Teaching *Music Colonialism in Global History*: Pedagogical Pathways and Student Responses

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European powers colonized about 84% of the globe between 1492 and 1914.[1] Today, the consequences of centuries of domination linger in many former colonies, especially those in the Global South. In addition to devastating long-term effects on slaves and Indigenous people, colonial rule left behind unequal distribution of wealth, social inequalities, poverty, slow economic growth, and low rates of mass education.[2] As Aníbal Quijano has pointed out, European governance also gave birth to a widespread mindset, "coloniality," in which "European or Western culture imposed its paradigmatic image and its principle cognitive elements as the norm of orientation on all cultural development, particularly the intellectual and the artistic." Former colonies, according to Quijano, were "pushed into Europeanisation of everything or in part." Even though "colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed," Quijano asserts that it "is still the most general form of domination in the world today."[3]

How did the music and musical practices brought by colonizers affect those in the colonies, and vice versa? What European cultural value systems travelled global routes via music? And how did local communities receive, negotiate, and re-invent them? The course "Music Colonialism in Global History" (MCGH) seeks to answer these and related questions by probing global musics vis-à-vis coloniality and its inherent power structures.[4] Overall learning objectives include increasing basic understanding of the relationship between music, geography, and colonial history; developing critical reading and listening skills; understanding the diversity of musical practices in different locations in the world; and appreciating music as a site of social issues in the past and/or present. Among the learning outcomes are topic-specific information and terminology, and familiarity with critical issues about Western music in colonial and post-colonial cultures on a global scale. In-class activities include discussing the complex artistic legacies of colonialism, cultivating inclusive dialogues about the cultures and histories of diverse communities around the world, and engaging in self-reflexive critiques to destabilize and counter deeply entrenched assumptions. The course prepares students to make informed decisions about engaging with postcolonial musics, including leading or participating in initiatives to decolonize the arts.[5]

The content of MCGH differs from traditional music history courses, which typically cover European music in Western settings, and from ethnomusicology courses, which typically emphasize traditional and local musics worldwide. Parallel to ethnomusicology, MCGH features global locations; however, we study the receptions and practices of Western (art) music in former colonies and our approach is heavily informed by critical theories from the field of Postcolonial Studies. Having designed the course in 2015 with the support of a fellowship from McGill University's then-Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas, I first offered MCGH to graduate students in Fall 2016. A year later, I adapted the course for undergraduates. Since its inception, I have taught the class four times at the undergraduate level and six times as a graduate seminar. Although both levels make use of the same core materials, the formats, reading loads, assignments, and expectations are tailored to the respective educational stages.

In this article I explain how I teach MCGH at the undergraduate level (including methods and materials), and reflect upon the effectiveness of my pedagogical approach by analyzing what students took away in relation to the class's learning objectives and learning outcomes. For the latter exercise, I solicited student responses to a questionnaire with broadly-couched queries. This article is divided into three sections. After describing the course's practical aspects (format, setup, examples of readings), I present and summarize the students' commentaries. They were invited to articulate what they had gained from the course, evaluate the materials and pedagogical tools used, and suggest adjustments to the course content and approach. In the third and last section, I

1. Philip Hoffman, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 2, see also 3, n5

2. Hoffman, *Why Did Europe*, 208.

3. Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," *Cultural Studies* 21 nos. 2–3 (2007): 170.

4. I originally coined the term "music colonialism" for the *Oxford Handbook of Music Colonialism* when the *Handbook* was contracted several years ago. Co-edited by Erin Johnson-Williams, Yvonne Liao and me, the volume is forthcoming in 2024. This article marks the first appearance of the term in print.

5. Numerous scholars and policy makers have highlighted education's crucial role in decolonizing initiatives. For instance, a report forged by Canadian Indigenous communities and the Canadian government, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015), calls for "Developing culturally appropriate curricula," 10.iii, 2; and "Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect," 63.iii, 7. https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.801236/publication.html (accessed June 12, 2022).

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summarize what MCGH and its pedagogies achieve, and offer thoughts on the course's significance and goals for the longer term.

I. Practical Aspects

For music majors at my university, MCGH represents an elective that fulfills one of two required upper-level music history courses. Given the interdisciplinary nature and breadth of the topic, however, I decided from the beginning to cross-list the course so that non-music majors may also enroll (class size is capped at 20). The pre-requisites for music majors include first- and second-year music history courses; for non-music students there are none. By welcoming intellectually curious participants from across campus, I simulate a liberal arts classroom setting (within a large music conservatory) that brings the field of music into interdisciplinary conversation with the hydra-headed phenomenon of colonialism/ coloniality. This arrangement is also intended to fuel peer education between music and non-music undergraduates. The class meets once a week for three hours to discuss reading and listening assignments. Each week, we focus on particular themes or aspects of colonialism/coloniality, which are illustrated through readings that present thought-provoking, debate-worthy issues along with case studies from different parts of the world. Weekly themes include "Zones of Contact,"[6] "Diversity, Difference, Hybridity," and "Politics of Resistance and Race" (see Appendix One).

Aligning with the course content's ideals of global, inclusive dialogue and cultural equality, the class format cultivates a non-hierarchical, shared, and engaged classroom. For example, I allow students to select readings rather than assigning them directly. Here's how it works. At the end of class, I project a list of possible readings and explain how each relates to the following week's theme. Students then come to a consensus about the reading(s) we should cover. They are required to post weekly "Reflective Questions" about the selected publication(s) in the course's Learning Management System. Occasionally, a particular student is attracted to readings beyond those selected collectively. I list such extra readings as "optional" and invite the interested student to summarize and present them (or one of them) to the entire class. In addition to weekly "Reflective Questions," I assign a midterm and a final project. For the midterm, a take-home task, students read and review an article or book chapter which they individually select from a list of items not previously addressed in class.

6. Inspired by Mary Louise Pratt's notion of "contact zones" which are "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today." *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 4.

They have two weeks in which to write a "Summary, Evaluation, and Critique" of the publication. For the final project, I ask students to give an in-class oral presentation accompanied by a detailed handout. They select one of two possible pathways: either they examine a former colony and its musical traditions in light of its colonial history, or they write an autoethnographic, self-reflexive account of their experiences learning and playing Western art music, using critical concepts from postcolonial, cultural, race, and gender theories.

II. Student Responses

What are students learning from the course and its global components? In April 2022 I contacted seven (out of seventeen) students who had taken MCGH in Fall 2021 and invited them to submit written responses of 1000–2000 words to three questions. Five accepted.[7] I selected students who had been particularly engaged in the course, as I believed they would provide thoughtful comments. I designed open-ended questions that encompassed the impact of the course, the effectiveness of the course materials, and possible revisions to the course design. I present a sampling of the students' responses below.[8] Overall, respondents had enjoyed the course, citing its content and approach as perspective-changing in the context of their experience. Previously unaware of connections between music and colonialism/coloniality (particularly in terms of political and other power relations), they had found the readings and cultural theories enlightening and useful tools for thinking about global social justice.

Question 1: How has MCGH contributed to your understanding of our ever-globalizing world, and the place of "Western art music" within it?

Students reported that the course had enlarged their intellectual and geopolitical horizons and enhanced their awareness of the power structures underlying the music industry worldwide. NYH wrote:

> MCGH established music and art as inherently political acts that cannot be separated from the social context of power. The discussions and materials taught me that music has historically been used by institutions of power as tools of oppression, and to a certain extent these hierarchical constructions are embedded in the essence of the art form itself; but more importantly, that

7. I thank the respondents for their thoughtful, lively remarks. I am also grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for funding the survey. Each student received CAD 500. Since they had already received their grades, I anticipated neither risks nor conflict-of-interest issues. They chose a preferred mode of identification from a given list and gave me permission to publish their answers. Unless volunteered by individuals, information about gender, ethnicity, citizenship, major, and year in the student's program is not included.

8. Responses have been edited for clarity and concision.

> music can be a useful tool toward liberation and empowering self-determination for marginalized peoples in the contemporary culture industry. It was fascinating to explore the two aspects with nuanced class discussion, learning from different global perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of music as a political tool. The discussion of music in "post-colonial" countries such as Singapore in particular was very illuminating and helped me learn more about the ways in which music remains a symbol for prestige and acceptance in the globalizing world.

Milton Rosenbaum found the class eye-opening when compared to his previous experiences with "Music History." He likened his shift in perspective to his experience of reading Helen Gordon's *Notes from Deep Time*, a book detailing the geological development of our planet.[9]

> The class was key to shaping the way I look at music as a whole. Music has become less of a static collection of songs and composers and more of a long-form, single story. I can now appreciate songs as single points in a larger narrative of cultural exchange and domination. Before entering the class, statements like "Beethoven is the greatest composer of all time" were axiomatic, but the class allowed me to question and identify similar thoughts. Gordon's conception of the world as almost a liquid substance, flowing under complex interacting forces, closely mirrors how classes like this can help you see the social world. Countries and cultural concepts stop being fixed and instead become contingent on the social forces that shape them. MCGH helped me apply that understanding in a deep and nuanced way to music. I was already aware, for instance, of lingering neocolonial and cultural colonialism in East Asia. However, I was surprised to learn that many of these countries still "authentically" venerate Western styles of music. MCGH equipped me with a theoretical framework to understand this domination-by consent.[10]

Excited that the course was available at all, Yuval Tessman-Bar-On found that:

> MCGH profoundly influenced my interests in feminism, transnational feminism, and global music traditions. It allowed me to discover the complex ways in which music fits into narratives of colonialism, displacement, immigration, diaspora, global issues of social justice, and how the musical and cultural lives of post-colonial nations are impacted by histories of colonialism.

9. Helen Gordon, *Notes from Deep Time: A Journey through our Past and Future Worlds* (London: Profile Books, 2021).

10. The phrase "domination by consent" comes from "Education," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 371. For the origins of this idea, see Antonio Gramsci's "On Education," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, translated and edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2003), 24–43.

To Alan Vlaykov, the course was intriguing but also puzzling. He had had little background in music and sensed that musicians share a subculture in which he perceived certain unexamined beliefs. Between the readings and his interactions with classmates, Vlaykov realized that the attitudes appear to stem from the traditional pedagogical model used in applied music lessons, a model that has disseminated worldwide through colonialism.

> I came into this class not knowing almost anything about Western art music. After all, I am an economics major and music had no role in my previous thought about globalization which had always been a social and economic phenomenon for me. The course changed my view on the world. It has added a completely new layer of understanding. I realized that the way music is taught fundamentally contributes to its practitioners' ideas of the world. Not only through the readings done for the course but through conversation with my classmates. Many preconceptions and ideas that were presented by my peers did not make sense to me. Some things were taken as given and not questioned.[11] I could not comprehend why but these made more sense after I understood the way music is taught. Overall, my understanding of the world has been expanded.

On her part, WJ was aware of debates about Western art music in the Global North, but the music's continued influence in the Global South astonished her. She was especially struck by how Western music education had been adopted far from its place of origin, and critically contemplated her own learning experiences—which she elegantly termed "musical interpellation" (after Louis Althusser).[12]

> It had been brought to my attention in music history classes that Western classical music continues to promote outdated colonial ideals through the traditional works that modern establishments choose to perform. However, it was only in taking MCGH that I truly understood how intrinsically connected colonialism is to Western classical music, not only in terms of content but additionally through music education in former colonies. I had not realized the extent to which our supposedly modern musical institutions continued to uphold outdated and problematic power structures through their steadfast adherence to traditional teaching practices. This course helped me

11. Entrenched practices can remain unquestioned for a long time. After a class discussion about hiring practices in orchestras, a Business Management major who took MCGH several years ago expressed shock that music has only recently begun to address workplace inequities. She explained that the topic is well developed in her own field, and at least thirty years old.

12. I had introduced the concept via "Notes on Interpellation," an open-access handout by Chris McGee based on Louis Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation," in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 85–126.

McGee's handout can be found at "Notes on Interpellation," https://www.longwood.edu/staff/mcgeecw/notesoninterpellation.htm (accessed March 17, 2020).

> examine the musical interpellation I inherited from my teachers, peers, and from Western society in general. It helped me re-contextualize my own experiences as a pupil struggling to learn in colonial master-pupil dichotomies.

These responses confirmed that MCGH had successfully achieved (and in some ways, exceeded) its learning objectives: increasing basic understanding of the relationship of music, geography, and colonial history; developing critical reading and listening skills; understanding the diversity of musical practices in different locations in the world; and appreciating music as a site of social issues in the past and/or present.

Question 2: The pedagogical tools used in the course included readings and assigned written responses, in-class dialogue and discussions, a review essay, and a final project.

Question 2a: Which do you think was/were most effective in delivering the course content? Elaborate on your responses, including reasons for the points you make.

Student respondents had enjoyed the course materials and pedagogical methods. Praising the readings' rich content, high quality, and accessibility, they highlighted the stimulating class discussions and appreciated the opportunity to share and discuss Reflective Questions. Many discovered exciting new points of connection with the materials while working on their midterm essays and final projects. Several expressed gratitude for the flexible approach I took toward the selection of readings.

> (NYH) The readings were very effective in delivering the course content, especially as the instructor allowed students the freedom to choose the specific readings for each prescribed weekly topic. Readings were usually challenging in an intellectually stimulating way, but were not inaccessible. Giving students a choice also made the course content easier to engage with and benefitted in-class discussions, since it made the topics a bit more personal and approachable to students. The midterm essay was also very enjoyable and helpful in my learning process. Again, I appreciate the instructor's flexibility in allowing students to complete the assignment on their article of choice from the list of options, and I was able to write on one that was particularly fascinating to me.

> (Rosenbaum) I loved the in-class discussions. Each student brought their perspectives and understanding for each paper. Even though none of us individually were able to glean every useful bit from each paper, with the instructor's help, we were usually able to come to a deep understanding of each paper. I enjoyed the midterm essay and final project. The opportunity for each person in the class to pick their region and paper allowed each student far more self-expression than is usually present in these courses.

> (Vlaykov) The most effective pedagogical tool in the course were the in-class dialogues and discussions. The class was centered around creating an environment that encouraged presenting new ideas and challenging the readings and our peers which encouraged us to comprehensively read and really think about the deeper meaning, to formulate questions for in-class discussions. It allowed for new ideas that I may have missed to be discussed by my peers and opened up my eyes to so many new concepts that I would have never discovered before. I was able to grasp these concepts in a much deeper way than I could've through a lecture. Personally, being from an economics background I was intrigued by the opinions of my fellow classmates from music. It was evident that their way of critiquing and understanding critical concepts was different from my own. I was also encouraged to share my opinions which also would not have been possible in a lecture. Through sharing I hopefully gave a new perspective to my peers about the way they have learnt about the world through their musical education.

NYH noticed the emphasis I placed on critical thinking:

> Similarly, the assigned written responses and reflective questions were a good way to [ensure engagement and] encourage critical thinking … through the act of formulating a question, to be discussed in class. I enjoyed the way class discussions were organized because of this, because there was a personal touch to the structured discussions in a way that would be absent if it was entirely facilitated and decided by the instructor. From this, we were also able to bring in our own insights from outside of the assigned reading materials and enrich the discussion, which really helped my understanding of the material. Including instances where my classmates brought in their own life experiences or contemporary examples of the readings' claims in today's culture industry, I thought it was very useful toward establishing an enriching discussion of the course material in a sensitive and refreshing way.

Students lauded the intermingling of music and non-music majors, which produced fruitful exchanges:

> (Tessman-Bar-On) Another strength of this class was that it naturally encouraged interdisciplinary thought and discussion. The course included both music students (which include performance students, musicology students, and others) and arts students (including students in cultural studies and sociology, among other fields). The instructor's enthusiasm for this interdisciplinarity encouraged students to allow our varying expertise to intersect and inform our discussions.

Exploring the presence of Western art music around the globe, many students were attracted to specific case studies that sparked searching reflections on

their part. For some, the midterm review essay became a powerful vehicle for intellectual discoveries.

> (NYH) My midterm essay focused on an article about the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, which discussed issues of cultural hybridity in post-colonial societies. The article was particularly illuminating in its exposition of the Orchestra's programming to frame the institution's cultural identity as fluid and contingent on the specific context and site of articulation.[13] I was able to critically engage with it in a way I don't get to very often in other courses, and it's one of the articles that have stuck with me the most from the course, even after the end of the semester.

> (WJ) The midterm review essay was very effective in delivering the course content, as it provided students with the time and space required to examine the inner logical machinations of a specific article and explore its findings with a critical lens. The assignment encouraged re-reading, reflecting, making connections and broadening students' understanding of the text and its positioning within the framework of post-colonial studies. Students could examine the relationship between the author's identity and the subject matter of their article, a crucial step in the identification of any hidden biases or weaknesses in argument due to cultural inexperience or colonial interpellation. An author's lived experience is the invisible player in post-colonial research. A close reader must keep the author's relationship to the content of their research in mind while reading. Just as an article approached from an etic perspective will likely present differing conclusions to one written from an emic viewpoint, an ancestor of a colonizer and a member of a former colonial region are likely to have differing perspectives, resources and motivations when writing about an identical topic.

In a few cases, the intellectual journey took a deeply personal turn. Tessman-Bar-On researched her family background for her oral presentation. She shared:

> The final project was particularly effective, I think, because it was flexible. The project gave students the opportunity to choose one of two directions. The first was to present about a country with a history of colonialism and chart the development of musical traditions in that country, with particular attention to how colonialism interacted with this musical development. The second option was to present a personal experience of colonialism and discuss how it impacted one's own musical development and life. Many students (not only those who chose the second option) talked about subjects and countries to which they had a personal or familial connection. I presented on the Cyprus Detention camps, where my family was held as they immigrated, in the years before 1948, to what would become Israel; this involved researching family history and documents in addition to doing research on Cyprus, the British Mandate of Palestine, and the music involved in these contexts. Because of my in-depth interaction with music of the Cyprus Detention camps in this project, I developed an interest in further pursuing the study of music of the wider Arab-Israeli conflict, which I could see growing into a significant part of my future scholarship.

13. Shzr Ee Tan, "A Chinese Take(Away) of Brahms: How the Singapore Chinese Orchestra Courted Europe," *Wacana seni/Journal of Arts Discourse* 11 (2012): 127–148. Respondents also found memorable the writings of Kofi Agawu, Homi Bhabha, Anna Bull, Stuart Hall, Susan Neylan and Melissa Meyer, Edward Said, Amanda Weidman, and Mari Yoshihara.

In a wholly unexpected way, WJ's final project fundamentally changed her personal outlook. The newfound knowledge enabled her to recontextualize her experiences with her mixed-race family and parents.

> The final presentation also effectively reinforced the course content. The nature of the assignment allowed for rigorous research into a former colony which could also include a personal touch. Depending on how closely the student's selection was linked to their family history, the impact of their research could have a much broader effect beyond their project. I chose to research Mauritius, a tiny African island off the coast of Madagascar and home to most of my father's immediate family. I have only visited the island twice, and have limited contact with family there. Through my final project, I was able to construct a more detailed picture of the colonial history of my father's country of origin and share my findings with the class. However, my research also enabled me to examine my paternal family's sociopolitical position on the island as members of the dominant Indo-Mauritian group in a manner that would have otherwise been almost impossible. I was able to observe and interpret my father's marriage to my mother, an English-speaking Canadian with Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian ancestry, through a heightened and more focused colonial lens. I now have a breadth of colonial and cultural context to colour and contextualize my personal struggles with my colonial identity, as well as the intergenerational trauma and colonial interpellation experienced by my father, his siblings, and their ancestors at the hands of the ancestors of my mother. The tools and terminology I acquired through taking this course are now integral to my understanding of my family's history in a way I could never have anticipated.

Several other students (not polled) also explored their personal backgrounds in relation to their music studies. Tessman-Bar-On attributed the interest in such projects to my essay that we had studied in class.

> A pedagogy that the instructor employed was centering her personal experiences of learning music in Malaysia, in a music education system influenced by the legacy of British colonial rule and entrenched ideas of the superiority of Western art music.[14] This not only demonstrated the significance of the work we were doing in the course, but it also modeled to students how to

14. Roe-Min Kok, "Music for a Postcolonial Child: Theorizing Malaysian Memories," in *Musical Childhoods and the Cultures of Youth*, ed. Susan Boynton and Roe-Min Kok (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 89–104; reprinted in *Learning, Teaching, and Musical Identity: Voices across Cultures*, ed. Lucy Green (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 73–90.

> reflect on one's own personal experience in a scholarly way, as the final project allowed us to do.

Question 2b: Which was/were less effective in delivering the course content? Elaborate on your responses, including reasons for the points you make.

Respondents shared constructive and useful criticism on the pedagogical approach in MCGH. Some found that the sheer breadth of materials led to difficulty in narrowing the topic of final projects. Listening to her classmates' oral presentations, NYH thought that "the scope for the first [topic] was a bit too wide for the students; too broad for comprehensive analysis in many cases," and suggested:

> Encourage students to focus on a specific aspect of the former colony's relationship with music, such as their contemporary classical music scene, the conservatories and music education program, popular music within the country today, prominent uses of music in key political moments, etc., so that there is more room for comprehensive analysis within the presentation, rather than simply an exposition on the country's history with colonialism and music.[15]

Although Rosenbaum had enjoyed both the midterm and final projects, he wished for an oral exchange in the former: "the final project was far more useful. Focusing on a specific country forced us to apply the concepts we had learned in class on particular manifestations and was excellent practice for research in the real world. The midterm left no opportunity to hear other students' thoughts." He was seconded by Vlaykov.

> I believe that the midterm paper was the least effective part of delivering the course content. For me, discussing ideas and having meaningful conversations about key topics in the class were pivotal for the course. Even with the final project we were encouraged to present research questions and answer questions from our classmates to expand on the topics being spoken about. The midterm paper stood out because of how closed off it was from the regular contributive nature of the class.[16]

WJ was bothered by some of her peers' limited approach to the weekly postings and in-class discussions.

15. I have since adopted NYH's suggestion.

16. In the next iteration of the course I floated the option of a post midterm discussion, but it failed to gain any support from students. Group dynamics can differ greatly from class to class and are especially pronounced in courses that depend heavily on student engagement and discussions.

> Students would often use their weekly reflective question assignments to summarize the articles, instead of stimulating thought-provoking discussion. This issue was addressed mid-way through the term, with noticeable improvement.[17] However, the structuring of class discussions around students' reflective questions posed another challenge. Since the onus was placed on students to volunteer their reflective questions for discussion, the topics tended to originate from a small number of students who were comfortable reading their questions aloud to the class. This led to less diversity in terms of responders and, consequently, perspectives.[18]

To encourage more profound engagement among her classmates, Tessman-Bar-On suggested expanding the weekly assignments:

> I think many of the students would have been willing to engage the material in a way similar to that of a graduate seminar. The discussion questions were useful because they set a starting point for class discussion but could have sparked deeper discussion if students had been offered the opportunity to write more each week written and posted summaries and engagements with the readings, for instance.

The responses to Questions 2a and 2b reinforced my learning objectives for MCGH, but also extended them in unexpected ways. Through first-hand engagement in readings and class discussions, the midterm review and the final project, students learned to probe music's position within global colonial histories through a critical lens. They relished the regular opportunities for in-depth, interdisciplinary debates. They became savvy readers of scholarly arguments and incorporated theoretical concepts such as "domination by consent" and "interpellation" into their vocabularies (thereby attaining "topic-specific information and terminology," among of the course's learning outcomes). More unexpectedly, a few respondents in the group, which included a range of backgrounds and ethnicities, discovered new ways to understand and connect with their familial histories as they realized, for the first time, the impact of coloniality on their own past and present. I found the students' suggestions for adjusting the pedagogical approach helpful and have since either implemented them (see footnotes 15 and 17), and/or brought them up in subsequent iterations of the course (footnotes 16 and 18).

17. WJ contacted me about this issue, which I managed to rectify to an extent

18. For another course in the following term, I divided students into groups of 4–5 by last name. Each group was assigned to post and lead discussions on specific days, an arrangement that resulted in much more evenly distributed postings and participation.

Question 3: What do you think should be added to and/or subtracted from the course? Examples might include assignment prompts, research paper designs, classroom activities, assessment modalities, and/or other relevant course materials.

This question drew a rich panoply of ideas and propositions (I moved some comments from 2b to this section). Several respondents offered their thoughts on further diversifying course content. NYH wrote:

> Dedicate a specific week to spotlight marginalized or little-known local musicians, or to encourage initiatives toward music education as a decolonial practice. This would add an important real-world element to round off the important theoretical offerings. With the course evenly split between Arts and Music students, each with their own unique perspectives, I believe opportunities like this would help apply what we have learned in a real-world context, hopefully beneficial to students from all Faculties.
>
> (Tessman-Bar-On) Include the music of refugees, which I think is implied by the course title and could have been extremely interesting and relevant in this historical moment.
>
> (Vlaykov) Allow us to research and find a publication (related to the course content) on our own and discuss it with the class. This would promote more research about topics that individual students find interesting. It would also expand the scope of the course.

Many expressed concerns about the theoretical and conceptual difficulty of certain readings and requested more structured guidance through the materials. Rosenbaum noted the "speed of the course" in relation to the complex ideas presented:

> We covered a new reading each week, and while that is not by itself overly demanding, several times we were reading a single piece that could by itself fill up an entire course. I remember the week on Homi Bhabha being particularly hamstrung. Most people in the room (including myself) struggled with his concept of a "third space." Even had there been a lecture on it beforehand, I doubt we could have said anything worthwhile having only learned the term a few days prior.[19]
>
> (Tessman-Bar-On) In class discussions, students were not being well prepared to think through connections to critical concepts or to other texts. Perhaps writing a full discussion post (especially if this were set up by the introduction and clear definition of relevant critical concepts in class—such as interpellation, indigeneity, hybridity, appropriation, strategic essentialism,

19. Rosenbaum is referring to Homi Bhabha, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1994), 206–09.

> etc.) would help prepare students to engage this terminology in well-informed ways. This would also help to formalize class discussion, which would allow students to come away with a sense of how to talk about issues of colonialism in a scholarly way.
>
> (Vlaykov) Add a brief introduction about the broad topics discussed in the readings before the class goes into discussion. A short set of slides would have helped me engage in discussions better. Occasionally I found it hard to talk about certain topics due to a lack of knowledge even if I wanted to contribute.
>
> (WJ) Provide students with prompts before they read each article to sharpen their focus on certain attributes or concepts and assist them with formulating questions. Post-colonial studies borrows concepts, theories and content from a wide variety of disciplines, and the students have varied backgrounds so some scaffolding for assigned readings would be helpful such as reading prompts or full-scale structural aides. Prompts could be created by the professor or taken from the reflective questions of past students.
>
> (WJ again) Preparing article summaries would emphasize important terms and concepts, encourage notetaking and the use of proper terminology during in-class discussions.

Seeking deeper engagement were Tessman-Bar-On, who favored assigning a fully fledged final paper because so many students decided on research topics that were personally meaningful; and Vlaykov, who requested oral discussions of the midterm essays. A thornier issue centered on writing skills appropriate to the coursework. Vlaykov believed that music majors were at a disadvantage when it came to written work:

> Finally, I believe the format of the midterm examination could have given a major advantage to the students outside of the music school (this includes myself). This is because writing papers in strictly academic majors is more common than in majors which focus on the performing arts. I could see it being significantly easier for those who have more practice writing university papers compared to those who don't do it as often.

Rosenbaum went further, opining that high standards for writing in English are inappropriate in a class about colonialism. However, he also realized that lowering expectations may be inappropriate and/or counterproductive and suggested assigning practice essays.

> I found the focus on precise academic grammar in the grading of the essay a bit strange. I know several music students who had not practiced writing academically and/or spoke English as a second language. They were blindsided by the way their papers were graded. It also felt somewhat ironic that a class

> about the arbitrary standards of Western art music being applied to unfairly denigrate other cultures would so strictly cling to its own set of Western, academic standards. The rest of the course had not emphasized academic writing, so this issue could even have been fixed by requiring several, smaller essays, allowing students rusty in their writing to catch up.[20]

Students had found the dense theories and conceptual terminology of Postcolonial Studies illuminating but complex. They agreed on the need for more careful, step-by-step guidance through these terms in the publications we had read and discussed together. Judging by the respondents' earlier answers to Questions 2a and 2b, however, they appear to have grasped the theoretical frameworks well, probably as a result of the effective case studies in each reading. To further reinforce student comprehension, I decided to add a concept-focused guide as a general resource, and I refer to it whenever we come across a new concept.[21] I also explain special terms during class discussions, halting the conversation temporarily as needed. The contentious issue of academic writing has led me to take concrete steps (see footnote 20). As for enriching the syllabus, I continue to add fresh themes as well as suitable readings to the course, as each iteration of the class brings a different set of interests into play.[22]

III. Conclusion and Thoughts

Students had begun the term with little or no knowledge of music's connections with global colonialism/coloniality. Their lack of awareness is unsurprising, as colonialism and its aftermath in music remain relatively distanced (geographically, historically, and culturally) from contemporary North

20. Vlaykov and Rosenbaum were probably thinking about a classmate who had been unhappy about their midterm grade. I had specified that points would be deducted for writing mistakes and the Department Chair did not accept the student's charge of unfair grading. I decided that in the future, I would communicate expectations more clearly, give concrete examples of poor grammar and weak sentence constructions, and refer students to the university's Writing Center early in the term. On language barriers experienced by international students, see Leon Moosavi, "The Myth of Academic Tolerance: The Stigmatisation of East Asian Students in Western Higher Education," *Asian Ethnicity* 23 no. 3 (2022): 484–503 DOI: 10.1080/14631369.2021.1882289, and his "'Can East Asian Students Think?' Orientalism, Critical Thinking, and the Decolonial Project," *Education Sciences* 10, no. 10 (2020): DOI:10.3390/educsci10100286. For resources on antiracist writing pedagogies, see Asao B. Inoue, *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future* (Fort Collins: WAC Clearinghouse, 2015) and Amherst College's recommendations at "Antiracist Writing Pedagogy," accessed March 18, 2023, https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/writingcenter/faculty/pedagogy/antiracist-writing-pedagogy.

21. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (3rd edition), (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013).

22. For instance, many students in the course this term (Winter 2023) are from STEM disciplines, which are examining their own discipline-specific legacies of colonialism.

America and its musical concerns. Few university music programs currently offer courses about colonialism/coloniality, although many in higher education agree that these notions are important and timely. Imperialistic ambitions (evident in Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine), and power imbalances in overt and subtle forms (such as issues faced by Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups) are just two present-day examples of widespread inequitable behaviors that have been stoked and facilitated by the world's colonial past. Similarly problematic attitudes arguably underlie the practice of Western music around the world, and MCGH's global content and postcolonial approach enabled my student respondents to acquire new, complex, and nuanced views. They came to understand that the creation, performance, and practice of music in different global settings may be framed by colonial history and coloniality, and were sensitized to the corresponding power dynamics and social-cultural inequities. These perspectives align with the course's immediate learning outcomes: topic-specific information and familiarity with critical issues about Western music in colonial and post-colonial cultures on a global scale. Looking to the future and over the longer term, MCGH hopes to advance a strong sense of global citizenship in future generations by cultivating the key attributes of "intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect."[23]

APPENDIX One

Weekly Schedule (course outline with thematic modules and sample readings)

Music and Colonialism in Global History

Week 1: Introduction to the Interdisciplinary Field of Postcolonial Studies

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin, "Introduction," in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1–13.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin, "General Introduction," and "Introduction to the Second Edition," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1–4, 5–8.

23. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015): 63.iii, 7, https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.801236/publication.html.

Ziauddin Sardar and Borin van Loon, *Introducing Cultural Studies. A Graphic Guide* (London: Icon, 2010), 3–55, 70–72, 78–80.

Week 2: Zones of Contact

Mari Yoshihara, "Chapter 1: Early Lessons in Globalization," in *Musicians from a Different Shore: Asians and Asian Americans in Classical Music* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 11–48.

David R. M. Irving, "Lully in Siam: Music and Diplomacy in French-Siamese Cultural Exchanges, 1680–1690," *Early Music* XL, no. 3 (2012): 393–420.

Barbara Alge, "Transatlantic Musical Flows in the Lusophone World: An Introduction," Special Issue "Transatlantic Musical Flows in the Lusophone World," ed. Barbara Alge, *The World of Music* (New Series) 2, no. 2 (2013): 7–24.

Weeks 3–4: First Nations/ Settler Colonialism

David Gramit, "The Transnational History of Settler Colonialism and the Music of the Urban West: Resituating a Local Music History," *American Music* 32, no. 3 (2014): 272–91.

Beverley Diamond, "Resisting Containment: The Long Reach of Song at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools," in *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action in and beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, eds. Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 239–65.

Dylan Robinson, "Chapter 1: Hungry Listening," in *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 37–76.

Susan Neylan and Melissa Meyer, "'HERE COMES THE BAND!' Cultural Collaboration, Connective Traditions, and Aboriginal Brass Bands on British Columbia's North Coast, 1875–1964," *BC Studies* no. 152 (2006): 35–66.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin, "Indigeneity," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 163–64.

Margery Fee, "Who Can Write as Other?" in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 169–71.

Terry Goldie, "The Representation of the Indigene," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 172–75.

Week 5: Vocal Cultures and Identities

Nina Eidsheim, "Formal and Informal Pedagogies: Believing in Race, Teaching Race, Hearing Race," in The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 39–60.

Grant Olwage, "The Class and Colour of Tone: An Essay on the Social History of Vocal Timbre," Ethnomusicology Forum 13, no. 2 (2004): 203–26.

Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier, "On Howls and Pitches," in Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 31–75.

Week 6: midterm Assessment (take-home)

Week 7: Diversity, Difference, Hybridity

Robert Young, "Hybridity and Diaspora," in Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2–26.

Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," The Location of Culture, 2nd ed. (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2004), 121–31.

Amanda Weidman, "Echo and Anthem: Representing Sound, Music, and Difference in Two Colonial Modern Novels," in Audible Empire: Music, Global Politics, Critique, eds. Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 314–33.

Week 8: Politics of Resistance and Race

Tina Ramnarine, "Orchestral Connections in the Cultures of Decolonization: Reflections on British, Caribbean and Indian contexts," in Global Perspectives on Orchestras: Collective Creativity and Social Agency, ed. Tina Ramnarine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 324–350.

Mina Yang, "East Meets West in the Concert Hall: Asians and Classical Music in the Century of Imperialism, Post-colonialism, and Multiculturalism," Asian Music 38, no. 1 (2007): 1–30.

Mhoze Chikowero, "Cultures of Resistance," in African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015), 239–273.

Weeks 9–10: Education—A Living Force

Alan J. Bishop, "Western Mathematics: The Secret Weapon of Cultural Imperialism," Race and Class 32, No. 2 (1990): 51–65.

Ubiratan D'Ambrosio, "In My Opinion: What is Ethnomathematics, and How Can It Help Children in Schools?" Teaching Children Mathematics 7, no. 6 (2001): 308–310.

Anna Bull, "El Sistema as a Bourgeois Social Project: Class, Gender, and Victorian Values," Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education 15, no. 1 (2016): 120–153.

Roe-Min Kok, "Music for a Postcolonial Child: Theorizing Malaysian Memories," in Musical Childhoods and the Cultures of Youth, eds. Susan Boynton and Roe-Min Kok (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 89–104.

Christopher N. Poulos, "Conceptual Foundations of Autoethnography," in Essentials of Autoethnography (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2021), 3–9.

Week 11: Social Inequalities in the Culture Industry

Christina Scharff, "The Silence that is Not a Rest: Negotiating Hierarchies of Class, Race, and Gender," in Gender, Subjectivity, and Cultural Work: The Classical Music Profession (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2018), 85–112.

Anna Bull, "'Getting It Right' as an Affect of Self-Improvement," in Class, Control and Classical Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 70–92.

Anna Bull, "Uncertain Capital: Class, Gender, and the 'Imagined Futures' of Young Classical Musicians," in The Classical Music Industry, eds. Chris Dromey and Julia Haferkorn (New York: Routledge, 2017), 79–95.

Catherine Lu, "Responsibility, Structural Injustice, and Structural Transformation," Ethics & Global Politics 11, no. 1 (2018): 42–57.

Weeks 12–13: Final presentations