



Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World (Refiguring American Music)

By Timothy D. Taylor

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In *Beyond Exoticism*, Timothy D. Taylor considers how western cultures' understandings of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences have been incorporated into music from early operas to contemporary television advertisements, arguing that the commonly used term "exoticism" glosses over such differences in many studies of western music. *Beyond Exoticism* encompasses a range of musical genres and musicians, including Mozart, Beethoven, Jean-Philippe Rameau, Maurice Ravel, Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, Bally Sagoo, and Bill Laswell as well as opera, symphony, country music, and "world music." Yet, more than anything else, it is an argument for expanding the purview of musicology to take into account not only composers' lives and the formal properties of the music they produce but also the larger historical and cultural forces shaping both music and our understanding of it.

Beginning with a focus on musical manifestations of colonialism and imperialism, Taylor discusses how the "discovery" of the New World and the development of an understanding of self as distinct from the other, of "here" as different from "there," was implicated in the development of tonality, a musical system which effectively creates centers and margins. He describes how musical practices signifying nonwestern peoples entered the western European musical vocabulary and how Darwinian thought shaped the cultural conditions of early-twentieth-century music. In the era of globalization, new communication technologies and the explosion of marketing and consumption have accelerated the production and circulation of tropes of otherness. Considering western music produced under rubrics including multiculturalism, collaboration, hybridity, and world music, Taylor scrutinizes contemporary representations of difference. He argues that musical interpretations of the nonwestern other developed hundreds of years ago have not necessarily been discarded; rather they have been recycled and retooled.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A bold and wide-ranging study, from a musical angle, of ‘the West and the rest.’ Timothy D. Taylor mingles insights from musicology, cultural and social history, and cultural theory to demonstrate the changing ways in which various streams of musical life, in Europe and America, have responded to the wider world. Rameau, Mozart, Ives, and Ravel here stand cheek by jowl with Bill Laswell, *bhangra*, Hawaiian cowboy music, and TV ads, challenging—and reinvigorating—such easy labels as ‘exotic’ and ‘multicultural.’”—Ralph P. Locke, Professor of Musicology, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester

“In *Beyond Exoticism*, Timothy D. Taylor provides an articulate primer on so-named world music. In clear, jargon-free, and lively prose, he explains the impact of corporate capital organized through intricate global networks of production, dissemination, and consumption. His goal is to historicize musical otherness across a broad swath of time and place, beginning with European orientalist operas in the eighteenth century and ending with the fake exoticism of recent television adverts. Taylor relates a story of difference governed, above all, by varying and persistent efforts to render fungible the musics of the nonwhite world: He describes in detail the marketing of musical difference and the homogenization of sonic otherness that commonly results. In brief, this is a story with serious stakes.”—Richard Leppert, author of *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*

“Ranging deftly from global pop to global musicology, Timothy D. Taylor launches a global challenge against the division of the world between the producers and consumers of the exotic, between self and other. In the course of carefully focused case studies formed along the borders of colonial and imperial encounter, history emerges with new narratives of difference, insistently including the disjuncture and dissonance unleashed when western music enters into aesthetic and political counterpoint with the world. *Beyond Exoticism* is a disquieting book that nonetheless serves as a call for renewed engagement with musics familiar and unfamiliar.”—Philip V. Bohlman, University of Chicago

“Taylor deftly combines lucidity and nuance in a work of such breadth. *Beyond Exoticism* is crisply written, mercifully free of jargon, and addresses important concepts and issues in a vocabulary that graduates, undergraduates, and non-academic readers should be able to understand and apply in their own encounters with music of many kinds. The book’s emphasis on a multitude of musical discourses from scores to Internet chat makes it easily translatable across disciplines.”

(Nabeel Zuberi, *Current Musicology*)

From the Publisher

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From the Back Cover

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