

Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction

By Timothy Rice

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- If you were at a party with friends and family, and someone asked you what ethnomusicology is, how would you define it for them? Why?
- If you were speaking to an anthropologist or a sociologist, how would you define ethnomusicology for them? Why?
- If you were talking to a classical violinist, how would you define ethnomusicology for her? Why?
- How is the research of ethnomusicologists today related to ancient Chinese and Greek philosophers' understandings of music?
- Why do ethnomusicologists study so-called traditional music from all over the world? What is traditional music?
- Why do local musicians and communities sometimes resist or even block ethnomusicologists' efforts to gather knowledge about music everywhere in the world?
- What theories have ethnomusicologists developed about the nature of music?
- How do ethnomusicologists' theories about the nature of music challenge commonsense beliefs that music is really just an art or an entertainment?
- Given how much time people spend listening to music today, it seems obvious that music must meet some important psychological needs in individuals, but how and why is music important to them socially?
- What is the difference between the notion that language has meaning and the notion that music has meaning?
- When ethnomusicologists claim that music is culture, what do they mean and how do they demonstrate the truth of that claim?
- If ethnomusicologists are so deeply interested in music as culture and in the social role of music in society, why do they study and write books and articles about individual musicians?
- In what ways do ethnomusicologists explain musical change and the flow of music history through time?
- How has music technology affected the way ethnomusicologists do research?
- How has music technology affected the music traditions that ethnomusicologists study?
- What have ethnomusicologists learned about music from studying it in societies under pressure from disease, war, and climate change?
- Ethnomusicologists seem to understand themselves as doing good in the world. Why is that, and what sort of good work do they do?
- Based on this book, how would you characterize the field of ethnomusicology? What kind of field is it?

Other books by Timothy Rice

Ethnomusicological Encounters with Music and Musicians (Ashgate, 2011)

Music in Bulgaria: Experiencing Music, Expression Culture (Oxford University Press, 2004)

Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Vol. 8, Europe (co-editor) (Routledge, 2000)

May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music (University of Chicago Press, 1994)
Cross-cultural Perspectives on Music (co-editor) (University of Toronto Press, 1982)

Further Reading

Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (eds.), *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* 2nd Edition (Oxford University Press, 2008)

John Blacking, *How Musical Is Man?* (University of Washington Press, 1973)

Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts* (University of Illinois Press, 2005)

Ruth Stone et al., *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* 10 Vols. (Routledge, 1998-2002)

Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (University of Chicago Press, 2008)

Elijah Wald, *Global Minstrels: Voices of World Music* (Routledge, 2007)