confine music in.

Evidently this has only to be intended as a first frame to be used to understand that in world music is not important anymore how we define music but how we perceive music starting from the relation between musician and audience and how they relate to the issue of the other and the question of how music can be a mean to express all the possible faces of identity and exoticism.

LIST OF ALBUMS AND ARTISTS:

1. Claude Debussy – Pour le piano - "Prelude" (1901)
2. Erik Satie – Gnossienne (1893)
3. Martin Denny – Exotica (1957)
4. Jon Hassell – Vernal Equinox (1977)
5. Jon Hassell / Brian Eno – Fourth World, vol. 1: Possible Musics (1980)
6. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan – Mustt Mustt (1990)
7. David Byrne – Rei Momo (1989)
8. Ryuichi Sakamoto – Neo Geo (1987)
9. VV/AA - Exotic ésoérique Vol. 2 (2017)
10. Tarawangasawelas – Wanci (2017)

LIST OF LABELS:

1. Sublime Frequencies
2. Habibi Funk
3. Mississippi records
4. Soundway records
5. Awesome Tapes From Africa
6. Canary records
7. Analog Africa

8. Realworld
9. Finders Keepers
10. Luaka Bop
11. Les Disques Bongo Joe
12. Death Is Not The End
13. Ocora
14. Albatros
15. Olvido Records

KEYWORDS:

exotica, exoticism, world music, ethnic music, Neo Geo, fourth world music, fifth world music, outernational, David Byne, Jon Hassell, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Claude Debussy, Peter Gabriel, Roberto Leydi, Alan Lomax, Victor Segalen, Veit Erlman, anthropology, pop Culture, ethnomusicology, cassettes, internet.

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