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### Disability rights, music and the case for inclusive education

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## **Disability rights, music and the case for inclusive education**

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Participation in music is both a human right and a disability right. Music is a human need in the Darwinian (not Social Darwinian) evolutionary sense. Similarly, inclusion is an evolved capacity, beneficial to human perpetuation. The policing of music resembles authoritarian regulation of other forms of allegedly pleasurable but actually vital human activities such as sexuality and gender expression, all related to disability in that the oppressed groups are also pathologised. The impact of denying musical rights to a pathologised population is demonstrated in the case of the New York City public schools, where Draconian cuts turned the entire city into a de facto, segregated special education programme, which gave birth to rap when students took music making into their own hands. By contrast, inclusive education is the appropriate response to material challenges, as illustrated with case studies from St. Paul, the USA, and the southern African nation of Lesotho.

**Keywords:** disability; inclusive education; poverty and education; race

### **Introduction**

Music, at least as it is understood in the West as aestheticised sound, is ubiquitous. Numerous scholars in many fields, though shockingly few from music disciplines, have determined that music is useful, even essential, beyond its obvious provision of aesthetic and somatic fulfilment. They differ on what music's purposes are, and even when in agreement, on the relative importance of its various applications.

One prominent pioneer of this avenue of music research was Charles Darwin, who theorised that music's ubiquity indicated an evolutionary value; beyond the benefit to the individual, the attainment of human musicality was of benefit to the propagation of the species as a whole. While his investigation of the purpose(s) of music did not extend far beyond assuming that such functions existed, that they included mate selection and that others would be found, he established the surprising precedent that this avenue of music research would be pursued overwhelmingly by scientists, with occasional if essential contributions from ethnomusicologists such as Bruno Nettl (Nettl 2000; Wallin, Merker, and Brown 2000).

As music is a vital human capacity and a major life activity, access to music is thus also a human right. All human rights are also disability rights. Because music is both a learned and a social activity, it both has an essential place and, in perhaps unexpected ways, makes an essential case for inclusive education. At the risk of awful metaphor, music is the canary (a songbird) in the educational coalmine, which can tell

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us more about a society's inclusive – or non-inclusive – praxis than might readily be imagined.

My purposes here are two. I argue for music's importance, both generally and especially within inclusive education, with its availability as a participatory activity (beyond passive exposure) guaranteed as a human and disability right. I will also illustrate the lessons case studies in music and disability provide for human/disability rights in general and the right to maximally inclusive education in particular.

Much of my thinking on this subject is and must be theoretical, because inclusive music education programmes barely exist at this time. Although I would not be surprised if music is used in the early grades in some such classrooms, I have been unable to obtain any information to this effect. I am unaware of any systematic inclusive music curriculum on any level, particularly in the late elementary through high school years (typically ages 9–18 in the USA), when separate music classes and in particular large performance ensembles (band, orchestra and chorus) become important.

### **NGOs: inclusive music education at the margins**

Rather than in formal schooling, what few inclusive music programmes exist reside in NGOs. One, Canada's Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS; <http://www.vams.org/>), has done remarkable work, including the commissioning and propagation of new technologies to enable extraordinary professional and avocational performance, composition and recording by musicians with physical impairments. Founded in 1988, by quadriplegic musicians Dave Symington and Sam Sullivan (later mayor of Vancouver), VAMS specialises in supporting musicians with 'significant physical disabilities'. Within the vernacular pop, rock and jazz idioms, the musics of choice for VAMS participants, mobility impairments present the greatest need for accommodation and adaptation.

Among the more intricate VAMS technologies, its recording and sound synthesis studio is completely equipped with 'puff and blow' technology. Everything can be operated by breathing and (almost?) no impairment prevents access to participatory musical experience. For some musicians this will be composition only, rather than real-time performance. But VAMS also offers music lessons and provides adapted real-time performance instruments and accessories.

One such accessory is the velcro gloves VAMS cofounder (and quadriplegic) Dave Symington invented to enable him to hold his sticks when he plays electric drums. Sullivan, his bandmate, in VAMS original flagship band, Spinal Chord (Shepp 2007), sang and played keyboards in real time, assisted by digital mapping technology that defined chords in lieu of finger dexterity. Unlike more recent VAMS arrivals (judging from copious and varied audio samples and links at <http://www.vams.org/>), Spinal Chord's songs, such as 'We Only Kiss' and 'Lady in White' (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSEhPvdrLXE>), sometimes featured powerful, no-holds-barred disability themes, floating ironically over lovely, airy pop. (Their CD, *Why Be Normal?* is hard to find.) The lessons and legacy of VAMS are that technology makes real-time musical performance possible (almost?) regardless of a musician's mobility impairment. If real-time performance is impossible or not desired by such a musician, composition and realisation through synthesis and recording are always possible. Thus, musical creativity is always an available option.

In the USA, the Long Island, New York-based Coalition of Disabled Musicians Inc. (CDM; <http://www.disabled-musicians.org/>, includes a few recorded samples)

serves people with the full range of impairments via a lower-tech approach, including a programme of outreach performances in schools. While these shows offer an important opportunity to observe inclusion, they do not provide performance or composition experience for the students who attend. The Coalition's focus is support for professional performance by musicians with disabilities, sometimes using 'tag-teams', when musicians' impairments cause fatigue that would not permit playing an entire gig. Their featured technologies are typically simple devices such as stands for players who cannot bear the weight of instruments such as guitars and electric basses. (Lubet, forthcoming, includes more information about the range of adaptive music technologies.) No disability content appears in lyrics of samples or links to the CDM website.

Neither of these organisations has an 'inclusive' clientele, insofar as they work exclusively to provide opportunities, technologies and accommodations to musicians whose impairments impact their ability to perform, compose and record. Both organisations also feature their artists in events that forthrightly spotlight disability culture, rarely with lyrics, but often with proclamations of disability pride. But, importantly, they enable their members to make music in inclusive contexts. Though neither organisation is a school per se, both incorporate education into their missions.

Inclusive education is a fundamental disability right, one of the most essential to assure independent living and maximum self-determination. And music is a fundamental element of curriculum that cannot for any reason be made an exception.

### Music, disability studies and disability rights

Education is a fundamental human right. Disability rights are human rights. The status of music as a right is, I assert, similarly fundamental, if also provocative, owing to interesting and perhaps unexpected questions it raises.

Music as a human right is an issue worthy of consideration for its own sake. But the critical examination of music in its social context also provides lessons about human rights in general and disability rights in particular, of interest to disability studies per se, but also beyond, to many other fields and situations. It is in large part the extraordinary emphasis on musical 'talent' – that is, *hyperability* – juxtaposed against *disability*, which has yielded numerous case studies whose lessons may be widely extrapolated (Lubet 2004a; Lubet, forthcoming).

Music, at least as it is understood in the West, as the full range of humanly intended, aestheticised sound, is ubiquitous. According to this definition, music is a universal human practice (Brown, Merker, and Wallin 2000, 3–4; Nettl 2000, 406–7).

There are also cultural practices and languages in which a single, overarching concept of or term for 'music' does not exist. This was traditionally the case in sub-Saharan Africa and among indigenous American peoples (Nettl 2000, 406–7). There are also aestheticised sound practices, most notably religious chanting, whose own cultural systems regard them as categories distinct from music. This is a familiar distinction in Islam and also part of the praxis of the most austere Orthodox Judaism (Shiloah 1992, 74).

I am hardly the first to observe music's ubiquity. Notably, naturalist Charles Darwin recognised this nearly 140 years ago (Darwin 1871, 334). The evocation of the great founding theorist of evolution here will likely generate a sense of unease and suspicion in a readership that is justifiably reminded of the eugenics that sprang – erroneously, I assert – from Darwin's discoveries.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom of disability studies and related fields grounded in the social model theory of disability, I believe that the evolutionary sciences are or will be (as we evolve!) on our side. One measure of the potential of this alliance is that the preponderance of evidence for inclusive music as a human right comes mostly – albeit indirectly – from fields including animal and human biology, psychology, neuroscience and paleoanthropology. Only a few ethnomusicologists such as Bruno Nettl (2000), truly a scholar of musics from around the world, have contributed to research on the ubiquity of music.

My purpose here is to revisit and redeem Darwin and his followers in evolutionary studies for the cause of inclusion through their research on music. Invoking Darwin in this context is of particular value because he is associated – wrongly, I believe – with ‘Social Darwinism’.

Owing to the theory of the *social* survival of the fittest, Darwin is not typically associated with the disability movement, whose relationship with science in general, biology in particular, and especially medicine is only occasionally better than tenuous and often oppositional, as in the social versus medical models of disability that are the foundation of disability studies. (Nuanced and mostly friendly amendments to and departures from the social versus medical binary include Tremain (2002), Shakespeare and Watson (2002) and Lubet (2004b).)

This positing of a medical ‘anti-Christ’ is problematic. There are vast regions of science – engineering in general and infotech in particular – that have been profoundly liberatory for people with disabilities, and thus foundational to the implementation of disability rights (as VAMS illustrates). The scientific worldview with regard to the pragmatics and politics of everyday life is infinitely preferable to the particular theistic agenda that has invaded the US politics, culture and education to their detriment for at least the last three decades, with their insistence that ‘literal’ and ‘inerrant’ readings of Hebrew and Christian scripture be applied throughout public life. (It is de facto only the latter, since it is Christianised readings of the ‘Old Testament’ rather than the Jewish Torah that are put into political play by the American religious – that is, Christian – right.)

I propose that the study of evolution is beneficial to the disability movement. Social Darwinism is, I think, not Darwinism at all. Darwin’s concern was the (origin and) perpetuation of species, not the competition of individuals. If the human species has advanced its chances for perpetuation, it has been because of our capacity to function collectively, that is, inclusively. Thus, the more inclusive we are as a species the more we have evolved. This is a recurrent premise of *The Origins of Music* (Wallin, Merker, and Brown 2000), a groundbreaking, broadly interdisciplinary anthology of articles on music and evolution, oft cited in this essay. Therefore, disability rights make us better in a Darwinian, evolutionary sense.

What I am asserting here about disability rights, and thus disability itself, is closely related to Darwin’s thinking about music, which later evolution scientists have both theorised and investigated more concretely. Darwin speculated that because music was a universal human practice, it had to serve an evolutionarily advantageous purpose, something that advanced the survival of the human species. He theorised a role in mate selection (Darwin 1885, 567, cited in Dissanayake 2000, 389; Miller 2000, 329–60; Mithen 2005, 178–9, 188, 191), while admitting to being mystified with regard to other possible uses, while recognising their likelihood (Darwin 1885, 569–70, cited in Dissanayake 2000, 389).

British paleoanthropologist Steven Mithen accepts Darwin’s mate selection hypothesis, while providing evidence (much derived from contributors to *The Origins*

of Music) that music's evolutionary functions are more diverse. Most of these uses of music can be read as educational, aspects of learning writ large, such as interpreting and deploying the tonal, timbral, rhythmic, amplitude characteristics of speech, as well as other performative aspects of communication, in particular the gestures associated with speech, into valuable information about the human environment (Dissanayake 2000; Mithen 2005, 196–98).

In the interest of balance, I acknowledge that noted Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker regards music as useless or frivolous and, by inference, denies that universal human activities are necessarily universally perpetuated (Mithen 2005, 4–5; Pinker 1997). Many others, however, have theorised, observed and in some cases demonstrated experimentally the utility of music.

A common argument for music (and all the arts) in curricula is instrumentality, the benefit to general academic performance, including America's pedagogical Holy Grail, standardised test scores. Were this true, it would surely buttress the case for music education as a human right. It is, though, a tough call.

In a vast literature review, Burnaford et al. (2007) cite several studies that show correlation and/or causation for the inclusion of the arts as a boost to academic performance. The most compelling, Hetland and Winner (2001), a meta-analysis, indicates 'reliable causal relationship' between (1) listening and spatial-temporal reasoning (temporary, medium effect); (2) learning to play and spatial reasoning (large effect); and (3) learning to play and mathematics (small effect). Such findings are not overwhelming and thus the authors caution against promoting arts education on this basis.

By contrast, the self-explanatory 'Rhythm and reading: Improvement of reading fluency using a rhythm-based pedagogical technique' (Lipscomb et al. 2008), demonstrates a significant causal benefit. Here a musical exercise was devised and implemented with precise didactic goals. The use of music to enhance '3 R's' academic performance might be significantly greater were this study's precision emulated.

In their transfer learning scepticism, Hetland and Winner remain 'art for art's sake' aesthetic education fundamentalists, while Lipscomb et al. might, had they worked with a 'special' population, be regarded as music therapists. Alternatively, in a particularly pro-inclusion stance, Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles invoke the 'hidden curriculum' and conclude that (among many other benefits): 'Engagement in arts experiences has been found to relieve prejudice, hedge against violence, and help children become better risk takers, become more sociable, and enhance self-esteem' (2000, 230). These are vital, essential, largely collective virtues that evade the usual standardised tests of individual students.

Non-educator scientists regard one important value of music as building social cohesion (Brown 2000, 296–7; Dissanayake 2000, 389; Mithen 2005, 180, 204, 205–6, 208, 213–8;). This requires little convincing for those of us who have participated in music for decades.

My favourite theory of music's utility is psychologist Sandra Trehub's (2000). She ascribes musical qualities to what she calls 'infant-directed speech', the pitch and rhythmically exaggerated inflections that mothers especially use when they communicate with young, particularly pre-verbal, children. This is reported in an essay that also notes the existence of 'infant-directed music' and 'infant-directed sign', the latter's use not restricted to deaf infants. Because Trehub involves both adults and infants (as well, at times, as older children) in her ingenious experiments and combines her findings with cross-cultural evidence from ethnomusicology as well as

archaeological findings, she is able to postulate convincingly not only the universality of music but also the existence of a surprising number of musical universal qualities. It is important, however, to note emphatically that, despite these commonalities and in contradistinction to what has long been a cloying bit of conventional wisdom, ‘music is not a universal language’ (Sachs and Kunst 1962, 219). Whether or not music is a ‘language’ per se, it is clear that, like languages, there are numerous ‘musics’ and they are by no means all mutually intelligible.

Others have noted that the uses of music have become numerous and complex beyond its evolutionary origins. Here, an analogy to sexual activity bears noting. The simple, reductive view that only procreative sex is purposeful is often used, implicitly or explicitly, to justify the denial of rights of sexual and gender minorities and to critique allegedly merely pleasurable activities such as non-procreative sex – and, similarly if perhaps surprisingly, music – as problematic and/or useless. This is both the right wing critique of sexual and gender minorities and Steven Pinker’s conclusion about music (though not Pinker’s ideology or programme for music), which he calls ‘auditory cheesecake’ (1997, 534). Pleasure, however, is often an enticement or reward for purposeful, species perpetuative, evolutionarily advantageous behaviour, such as unit cohesion, for which sex (Roughgarden 2004), music (Dissanayake 2000, 389–90) and even real cheesecake – sometimes in combination – are exemplary.

There are numerous arguments for the human necessity of and evolutionary arrival at music. Cognitive paleoanthropologist Stephen Mithen has chronicled all of the above and more in *The Singing Neanderthals* (2005). And although Mithen never discusses deafness, he also describes expressive movement, all of which he subsumes, perhaps overenthusiastically, into the category of dance, as entirely spatially analogous to music (15, 154–7; see also Dissanayake 2000, 397–8; Nettle 2000, 466). The significance of this is that his case for the importance of music does not exclude those whose relationship to sound, those with less than typical hearing, may lead to a preference for a more visual kind of music. (This also includes Trehub’s ‘infant-directed sign’ [2000, 437].)

Bahan (2006) both explains and illustrates (on an accompanying DVD) the gestural musicality of American Sign Language (ASL) performance, especially (to my eyes) its use of rhythm, articulation and (visual) dynamics. Several ‘songs’ in different genres are included, including, notably, Freda Norman’s performance of a ‘fight song’, an example of ‘percussion signing’. (A Google Video search for ‘ASL’ and ‘songs’ yielded over 2900 additional examples.)

Thus, deafness is not an impregnable barrier to engagement with music and no grounds for the wilful denial of the right to access music. For different but related reasons, the same declaration of musical rights must be made for all people with disabilities. The current state of technology, as fostered by the VAMS, makes a fully *participatory* life in music possible for anyone. The earlier comparison of music to food and sex needs be deepened here because, even more than food or sex, music, while often a spectator sport, only delivers its full benefits when one gets to play or eat and not just watch, listen or sniff.

This discussion heretofore has been a prelude to a consideration of what can be learned about human rights from the intersection of music and disability. Despite my having played the analogy to sex and food partly for laughs, it is also serious and revealing. Pleasure is often policed to very cruel effect, as is so often the case with sexual and gender minorities. The management of food and other material necessities can be an instrument of control over the poor, who are often disproportionately and

sometimes even systematically comprise particular ethnic groups, women or sexual and gender minorities.

Who then has been deprived of the right to music? While censorship and other forms of condemnation of certain musical genres or particular pieces for their lyrical and/or sonic content for political and/or moral reasons occurs all over the world, what I am referring to here is something on a different level, the denial of access to music per se. The near total and savagely enforced ban on musical expression by the Afghan Taliban is well known. Those caught listening to or performing anything other than those sacred vocal genres not regarded by Muslims as music were beaten or jailed (Lubet, forthcoming). (Interestingly, the explosion of musical activity in post-Taliban Afghanistan has been highlighted by the extraordinarily popular television programme *Afghan Star*, an *American Idol* knock-off in modest dress, in which remarkably, women as well as men successfully contend [afghanstar.tv; [http://afghanstar.tv/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://afghanstar.tv/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)].)

The Orthodox Jewish doctrine of *kol isha* (Hebrew; literally ‘a woman’s voice’), while a lesser order of prohibition, is also of interest. In theory, this religious law forbids men from listening to adult women’s singing. In practice, it places severe – and unreciprocated – limitations on women’s opportunities to sing, including professionally. While one of the articulated goals of *kol isha* and related and similarly restrictive statutes is the protection of women as a vulnerable class, it is hardly surprising that limits on access to opportunity and freedom of expression at the very least fail to provide safety and may in fact be counterproductive.

Both of these cases of Draconian religious censorship of music are ultimately disability-related, as musicality is not only disparaged but also pathologised. In the case of the Taliban, musicality itself was treated as a sociopathy, much the same as political expression was contained and punished through psychiatry in the former Soviet Union. In the case of *kol isha*, Orthodox Jewish law is adamant that male lack of impulse control is the culprit that mandates that men not listen, although it is women deprived of the right to sing who bear the consequences (Lubet, forthcoming). As idiosyncratic as this practice may seem, it evokes the self-imposed curfews of women who avoid male aggression by staying away from dangerous places at risky times. And it has much to do with the exclusivist idea that segregated special education is a needed protection.

### **Music education, human valuation and disability**

In a less drastic though more insidious manner, the policing of music operates throughout Western and Westernised educational systems in a manner that begs to be outed, as it has much to tell us about inclusion and exclusion. As ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam noted in his canonic *The Anthropology of Music* (1964, 67–70), music cultures can be parsed in accordance with their beliefs and practices regarding talent. Merriam identified certain cultural systems as being grounded in the idea that music is a talent of the few. In other traditions, music is regarded as an activity of daily living in which (virtually?) all are expected to participate, each at the appropriate times and in appropriate roles for their demographics, often in functions regarded as essential.

Musical praxis in the West is, of course, deeply fixated on talent. Musical talent is widely regarded as genius, *hyperability*. Conversely, while participation in music is extremely common in youth and adolescence, the music dropout rate during and

beyond the college years is huge. In my interviews with students in the many music appreciation courses I have taught over decades, the overwhelming majority who quit participating in music (beyond passive listening) self-identify with characterisations such as ‘not good enough’ or ‘no good’. This is emblematic of an educational system that obsesses over evaluation and tracking to the detriment of actual teaching.

The manner in which these students cop to failure and cease making music, a demonstrably beneficial activity, has implications for disability studies and disability rights. One is to ramify the idea, foundational in the social model theory that is the foundation of disability studies, that disability is a function of social context.

Several ethnomusicologists have observed that the institutions of classical music, such as music schools and symphony orchestras, are cultures unto themselves (Kingsbury 1988; Nettl 1995; Small 1998). Within professional schools of music, those self-proclaimed ‘not good enoughs’ who are mostly only qualified to take the appreciation courses in which they merely observe the music making which only the ‘good enoughs’ get to do, are, within the context of these institutions, where music making is the most important ‘major life activity’, disabled. (‘Major life activities’ constitute a category of great importance with regard to the determination of the severity of an impairment in the epoch-making rights statute, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (<http://www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm>) (ADA Home Page; <http://www.ada.gov/>), amended in 2008.) This may not be tragic, but clearly the way these students describe themselves as former musicians indicates that they feel hurt, even stigmatised by the way music education has treated them. Further, much is revealed here about the manner in which all of Western education is grounded in exclusion. Music is the canary in this coalmine.

Of course, there are potential musicians with disabilities who are never even regarded as ‘good enough’ to participate in music education at all (Lubet 2004a). This says at least as much about Western music education as it does about these young people’s impairments. The handful of NGO-based music inclusion programmes described here that facilitate richly participatory musical lives for youth and adults regardless of impairment status are testament both to what is possible and to how very little is impossible. But these are few and far between and do not appear to have had much impact on formal schooling anywhere.

The human rights implications of the often-drastic cuts to public school music programmes in the USA must be examined through the window of disability. Historian Douglas Baynton (2001) has shown that much if not all of the justification for the deprivation of rights of ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants and women in the USA is ultimately grounded in rationales of disability. Rights, responsibilities and full citizenship have been denied or attempts made to deny on the basis of the targeted group’s alleged defect or inferiority. Slavery and women’s suffrage are but two familiar examples.

The horrors of the vastly divergent quality of school facilities and programmes that Jonathan Kozol called *Savage Inequalities* (1991) remain rampant in the USA. While these are largely ultimately determined by economics, the economics are largely correlated to ethnicity, geography and other demographics. When cuts are made, allegedly superficial or ‘extra’ programmes such as music are often the first to go. While this might be claimed to be among the least damaging means to cut spending, the impact on culture and values may be far more than is typically reckoned.

Ethnomusicologist Cheryl Keyes (1996, 244) describes the keynote session of the 1994 Chicago meeting of the National Education Association. The keynote speaker was noted author Thulani Davis, who stated that:

the days of instruments in the classroom had been replaced by ‘street arts like rap ... [hence] those little instruments we once learned to play in the classroom, those [days] are gone’. [T]he majority of the audience cited the lack of funding for the arts in public schools as a major reason for the evolution of rap music. (Keyes 1996, 244)

Keyes put a finer point on this observation, noting that rap emerged when ‘[w]ith the reduction of monetary support for the New York City public school system music programmes, particularly the instrumental music curriculum, inner city youth reacted to this drastic change by relying on their own voices’ (1996, 227).

That this is a human rights issue should already be clear. A fundamental human need, music, was denied. That this is a disability rights issue should be manifested in that New York City and the Bronx, the birthplace of hip-hop, in particular became – or became even more – a gigantic special education – different and unequal – programme. I assert that this was permitted because the population of New York’s public schools is so largely non-white and/or immigrant, and thus targets of the kind of disability rhetoric Douglas Baynton identifies as a constant theme in American human rights history. That more intentional, *de jure* special education programmes that segregate children deemed problematic are disproportionately populated with minority students supports this contention (Samuels 2007; Skiba et al. 2008).

The implications of the cuts to music programmes in the New York City public schools have been enormous. The invention of rap and hip-hop culture in response has transformed virtually all of world culture for three decades and shows no signs of abetting. Although this change began as a response to further impoverishment of already poor people, who, denied the means to make music in school, made their own with the implements they could somehow afford, rap’s range and power has far exceeded its simple, austere origins. Whatever one thinks of hip-hop, it has forced an immense cross-examination of values.

### Who’s ‘we’ in ‘we are the world’?

Rap offers an extraordinary lesson. Owing to its logocentricity, as rap has become international, it has needed to transform, and spawn dialects, and new artists to meet local linguistic needs. The case of the Japanese language is interesting. Neither its structure nor poetic traditions are conducive to rhyme. Its accents utilise tone rather than stress. Appropriately, Japanese rap also addresses indigenous social concerns (Manabe 2006). The poetics of the original Ebonics rap are both formalistically un-Japanese and deeply African(-American) (Walser 1995). That Japanese rappers understand this (Manabe 2006), thus emblematises rap’s potential as an instrument of world – and local, culturally diverse community – to assimilate *and* creatively respond.

The global tour that rock music has made stands in contrast. Inherently Western Anglophone in cadence and culture, despite its joys (I earn my keep teaching it), it has never truly taken root and adapted elsewhere. Abroad, the Anglophone ‘real thing’ remains musical Coca-Cola, that sweet and refreshing multinational that once

proclaimed, 'I'd like to teach the world to sing' and fortunately failed. Related idioms such as reggae are too indigenised to be considered mere rock dialects. Rock thus lacks the potential to express unity within difference that is manifest in rap's simple logocentric premise coupled with an adaptability born of necessity in its impoverished origins.

The pop phenomenon of 'world music' (as opposed to the ethnomusicological catch-all term) has been a richly mixed blessing of globalisation (van der Lee 1998). Clearly a Western invention, the 1980s brainchild of such white Anglophone rockers as Peter Gabriel, Paul Simon and David Byrne, spawning collaborations (like Simon's *Graceland*), festivals (notably Gabriel's WOMAD) and reissues (Byrne's *Brazil Classics*), van der Lee sees as positive the 'domestication' (what I call 'indigenisation') of, for example, Kenyan pop, with language one of its saviours. Pitfalls include 'dilution' and 'exoticism' (1998, 61–63), both rife in Paul Simon's work, where English and his lyric's Anglo-narcissism are culprits.

Clearly language issues are focal to inclusion. But rap's potential to become a true world music that can simultaneously indigenise *and* retaining its identity has both limits and pitfalls. In my many years producing cultural (mostly music) events for the St. Paul Public Library, we often featured artists from our large Hmong community. Traditional Hmong tonal arts are the most logocentric I know. Even instrumental pieces are transcriptions of oral literature in the seven-toned Hmong language (Morrison 1998). When such logocentrics combine with deeply ethnocentric (no negative aspersions implied) subject matter, my own appreciation was almost entirely limited to the explanations provided in English and pleasure in how meaningful these events were to our Hmong audience. While Chinese rap in their own language (Manabe 2006, 27–28), Hmong-Americans, who have embraced hip-hop, rap in English.

Hmong rap's leading exponent, St. Paul's Tou Saiko Lee, also trades verses with his grandmother, traditional *kvw txhiaj* performance poet Youa Chang, as the duo Fresh Traditions (Farrell 2007; Schell 2008). Tou, a frequent artist-in-the-schools, has, with his grandmother, crafted a beautiful cross-generational link – 'My grandma's just an ill poet ... She's an ill MC! I'm continuing on that tradition through this different style and language' (Schell 2008) – but a contingent one that begs an important question.

How might we include in curriculum and community those such as the impregnable ethnocentric traditional Hmong with their *kvw txhiaj*, in cannot even 'dilute' or 'exoticise'? *Kvw txhiaj* lacks the catchy tunes and beats of, for example, the Soweto township jive upon which Paul Simon layered his irrelevant musings. It is so Hmong as to be a nearly unacquirable taste. While such cultural impregnability seems at first a challenge that is only analogous to the most difficult cases of disability inclusion, my research on socially constructed 'language disability' in the treatment of EFL students reveals it to be directly pertinent (Lubet, forthcoming).

Even for people like me who are confident that aesthetic and political good have resulted from the emergence of hip-hop from the special education programme that is the New York public schools, there is no doubt that there have been emotional and physical casualties as well. Rap's messages and interpretations are surely mixed, all the more as it has gone global (Manabe 2006). Still, its lessons and promises for inclusion are great. The hurt incurred in its evolution has been unnecessary. To a degree I think is rarely understood, programmes of genuinely inclusive education – neither separate nor unequal – are the answer.

## **Conclusion: inclusion, rights and resources**

If I seem at times to stray from the topic of disability, as it is typically understood, let me clarify that it is through disability – and music – that the lesson of inclusion writ large is made possible. I will close with two examples.

Avalon (Avalon School; <http://sites.google.com/a/avalonschool.org/avalonschool/Home>) is a small charter school in St. Paul, Minnesota. (In the USA, ‘Charter schools are non-sectarian public schools of choice that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. The ‘charter’ establishing each such school is a performance contract detailing the school’s mission, programme, goals, students served, methods of assessment and ways to measure success’ [US Charter Schools; [http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs\\_docs/index.htm](http://www.uscharterschools.org/pub/uscs_docs/index.htm)].) Avalon’s charter nowhere mentions disability, but its project-based learning programme attracts and serves students with disabilities extraordinarily well. Thirty per cent of the students have Independent Education Plans (IEPs; <http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>), mostly for ‘invisible’ or ‘judgmental’ (Skiba et al. 2008, 270) disabilities. There are two teachers trained in special education (at this writing, a search is being conducted for a third), but the programme is virtually 100% inclusive, with only limited ‘pull-outs’. While the policy of inclusion is doubtless largely or entirely philosophically grounded, limited resources, common in charter schools (Fuller et al. 2003; Robelen 2005; Thomas B. Fordham Institute 2005) would not permit segregated classes for the many students with disabilities who might attend them if attending elsewhere.

The southern African nation of Lesotho, among the world’s 50 poorest countries (UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries; <http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrls/ldc/list.htm>), is emphatic and explicit that its children with disabilities be educated (Johnstone 2005). A proudly ethnically and linguistically homogenous country, education for everyone is regarded as part of the national ethos, something children are taught the Sotho people do. Inclusion is ideological, but also a forced choice; severely limited resources make inclusive education the only kind possible. Of course, the Sotho could also choose not to educate children with disabilities at all, so it is to their credit that they have elected inclusion. In both Lesotho and St. Paul, we see that inclusion need not be a function of abundance and that not every educational best practice is linked to material resources.

I often wonder whether we could not learn from the Sotho. While they associate their belief in inclusion with their cultural homogeneity, I do not think a common ethnic heritage is necessarily a prerequisite for a sense of peoplehood that says that inclusion or any other good thing is what we – whoever we are – do as a people. In the USA (to paraphrase our Declaration of Independence from Britain; <http://www.ushistory.org/Declaration/>), there are plenty of truths we hold to be self-evident that could serve that purpose.

It hardly seems coincidence to me that for the Sotho and most sub-Saharan Africans, music is traditionally an all-inclusive activity of daily living rather than a talent for the gifted few. As John Blacking’s canonic writings on the South African Venda people (1973) – neighbours and linguistic cousins to the Sotho (Batibo, Moilwa, and Mosaka 1997) – indicate, music is so critical an element of socialisation that is not only a fundamental human right but also a duty of citizenship. We have a lot to learn.

### Note on contributor

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