

An Ethnology of Arizona Early Music Performers in the Twentieth Century

by

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ABSTRACT

A cultural overview of the so-called “early music movement” in Arizona, specifically the musicians who performed early music in the mid-to-late twentieth century, has never been undertaken. In applying ethnographic methods to Western art music, Kay Kaufman Shelemay suggests, in her 2001 article, “Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement,” that a musical anthropology “would seem to hold great potential for the study of ‘Western music.’” In this paper I analyze and discuss issues related to “early music” in Arizona from roughly 1960 to 2008. In focusing primarily on the musicians themselves, I address issues in three primary areas: 1) the repertory and the so-called “early music revival;” 2) specific types of early music which have been presented in Arizona and the effects of economic factors; and 3) Arizona musicians’ attitudes toward the repertory and their motivations for specializing in it.

I then analyze Arizona musicians’ involvement with both the early music repertory itself and with the community, identifying how musicians were exposed to early music and whether or not those first exposures began a long-lasting involvement with the repertory. In this section I also describe ways in which musicians define early music for themselves as well as analyze more critical areas such as musicians’ formation of an “early music identity.” I also asked informants to discuss how they see early music as being fundamentally different from other types of “classical” music and how they view their own places in that community of “difference.” Finally, I compare musicians’ thoughts on the “transformative” effect that some early music can have on performers and

listeners and how that effect compares with similar phenomena in other types of Western art music.

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INTRODUCTION

Early Music and its Revival

Definitions of the term “early music” have varied over time from those based simply on chronology (time and/or style periods) to those incorporating some aspect of what is now called “historically informed performance” (Haskell 1988). In fact, the process of accurately applying one label to the myriad styles of music that may (or ought to) be included under that umbrella looms large as one of several primary issues with which interested parties have and continue to struggle. In her article, “Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds,” Kay Kaufman Shelemay presents an example of the former, adopted from musicologist Howard Mayer Brown. She explains that for purposes of her study, she will follow Mayer Brown’s lead “in glossing ‘early music’ as ‘an interest and involvement with music of the past’” (2001:8). Haskell on the other hand presents a still concise yet perhaps more “modern” characterization of the term early music as he notes that it was “once applied to music of the Baroque and earlier periods, but [is] now commonly used to denote any music for which a historically appropriate style of performance must be reconstructed on the basis of surviving scores, treatises, instruments, and other contemporary evidence.”

For this paper, either (or sometimes both) of the two previously noted “conservative” approaches toward a workable definition will suffice, since each communicates one of the two primary factors in understanding the diverse collection of musical styles and genres subsumed under the term. The phrase

“early music movement” then is generally accepted as describing the long-term process of involvement in renewed interest in the literature, the instruments, and the performance practices which have become associated with those styles (Haskell 1988).

The early music movement itself can be traced to early eighteenth century England, France, and Prussia where, again according to Haskell, “a complex of social and cultural conditions gave rise to the concept of a canonical repertory of ‘ancient music’” (ibid.). In England, for example, this development of a canon of older musics was energized largely by music “clubs” like the Academy of Ancient Music and the Concert of Ancient Music, which “regularly performed English church music as well as works by Purcell, Handel, and Corelli” (Lawson and Stowell 1999:4). Developments like this resulted in the continuous exposure to the present day of both post-Baroque music and the instruments used in performing it (*The New Grove* cited in Lawson and Stowell: 2007:3). These very early groups adopted (while occasionally deviating from) their own criteria for choosing suitable repertory. Joel Cohen explains that the Academy of Ancient Music restricted its performances to pieces at least twenty years old and centering largely on the music of George Frideric Handel, adding, “... in a daring move, some late works of Mozart were introduced around 1826!” (Cohen 1985:13).

The endeavors of organizations devoted to exploring “older” musics eventually resulted in the music of Haydn, Mozart, and their contemporaries beginning to occupy a generally unbroken line of performance which exists to the present day. This development represented a significant shift, as the canon of

Western art music began to expand and encompass repertory from multiple time and style periods. Music not only of the “recent” past but also more temporally distant was beginning to be regularly performed. For example, conductors and performers working in the nineteenth century began to regularly program early Classical and Baroque works.

Perhaps the most notable instance of this practice came in 1829, when Felix Mendelssohn conducted a performance of an abridged version of J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* to great acclaim. This successful concert is often viewed as a seminal moment in music history, as Joel Cohen asserts, “The credit for starting the [early music] revival, or at least its Bachian side, is often given to Felix Mendelssohn” (ibid.:12). It should be noted, however, that Mendelssohn himself did not “treat Bach’s scores as sacrosanct” (Haskell), but rather presented a not only abridged but also a somewhat romanticized version of the work.

Haskell elaborates:

Like most of his contemporaries, Mendelssohn looked upon early music not as a body of historical artifacts to be painstakingly preserved in their original state, but as a repository of living art that each generation could—indeed should—reinterpret in its own stylistic idiom. (ibid.)

He continues by noting the establishment in Germany of a network of Bach societies as an outgrowth of Mendelssohn’s *St. Matthew Passion* revival (ibid.).

This revival of interest in Bach’s music in Germany led not only to other nineteenth century revivals of various instrumental musics, but also to renewed interest in some older vocal music genres. One such example was that of plainsong, which was revived not only by the Benedictines at Solesmes in France,

but earlier by the Catholic-leaning Oxford Movement within the Anglican church (ibid.).

Another primary issue which has confounded early music circles over the years is the idea of what was to eventually become known as “historically informed performance” or HIP. As the nineteenth century progressed, so did the engagement of musicians in the performance of “prior era” musics, enhanced to varying degrees by scholarship which sought to imbue these performances with historical accuracy. These efforts led them into uncharted territories, as they carved out a unique niche in the realm of performance practice. For the first time, at least on a large scale, musicians necessarily had to derive their ideas less from published performing editions and more directly from written and manuscript sources (Cohen 1985:19). Specifically with regard to many Baroque and virtually all older sources, details were left out of scores as performers of the time simply knew the various performance conventions they should employ (Lawson and Stowell 1999:2). This development represented a fundamental departure from the norm and, perhaps more important, corresponded perfectly with the values and motivations of those involved in early music (Cohen 1985:21). In fact, as the early music movement continued into the middle of the twentieth century, especially to the 1960s, many of its practitioners were known for their opposition to not only conventional musical values, but also to closely-held social and cultural values of the day. Indeed, some writers insist that in the 1960s, an element of protest was an essential ingredient in any “movement” and that a basic tenet of the HIP trend was a rejection of the status quo (Haynes 2007:41). Haynes

emphasizes the point with a personal note, adding, “Musicians like me, just getting started then, defined our movement in opposition to the Classical establishment...” (ibid.).

Returning to early twentieth century developments, one such practitioner, and perhaps the most influential champion of ancient music in the twentieth century was Arnold Dolmetsch. “A brilliant intuitive scholar” (Haskell 1988), he was a multi-instrumentalist as well as a builder of detailed replica instruments. He also hosted an informal series of musical “gatherings” at his own home in London, beginning in the 1890s. Dolmetsch’s influence spread to the U.S. when he moved to Boston in 1905 to build early keyboard instruments for the Chickering company. In 1915, he published perhaps the first modern exposition of early music performance practice, *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries*, later founding an annual chamber music festival at Haslemere, England (ibid.). In addition to his celebrated performances and achievements in instrument building, Dolmetsch’s most important contribution not only to early music but to music as a whole, was his insistence that musical scholarship also take cultural and historical context into account. Haskell describes this aspect of Dolmetsch’s impact:

In concluding that “we can no longer allow anyone to stand between us and the composer,” he formulated a credo for the nascent historical performance movement. Although the musical establishment held Dolmetsch at arm’s length during his lifetime, both performers and scholars gradually came to accept his conviction that no music could be fully appreciated without reference to the instruments on which it was originally played and the stylistic conventions of the period in which it was written. (ibid.)

Some musicians, in fact, have integrated Dolmetsch's "credo" into their own performance preferences to the point that they consider the term "early music" to be inadequate. Cohen explains his emphasis on musical *approach* over simply performing music from specifically defined style periods:

I would rather not use the word "early music" now. I think it's more a question of how you approach performance, and I try, when I perform...to place it in a historical context. You know...to find out what the surrounding values are...(Cohen cited in Shelemay 2001:9)

Bruce Haynes then takes Cohen's suggestion not one but several steps further as he posits that early music is no longer "early" and thus, should be called by a more accurate name, "modern" (2007:12). He elaborates by adding, "In fact, the idea that really captures the spirit of the period we've been calling "Early," the principle that motivated artists, intellectuals, and musicians of the time, was Rhetoric, the art of communication" (ibid.).

This central issue of the revival, that is the "definition" problem, encompasses the matter of determining what repertory constitutes the styles or genres so defined. In the early twentieth century, other genres of early music also began to be performed which incorporated at least some degree of "historical/contextual" scholarship. Some of these other revived repertoires included early choral music in England, France, and the U.S., Baroque opera in Germany, and the music of Handel specifically, also in Germany. In addition, early recordings of harpsichordist Wanda Landowska and even of chant made their mark on the early twentieth century (Haskell 1988). These developments suggest that early music as a whole should not be thought of as evolving in a "clean," linear progression. Rather, the repertory is varied not only in genre but

also in its being influenced by other contexts, both musical and cultural. Shelemay elaborates:

From an ethnographic perspective, the early music movement can be seen less as a bounded stream of musical discourse than [as] a multi-faceted world of musical and cultural experience. ...one finds a virtually unlimited array of musics and musical practices from a full range of accessible historical styles...infused both in the past and present with many cross currents. (2001:10)

Another important pre-war development in the early music revival was that German craftsmen began to produce “historical” instruments such as harpsichord, lutes, viols, reorders, and other winds (Haskell). Despite many of these instruments being somewhat less than historically authentic, they were widely distributed, especially in Europe, and they undoubtedly helped to fuel the increasing performance of historical music, not only by professionals but also by amateurs. In fact, the phenomenon of builders producing these instruments foregrounds one component of yet another central issue of the revival as a whole, that is, the problem of authenticity and related attempts to achieve it.

After World War II, significant early music activities emerged in Austria, the U.S., and London, with the latter’s prominent *BBC Third Programme* introducing early music, for the first time, to a “passive” audience: radio listeners. Then, with the introduction of the long-playing record in the late 1940s, a new generation of music aficionados were now able to enjoy perhaps more familiar early music styles like Baroque music, as the medium now had the capacity to reproduce longer pieces. This development foregrounded the effects of

technology on early music's growing popularity as the music of Vivaldi became so prominent that some dubbed the trend a "Vivaldi craze" (ibid.).

The 1960s saw yet more early music activity as a new crop of artists came to the fore, many of whom adopted novel, somewhat experimental approaches to performance practice. The activities of Noah Greenberg, Frans Brüggen, and David Munrow represented "a period of energetic experimentation, notably in the interpretation of Medieval and Renaissance music" (ibid.). Another facet of the experimentation characterizing the 1960s was evident in the work of Thomas Binkley, who regularly infused monophonic Medieval music with elements borrowed from Middle Eastern music. The 1960s also gave rise to a critical philosophical issue in the revival of early music, that is that the rise of HIP in a sense forced musicians to choose either that path on the one hand or a traditional (modern) approach to performance on the other; and that those who stuck with tradition "...did so either out of a sense of conviction—or by finding a rationale for rejecting Period [his emphasis] musicking" (2007:46).

The final decades of the twentieth century saw a marked increase in performances of Baroque music, aided again by the still-growing recording industry, which now more intensively promoted not only the music but individual artists and directors like Christopher Hogwood and Neville Mariner. Full period instrument orchestras, rather than collegium-style ensembles, became the most prominent type of early music performing groups in these decades (ibid.). Finally, the increase in performances of Baroque music, as well as more reliable and thorough scholarship, continued the evolution of early music repertory, as period

performance of even more recent music, that is of Classical and Romantic era styles, began to flourish.

Theoretical Framework of This Study

My interest in this project stems from not only my own experience as a participant in the local early music community but also from a basic curiosity about the influences and motivations of Arizona early music practitioners as a whole. While it is not surprising that a study of the Arizona early music community has not been previously undertaken, my interest in doing so was also influenced by learning that ethnographic work in early music communities in general is still relatively rare. One such study does exist however: the previously mentioned article by Kay Kaufman Shelemay. Published in the winter 2001 volume of the journal *Ethnomusicology*, the article focuses on the Boston early music community around 1999-2000. I have extracted one major component of Shelemay's article to use as a general model, specifically the experiences and motivations of early music practitioners in the Boston area.

In her article, Shelemay first summarizes the evolution, over the last decades of the twentieth century, of ethnomusicology and its "parent" discipline, cultural anthropology, from mere documentation and description of cultural artifacts toward processes aimed at deducing, for example, how various factors within a society converge and interact with each other (2001:1). In other words, she outlines how the emphasis of recent ethnographic work has concerned itself more with detailed examination of the inner workings of a culture (issues of identity, power, and politics, among others) than with merely cataloging a

culture's practices, traditions, and other more easily observed components. More significantly, Shelemay asserts that both ethnomusicology and historical musicology have in recent decades been bestowed a "grand anthromusicological opportunity" (ibid.) and thus those groups might benefit from making concerted efforts to bridge whatever intellectual and methodological gaps exist between them. Shelemay notes that one such gap is inherent in the "subject fields" occupied by the two disciplines. Traditionally, historical musicology has situated its inquiry primarily in the world of Western Art Music, while "ethnomusicologists have continued to pursue studies of 'other' musics—musical traditions that in some way stand outside the world of the Euro-American classical tradition" (ibid.).

Thus, I hope this project contributes in some way to the process Shelemay suggests—that of the world of Western music becoming a more enthusiastically explored domain for ethnographic inquiry. Primarily, however, my aim is to illuminate the motivations and experiences of the practitioners of early music in Arizona: in short, to uncover what makes Arizona early music "tick." To this end, in addition to theoretical principles borrowed from Shelemay, I will incorporate those outlined by Merriam (1964), Geertz (1973), and Richerson and Boyd (2005).

Following Merriam's lead, I look at social behaviors and self-image of musicians to uncover "certain well-defined ways" in which they behave socially (1964:123). In fact, behavior of musicians is a component of the analytical model proposed by Merriam, which involves "conceptualization about music, behavior

in relation to music, and music sound itself” (1964:32). In this study, I focus on the second of these, behavior in relation to music, specifically the behavior of Arizona musicians themselves. This aspect will incorporate looking at how musician behavior is “shaped both by their own self-image and by the expectations and stereotypes of the musicianly role as seen by society at large” (1964:123). Merriam also asserts that “the formation of a sub-culture based on music...seem[s] to be fairly widespread both in nonliterate and [in] Western societies” (1964: 143), thus underscoring the importance of eliciting evidence of such a sub-culture through informant interviews. Indeed, my efforts will be geared toward determining “who the musician is, how he behaves, what society thinks of him, and why these patterns emerge,” since they are “questions of vital importance to a thorough understanding of music as human behavior” (1964:144). I will also borrow from Merriam’s paradigm for looking at how individual musicians develop their own aesthetics: “In looking at the aesthetic in Western society, there appear to be six factors which, taken together, comprise the concept” (1964: 261). The first of these proved to be the most relevant and useful factor in this study. Termed by Merriam “psychic or psychical distance,” it is “the ability of the person interested in music to remove himself from it, to hold it at arms’ length as it were, and to examine it for what it is” (ibid.).

From Geertz, my project borrows one of the fundamental principles which distinguishes ethnography from history or other descriptive approaches (although significant overlap is common), that is, the investigation and systematization of meanings which influence behaviors. To this end, Geertz’ phrase “thick

description” (albeit borrowed from philosopher Gilbert Ryle) informs this study by focusing on and drawing conclusions from the meanings behind the behaviors of my informants. This process includes attention to how they have “acquired different beliefs, values, and skills through teaching and observational learning” (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 1920).

Scope and Methodology

Participants in any musical “movement,” in this case the early music movement in Arizona, comprise multiple segments, including but not limited to the musicians themselves, concert producers and presenters, venue owners/operators, audience members, including benevolent patrons, and journalists. I wanted to employ what Geertz calls a “microscopic” focus by which he asserts that “broader interpretations and abstract analyses [of ethnographic data] are approached from exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters” (1973: 21). Merriam glosses the same strategy “the intensive study, in which the student selects a particular limited area and gives his entire attention to it. This is depth study in which the aim is to exhaust the materials concerning music in a restricted area, insofar as this is possible” (1964: 42).

Thus in order to extrapolate and then discuss significant meanings which underlie behaviors, as noted above, I chose to focus my research on a sample of only one of the several segments of the Arizona early music movement: the musicians themselves. Rather than attempting to present a comprehensive study, I see this project as a preliminary stage in what could be a larger examination of Arizona early music activity in its entirety. I focus on the motivations,

philosophies, and fulfillment garnered by the musicians themselves, postponing inquiry into issues which a balanced examination of all segments of early music activity would illuminate.

Further, I have limited my study to early music practices occurring in the state's two metropolitan areas, Phoenix and Tucson. My geographic limitation stems from the fact that these two areas have had, over the years, identifiable early music "scenes" which provide a fruitful context for ethnographic inquiry. Conversely, early music performances occurring in other areas of the state have been relatively few. Moreover, these have been generally ad-hoc, independent events not situated in a framework like that of the other two locales. With respect to time frame, my study begins roughly around 1960, in part because this was the time in which the early music movement as a whole transitioned toward more adventurous repertory and interpretations, as exemplified by the work of artists like David Munrow, Noah Greenberg, Thomas Binkley, and others. Perhaps more significant, however, is that my study is defined by the collection and synthesis of the personal recollections of living informants. In short, only one person—whom I did interview—able to recall events from the early 1960s or before remains living. The other end of my time frame was determined by my initial target of completing this study in its entirety in the fall of 2009; thus, I concluded my interviews in the summer of that year.

My fieldwork consisted of interviews with informants lasting approximately one hour, conducted between October 2008 and August 2009. In some cases, interviews extended beyond an hour, as these participants were

especially thoughtful and engaging and eager to elaborate in more detail than did their counterparts. I targeted my selection of informants around four primary criteria. I wanted my sample to be as varied as possible as to informant age, the instruments they played and/or types of groups they played in, and to the time period (within my overall time frame) in which they were active. Fourth, and in retrospect perhaps the most illuminating criterion for selecting my informants, was that they represented different degrees of expertise with early music; that is, their education levels, experience performing, and the specific capacities (e.g. performer or director) in which they participated varied significantly. My primary methodological approach in data collection incorporated elements of McElreath's (2004) observational studies. Here, he used questionnaires and oral discussions with informants to collect personal data. He then developed a quantitative model from the data which elicited predictions as he sought to understand how behaviors, especially variations in behavior, form and persist.

My interviews began with a set of foundational questions covering for example the person's musical background in general, how they first became interested in early music, whether they view early music as being fundamentally different from other styles, etc. (see Appendix 2). I also geared my questioning toward the aim of illuminating some of the central issues in the early music revival noted in the first part of this chapter: 1) defining the term; 2) deciding on repertory; 3) the role of scholarship ("historically informed performance"); and the "authenticity problem." Responses to these questions then usually steered the conversations into unplanned areas, as I encouraged individual informants to

elaborate freely on their particular experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. After this data collection phase, I then transcribed, compiled, and edited interview notes, coding various parts of my informants' responses according to sub-topics which emerged from the conversations. Finally, I analyzed my coded interview excerpts in ways which allowed me to identify specific themes, trends, and processes illuminated within the behaviors and perceptions of my participants.

Chapter Overview

In chapter two, I present a concise overview of the history of early music performance in Arizona in the latter part of the twentieth century. Much of this section comes from the personal memoirs of one extraordinarily energetic and influential pioneer of early music in Arizona. I then present information on some of the various performing organizations which have presented early music over the years, most of which came from other informant interviews. In this chapter, I also discuss some of the economic factors regarding operating community arts organizations noted by my collaborators.

Chapters three, four, and five comprise the ethnographic core of my study. As noted, one of the primary issues of the early music movement as a whole is that of conceptualizing the "genre" and defining the term. In chapter three, I examine how my informants, musicians themselves, negotiate this fundamental issue, focusing on the various ways that early music participants "define" the term early music for themselves. I organize these approaches into those which define early music by chronology or performance practice or a combination of the two. I

then present material from interviews with those informants who are comfortable with an “extended” view of the early music umbrella (generally toward inclusion of non-European musics) as well as the views of some respondents who identify the independent yet significant role that perceptions—of musicians, listeners, and presenters to name a few—play in crafting a “definition” of early music.

In chapter four, I offer findings related to early musicians’ formation of identity, collecting philosophical and behavioral data through my questioning to then address larger, perhaps more subconscious issues expressed in questions like the following: How early music has shaped informants’ sense of musical or personal fulfillment? How does early music’s perceived “difference” impact informants’ sense of community? Do informants feel somehow marginalized due to their interest in early music, and if so, to what extent do societal pressures implying that “legitimize” musicians concentrate on the “standard repertory.” My examination of issues like these comprises three main areas: first, I look at how my informants found their aesthetic tastes shifting toward early music (and possibly “away” from art music of other periods); second, many of my informants noted that their motivation for involvement with early music at least in part resides in a need to self-identify as unique, or, in some cases, an attraction to a “counterculture” identity. Finally, I discuss the concept of “self-truth” as articulated by some of my informants, that is, the importance of doing music which pleases only oneself and how these musicians find that expressive outlet with early music.

In chapter five, I discuss the concept of early music as representing the anthropological “other.” First, musicians offer their insights on how they themselves perceive objective musical elements as being fundamentally different from other styles of music. Next, I discuss musicians’ views on whether or not they perceive that there exists an “early music subculture” of some kind and the extent to which they do or do not feel a part of it. Chapter five also includes a look at two other facets of early music which make it unique for some participants: the phenomenon of time/space manipulation and the issue of authenticity. Some primary issues in this area are expressed by questions such as: Do informants feel as if they are “recreating the past” through early music and if so, to what extent do they believe that authenticity must or can be attained? Conversely, do informants feel that authenticity is elusive and/or even illusory, and if so, what strategies do they employ for addressing the issue?

Chapter six represents the conclusion of my study with an overview of findings primarily from chapters three, four, and five while also drawing conclusions which in some way correlate to principles articulated in the various theoretical sources I consulted.

CHAPTER 2

Arizona Early Music History: Beginnings

The proliferation of early music performance in various locales in the United States from about the early 1960s has been stimulated in no small part by numerous committed amateurs. In some cases, the interest of these amateurs was initially more about old instruments than about the music itself, and the situation in Arizona was apparently no different. One Arizona respondent notes, with respect to activities in the 1960s, “Early on...it seemed to be more about playing antique instruments.” One instrument in particular, although not always considered “antique,” helped to energize enthusiastic amateur musicians of all skill levels. Joel Cohen describes this phenomenon:

Take, for instance, the miraculous, modern-day resurrection of an instrument that music history tried to forget: the recorder. The recorder had an immediate appeal to amateurs for several reasons. To begin with, it is easy (deceptively easy) to generate a sound on this instrument. The recorder’s fingering system is simpler than that found on any modern wind instrument. And all the members of the recorder family, from the smallest and highest pitched to the largest and deepest, are fingered exactly the same way. It is thus relatively easy to set up recorder ensembles among players with limited skills and training. (Cohen 1985:85-6)

One prominent amateur in the Phoenix area, Mrs. Rachel “Archie” Archibald, remembers specifically that in the “late spring of 1962, I read an announcement of a Sunday afternoon concert in Phoenix, put on by ASU [Arizona State University], giving the thirteenth century *Play of Daniel*” (From unpublished memoirs of Mrs. Rachel Archibald, 1996). The announcement

contained a reference to the recorder, which Mrs. Archibald had recently begun to learn. She soon learned that a small chapter of the American Recorder Society was already active in the Phoenix area and became a member. The group met often for playing sessions, “and I even occasionally had them come to my house” (ibid.). This early cadre of amateurs was critical in establishing a climate for other early music explorations in the area as some of the members eventually took up other instruments, including other early winds, early strings such as the viol family, and even harpsichord. The significance of this genesis of activity in the Phoenix area is clearly evident in the words of this early advocate, as she continues, “I knew nothing of early music. Out of curiosity I went [to that first concert]. That changed my life for the next thirty years” (ibid.).

As the decade progressed, while groups organized by Mrs. Archibald continued to meet and develop, a collegium was founded at Arizona State University. Similarly, she recalls some of the efforts to infuse southern Arizona with early music, reaching back at least to the early 1960s and possibly as far back as the late 1950s:

Through the interest of a couple...who had been transferred to Tucson and helped to promote the early music movement in the southern Arizona area, I was recruited to teaching viols periodically at the University of Arizona for several years. The collegium director arranged to open his office for my teaching. The Tucson people began arranging an annual long spring weekend at a nice ranch facility in the Chiricahua mountains southeast of Tucson, where I became involved in conducting viol classes and playing keyboard for several years until that facility was no longer available. (Archibald, 1996)

Thus, there was indeed some early music activity in southern Arizona at about the same time that Mrs. Archibald attended the ASU production of *The Play*

of Daniel and subsequently joined the American Recorder Society. However, with the notable exception of Mrs. Archibald, few if any of the other participants in early music endeavors of this time remain living. Mrs. Archibald, however, has provided much detailed information about her own lifelong journey into early music in general and specifically, into bringing that music to Arizona.

She had first studied piano as a child, followed soon thereafter by studies in voice and violin. Her interest in early instruments came as an adult, after she was widowed in the early 1950s. It was during this period that she began to apply her violin skills to the viol family. A few years later, she began to seriously study organ, and then recorder in the very early 1960s. She recalls her first introduction to recorder as well as beginnings of the process of building musical relationships which would prove critical to the development of early music in both central and in southern Arizona:

A cellist friend who had to stop playing due to arthritic pain took up recorder playing to help satisfy her musical needs. I decided to try it and found a buddy who learned with me so we could play duets. It was a while 'til I found a buddy here in Arizona, but I did join the orchestra and enjoyed meeting a lot of new people. (ibid.)

After moving to Arizona, Mrs. Archibald also continued her organ studies, especially developing an interest in the works of J.S. Bach. She elaborates: “Soon after arriving in Mesa, I was able to find and purchase a used Hammond organ, thus fulfilling a dream I had had for years of owning one. At about that time, I also purchased all nine volumes of the inexpensive Kalmus edition of Bach organ works” (ibid.).

Throughout the 1960s, Mrs. Archibald frequently toured the United States by bus to attend workshops and develop her early music skills, studying with some of the pioneers of mid-twentieth century early music:

Early in 1963, I received in the mail a brochure about an ARS [American Recorder Society] workshop to be held in post-camp week at Interlochen, Michigan. I signed up for it and got myself there by Greyhound. I was fortunate that the faculty for that week were five of the best of the New York Pro Musica group then performing very early music. In 1964, I went to four summer workshops. A couple were just weekends, but another was for two weeks. I was off and running. (ibid.)

While availing herself of nearly every opportunity to work with experienced musicians either travelling through Arizona or in other states, Mrs. Archibald had begun to amass an impressive collection of instruments. She explains:

At the height of all this [her traveling, teaching, playing etc.], I owned nine viols, trebles, tenors, and basses, many of which I lent out to interested adult students until they achieved enough experience, expertise and it was easier to purchase an instrument for themselves. I would then start someone else on the instrument they had used. (ibid.)

Thus, a byproduct of Mrs. Archibald's regular acquisition of early instruments is that it afforded new students in the area the unique opportunity to borrow them from her and learn how to play them. She recalls the mid-to-late 1960s as an exciting period to be involved in early music, and her teaching endeavors were no small part of that excitement for Arizonans. In fact, she quickly became the most prominent (some would say the only) teacher of early music instruments—including winds, strings, and keyboards—in Arizona until perhaps the 1980s. At that time, Mrs. Archibald explains that she began to reduce

her own level of activity, while other musicians qualified to pick up the reins began to arrive in the Phoenix area: “During this time, the early music movement had progressed. New people moved here and my aging was causing me to slow down my activities. The Phoenix Early Music Society was formed. They made me a life member for my pioneering in early music” (ibid.).

Arizona Early Music History: Growth of Ad-hoc groups and clubs

The situation in the Phoenix area began to take a more concrete shape with the founding of the PEMS in 1981. But a brief survey of participants active in the area before that time does find the existence of a few formal and informal clubs, groups, and ensembles devoted either in part or entirely to early music. One early performing ensemble, founded in the late 1950s, was the Bach and Madrigal Society of Phoenix. Its name, of course, belied the type of repertoire the group performed. Over the years, the group expanded its offerings to currently including all choral genres, while maintaining a strong emphasis on Renaissance, Baroque, and also contemporary works. In the 1980s, the ensemble essentially split into two groups, the main portion changing its name to the Phoenix Bach Choir, while the original director, Daniel Durand, founded a new group, the chamber choir Cantemus. Still later, in August 2008, the Phoenix Bach Choir underwent another name change—to simply the Phoenix Chorale—encapsulating the group’s long-term metamorphosis and now all-encompassing repertoire (Phoenix Chorale website: <http://phoenixchorale.org/aboutus>, accessed March 27, 2010).

Another group already in existence in the period in which the PEMS saw its genesis comprised a casually organized ensemble of recorder players which was eventually subsumed under the PEMS umbrella when the society was founded. One recorder player who had recently moved to the Phoenix area recounts that there were no “official” recorder groups at that time:

...so we got out here and there was nothing. We came here in '83 and we were already in ARS (American Recorder Society) and I wanted to find some recorder players but there weren't any listed, there was no [ARS] chapter. Tucson had a chapter, but we didn't.¹ (Informant 2, personal interview, July 17, 2009)

This respondent goes on to detail how she eventually was able to find other recorder players with whom to play, obtaining a referral from an ASU faculty member. These players were instrumental in establishing an ARS chapter at around the same time that the PEMS was founded. This afforded interested recorder players two groups from which to choose: the ARS chapter group and another group eventually dubbed “PEMS Pipes” (although some players chose to perform with both groups).

Discussions with various informants also reveal the existence, from roughly the late 1960s through the 1970s, of a few other ad-hoc and usually short-lived clubs or groups in the Phoenix area. Most of these were either very loosely (or not at all) organized and thus disbanded, or were eventually subsumed by

¹ As noted in Mrs. Archibald’s memoirs, there did exist a Phoenix chapter of the American Recorder Society as early as 1962. Subsequent research revealed that the group did not continue its affiliation with the ARS continuously, supporting the assertion of Informant 2 that there was no ARS chapter in Phoenix in 1983.

larger, established groups such as PEMS, or in the case of vocal musicians, by ensembles like the Bach and Madrigal Society.

Arizona Early Music History: Emergence of Early Music Societies

In 1981, three musicians decided to formalize and combine their efforts by founding the Phoenix Early Music Society. At the time, there existed no organizations whose primary mission was to promote and present concerts of early music. One active player of that period recalls:

There were early music societies all over the country but that one [the Tucson ARS chapter] was the only one in Arizona. They had the idea of combining the recorder groups, they did both the ARS chapter and another one and then they decided they would have a concert season, and I thought we should do that too. We shouldn't just meet and play instruments for ourselves, we should try and get the community in for performances. (Informant 2, personal interview, July 17, 2009)

Thus an early music society was founded and attained status as a non-profit corporation. In the first few years the society presented only a few concerts, with longer-term success being directly dependent upon an often tenuous financial condition. One of the founders notes how finances impacted the types of concerts the organization sponsored: "The success over the years was greatly varied. In some of the early years we were able to present an impressive array of major talents, other years, with fund raising [being less than expected], it was mainly local musicians." This informant continues by noting that PEMS' annual series consisted of performances that were "limited to Renaissance and Baroque" (Informant 3, e-mail survey, January 14, 2009).

Initially, the organization chose artists by tapping local resources and also sometimes by asking professionals already booked to visit ASU. A board member elaborates, “At first we would ask local people to play, maybe an organist, or if somebody came to the university, we could maybe lend our name to it, for a little ‘prestige.’ Also if John [Metz] had somebody he wanted to bring in, we’d collaborate if possible” (Informant 2, personal interview, July 17, 2009). This informant then adds that the society often found creative and sometimes financially advantageous ways in which to enhance visibility while not having to pay for advertising. She explains, “Also if we did a recorder workshop, and we got enough players, we usually didn’t lose money, if anything we had a little profit on the workshop.” She also notes that performing time donated by local musicians also became a common way for the new organization to attract high-level, out-of-town talent: “On some of those when Eva Legene was here, John would accompany and he didn’t charge us, they were old friends” (ibid.).

The PEMS staff also found that the at-large community of professional out-of-town musicians proved to be fertile ground for attracting artists simply through word of mouth channels. As the above respondent explains, “A lot of this was good old boy network because early music people all over the world and the country know each other, and they’ll do favors...” (ibid.)

Tucson in the early 1980s was the scene for parallel events, as it saw the founding of the Arizona Early Music Society [hereafter AEMS]. That organization’s website states:

In the spring of 1982, a group of friends, including University of Arizona faculty members James Anthony and John Boe as well as other members

of Tucson's musical community, hit upon the idea of forming a group that would be, as our mission statement still reads, "Dedicated to the enrichment of contemporary life with the music of the past."

The AEMS, like their Phoenix area counterpart, experienced somewhat muted beginnings: they presented three concerts in their first season, for which the artists were paid only the proceeds of ticket sales. In the organization's second and third years, they again presented only a few concerts but added a novel strategy for further developing their community through increased exposure to performances. Specifically, the society organized bus trips to attend early music concerts at Arizona State University in Tempe (ibid.).² The organization has developed its audience over the years and now presents five or six concerts each year. In addition, their offerings now consist of a series called *Hausmusik*, in which local performers, from experienced amateurs to professionals, present "mini-concerts" in private homes.

Despite developments like these, the early music scene in Arizona fluctuated and by the late 1970s was still somewhat muted. Arizona State University tried once in the 1960s and then again in the early 1980s to energize on campus early music activities through the establishment of collegiums, both of which were subsequently discontinued.

One primary reason for these decisions, despite some success in the community, may have stemmed from the still relative novelty of early music at this time. Music performance faculty members during the 1960s, 1970s, and even

² These would most likely have been to hear the ASU collegium, which was in existence in the first half of the 1980s.

1980s had for the most part received their training during times when there was virtually no historically informed performance being taught in conservatories. In fact, the 1950s and 1960s saw only a handful of significant early music pioneers on the world stage. Thus the lack of experience or even exposure to early music among university faculty fostered a climate of ambivalence, disinterest, and perhaps even mistrust of those who would promote university early music activities. At the same time, if not for the efforts of Mrs. Archibald and her colleagues outside the universities, the early music movement in Arizona may have taken even longer to become established.

The founding of early music societies in both Phoenix and in Tucson in the early 1980s did provide the movement with new energy, despite the fact that performances in the first few years of each organization's existence were minimal. One respondent noted that Phoenix especially, while still behind major cultural centers like Boston and New York, had progressed in the long run, in the community if not at the university. But the pace of growth in off-campus early music had not kept up with that previously established by Mrs. Archibald and her colleagues in the early days.

Economic Factors

One of the most difficult and potentially problematic aspects of operating a successful arts organization is fund raising. This is virtually a given in American society, especially in the fine arts, but even more so within the specific world of early music. As more mainstream classical music institutions (symphony orchestras, opera companies, etc.) struggle to at least stay "in the black" each

year, those difficulties are multiplied for early music organizations. Art music in general registers a low single digit footprint in the broader context of American musical culture, with early music of course, being a fraction of that. In essence, early music is a subset of a subset.

Arts organizations that do thrive generally have as their primary “engine” well-staffed, qualified boards of directors. For some however, attracting interested persons with the skills necessary to perform critical functions like fundraising is the first obstacle. For example, this problem has played out over the years for the PEMS, as one longtime member laments, “...and we couldn’t raise the money, we never found a fundraising expert who could do that for us...” (Informant 2).

Moreover, this observer notes that PEMS often had difficulty in increasing the level of donations being provided by potentially prominent patrons:

... and we never went back to the well of the people who could stick the hundred dollars in the envelope. The guy who owned Apollo Group, he’s a billionaire, he gave us a hundred dollars every year, we didn’t have anyone who knew how to approach him and ask for more. Someone like that writing a twenty thousand dollar check which would have been like you and me buying a pack of gum, it would have made a huge difference in the organization.

Success with fundraising, of course, pays dividends at all operational levels of an organization. One advantage of being able to set and maintain a workable annual budget is that organizations can contract artists earlier, thus ensuring a higher level of quality, a good variety of styles, and better scheduling overall. The contrast in this area between the Phoenix and Tucson societies is illuminated in additional comments from Informant 2, a long-time president of the PEMS:

Martha Salzman and I talked quite a bit because we had equivalent positions and we would share information on groups and she often had her groups lined up way before we did so I just piggybacked. That was a nice thing to do, you can book groups cheaper if you can offer them multiple venues nearby, so we shared quite a few concerts.

According to some informants, the board of directors of the AEMS has historically been somewhat more stable and skilled than its Phoenix counterpart. One participant explains, "...the society is well run by a volunteer board and has high standards..." (Informant 5, personal interview, June 4, 2009). Another participant, who had engaged members of the AEMS board to help with her ensemble's business matters, agrees and elaborates:

I couldn't have done the 501c3 myself, we had people who had the skills and the knowledge to start that process. One woman had done it for other things and there was another woman who was a legal secretary, so they put in the initial energy to do the paperwork to get that filed and done, we got it two or three years ago and that's the foundation for this other stuff. (Informant 4, personal interview, June 4, 2009)

Those successes noted, the consistency of the AEMS board of directors did not always produce better economic results. The above informant adds, "...but it's operating on a shoestring budget..." Thus it seems that despite perhaps being somewhat more fortunate than the Phoenix organization in attracting effective board members, the AEMS reality confirms that fundraising is a perpetual uphill battle for small arts organizations. Without a "critical mass" of skilled volunteers who have the time to contribute and who then achieve some success, discouragement often results in a "revolving door" of board membership. The above former president of PEMS (Informant 2) adds, "After a while, if you don't get the support, the people doing the grunt work, you just get burned out."

Thus the efforts and contributions of volunteers cannot be overstated, whether within the presenting organizations themselves or within individual performing ensembles. Also, in some cases at least, these efforts have eventually allowed the director/volunteers to receive some small stipend, as Informant 4 continues: "...so it'll be interesting to see now, our budget's not huge, but I'm going to start to be paid a little something, Jeff will be paid a little something, and we'll still manage because, budgeting, if we get the audiences for this year that we've had all along, we'll make it, but we're not making our living at it..." This informant also emphasizes that the organizations have, over time, streamlined their operations to the point that "we kind of fly under the radar, we don't need much," adding that her particular performing ensemble, while presenting a successful season "only got about twelve to fifteen hundred dollars in grants" last year (2008).

Economic factors can also impact the types of music that organizations present. Conversations with collaborators emphasized that this is not only related to unusually poor economic conditions, but is always the case to some extent with early music. This economically-driven trend affects repertoire decisions not only of organizations, but of individual artists as well. One performer explains, "I would like to do more early music, but I'm in a position where I mostly do music for which I get paid now, meaning more audience-friendly works most of the time" (Informant 7, e-mail survey, January 20, 2009). In the amateur world, this same principal is even occasionally turned "on its head" in a sense, as some performing groups pay their expenses through "concert dues" contributed by their

members. One choral singer explains, “As I recall, singing with Dan Durand's group cost us about \$250 for the one concert we joined the group for. That's why we didn't continue” (Informant 8, e-mail survey, January 14, 2009). This unusual strategy, while perhaps effective, is another facet of the myriad challenges encountered by early music presenting organizations.

The experiences of both the PEMS and the AEMS indicate that in order to function well, non-profit arts organizations need to have a quorum of dedicated and appropriately skilled board members. Volunteerism always being a “numbers game” of sorts, that condition is magnified within very small organizations like these. That is, the presence of one or two highly energetic and consistent members can represent the difference between success and failure. If an organization is fortunate enough to have such membership, then it may be able to function successfully, even if only marginally, for long periods. Additionally, when groups are successful, it is often a result of their ability to “streamline” their operations to the point that they require fewer resources to operate successfully than perhaps other organizations would.

In summary, the social and functional organization of the early music scene in Arizona reflected the worldwide movement in that, at least from the early 1960s, it was sustained largely by amateurs, many of whom were attracted by the unique (according to some) instruments. One of these instruments, although perhaps the best known due to its influential place in educational settings, was the recorder, which exists today in virtually the same form that it did in its “art-music heyday,” the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

One significant factor which does make the Arizona environment somewhat unique was that early music, again during its initial period of activity, was promoted and energized by one enthusiastic amateur, Mrs. Rachel Archibald. Although a novice player of recorders and viols at first, she quickly became the most significant teacher of early music in Arizona in the 1960s, as well as becoming a voracious collector of instruments.

Formal early music societies were founded in the early 1980s in both the Phoenix and Tucson areas, although various informal ad-hoc groups and clubs, such as Mrs. Archibald's, had existed over the years since the 1960s. Both societies started small, with the number of performances and prestige level of the artists, at least those brought in from elsewhere, tending to be more modest.

Other obstacles muted the growth of the Arizona early music scene even into the 1980s. These included the struggle to overcome a novelty or fringe image, held by both general audiences and at times, by university personnel, and the persistent difficulties faced by all organizations in fundraising. The latter was exacerbated by the challenges groups faced in attracting and retaining a "critical mass" of committed, experienced volunteers to serve as board members. Finally, although mitigated by occasional periods of relative stability, economic factors in general affected the level and styles of musical performances offered in Arizona, as either lesser-known artists or ensembles of smaller size (or both) were more commonly contracted.

CHAPTER 3

Defining Early Music

The tendencies with which early music participants conceive of early music itself represent a critical component in examining motivation and identity formation. As noted in chapter one, it is unsurprising that attempts to objectively define an artistic style or genre can be problematic; perhaps this is especially so in the case of what we call “early music.” The adjective “early” itself is imprecise since its use demands an objective reference point to distinguish that which is “early” from that which is not. Then, the sometimes painstaking task of labeling raises questions such as, “Where should the lines be drawn? What then, is to be considered ‘late’ or ‘middle?’” The process is also dynamic, as over time, opinions and labels evolve, sometimes becoming blurred or even vanishing (Kelly quoted in Shelemy: 2001:8).

Obviously, conclusions reached in such an endeavor will of course only be subjective. For example, on the surface it would seem that a chronological approach to defining early music—one based on specific time frames—would yield clear, objective results. However, in the “real” world, things are not so tidy: obviously, when using chronology as the primary criterion in designating style periods, there is always some degree of overlap. Even when, for the sake of argument, one emphasizes factors not strictly chronological, there is still usually too much information, too many criteria, too many qualifiers to arrive at fully satisfactory and objective conclusions. Perhaps more flexible strategies,

incorporating multiple criteria more or less simultaneously, would be more effective in pursuing a workable definition of a term such as “early music.”

Indeed, my informants’ thoughts on the issue, that is, on how they individually conceive of or define early music, incorporate not only chronological criteria, but other, perhaps even more subjective factors. These include for example a musician’s *approach* toward performance of a piece (from any “period?”) as well as highlighting styles or types of music that *should or should not be included* in the term. Other factors in defining early music seemed to stem from practical considerations, for example, what audiences *perceive* to be early music (despite what performers/presenters think) or simply what is “easy” or “difficult” to present, either in terms of audience comprehension or of the economics of concert presentation.

Definitions of Early Music Based Solely on Chronology

When Arizona participants considered chronology to be their primary criterion for defining early music, opinions ranged from using either firm or flexible dates, to considering specific composers (and their styles), to incorporating facets of performance practice. One informant articulated it simply by saying, “I loosely view the term ‘early music’ as representing compositions from the Renaissance period and earlier. So... 1600 and earlier” (Informant 10, e-mail interview, January 10, 2009). In this person’s statement—albeit concise, and on the surface objective—the word “loosely” introduces the subjective, as if, depending on the nature of the music (or its presentation), inclusion of say, some

early Baroque music might be appropriate. This type of subjectivity was not uncommon in informants' attempts to define early music. Additionally, this view echoes those of scholars such as Howard Mayer Brown, whose own opinions evolved over time. Mayer Brown at one point distinguished between musics which were and were not a part of "our continuing tradition" (Robert P. Morgan in Kenyon 1988:77). In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s, it was not unusual for scholars to declare a firm boundary around 1750, thus no longer feeling "justified to include Bach and Handel...whereas as recently as fifty years or so ago it would have been unthinkable not to do so" (Ibid.).

Evolving criteria and opinions notwithstanding, other attempts to arrive at a concise definition of early music also left open some possibilities for the inclusion of styles outside of a predetermined chronology. Some responses belied a degree of hesitation toward making a definitive statement, citing a certain authority in the views of other, more presumably experienced participants. This is exemplified in the following response, which begins, "I guess 'early music' for me is any pre-Baroque European music, of any level (religious, secular-pop, folk...)" (Informant 8). The informant next qualifies the statement, however, by adding, "I sort of think that that's generally how others use the term, but I haven't been in enough contact with enough true early music 'freaks' to be sure."

Still another musician begins her response by first delineating a somewhat narrow time frame then qualifying it not only in terms of chronology but also of culture and geography: "For me, early music is music primarily from Europe in the time frame of 1300 to 1600 A.D. But I'm open to music of that time and much

earlier (go back to the B.C.s) and from a wider geography, to include the Orient” (Informant 11, e-mail survey, January 21, 2009).

Another respondent avoids setting a specific time frame while introducing some subjective, non-chronological factors. This person begins with a pointed comment not on early *music* per se, but on its culture, by asserting that the label itself is only a “quaint British term” (Informant 1). This surprising thought contains “Pandora’s Box” implications for not only time frames and repertoires, but by extension for the process itself of arriving at an accurate label for the term. The remainder of this respondent’s thoughts on defining early music foregrounds additional concerns: “It should be taken to mean music of times chronologically before what we think of as standard repertoire (e.g., Bach, Handel, etc.), and some music created concurrently with these early representatives of the standard rep.”

This statement contains an apparent contradiction, as it seems to leave open the possibility that some of the music in question might actually be situated in both categories (early music *and* standard repertoire), depending on particular factors. Either way, this informant’s views again underscore the difficulty in developing a workable definition of the genre, as it was a theme expressed in various ways by many respondents.

Another respondent expressed a similar view by introducing the dynamic of elapsed time into his definition, while also allowing for a degree of flexibility: “I think it’s in flux because the more distance we create from the time of composition, the more things become ‘early’ music” (Informant 12, personal interview, November 15, 2008). He continues by noting one major development

in early music performance in recent decades, while elaborating on the problems inherent in drawing definite boundaries:

If you had asked me about this topic ten years ago I would have probably said it was music up to about 1750 and I would most likely have said that's about it. But then I think, what about Beethoven and what about Schubert or even what about Chopin played on an instrument that they themselves would have played? I'm just not sure where we would draw the line between historically informed performance and "early" music, so there's definitely a blurring there.³

Morgan affirms this recent trend in the early music movement as he notes that the "authenticity movement is now in the process of appropriating the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and it is beginning to establish a foothold in the early Romantic period as well" (Morgan in Kenyon 1988:77). The same respondent's (Informant 12) thoughts then moved toward incorporating a practical, perhaps economically-based factor in his definition as he notes, "Also I think it's partially defined by what symphony orchestras program. Like you'll always see Mozart being programmed by symphony orchestras, but Bach, Handel, maybe not." Of course, programming tendencies of modern symphony orchestras are likely also to be informed by actual stylistic elements, but the informant's point here is that there are indeed some factors *external* to the music itself which help to shape conceptions of what is or is not included under an umbrella term.

Definitions Based on Approach to Performance Practice

Some respondents, when addressing the definition issue, chose a different tact, in a sense, sidestepping the chronological question. For these respondents,

³ Of course, this musician may be mixing apples with oranges as he compares an *approach* toward performing music (HIP) with a chronologically specified *style* or era of music.

“early music” is more a particular *approach* to performing certain music rather than a time frame. Informant 3 asserts, “Personally I define early music as an approach characterized by scholarship and independent thinking, regardless of the era of composition. Most people don't agree.” Virtually all informants who favored musical approach over chronology as a primary criterion cited scholarship as the main determinant of their view. Some, as in the above quote, incorporated other points, such as this respondent expressing a sense that his was a minority viewpoint, albeit a decidedly *correct* minority viewpoint.

Another informant expanded the previous idea beyond merely a scholarly view of the music, toward the use of period instruments as he suggests: “I would nebulously define early music as ‘old music performed in an historically informed style using (when necessary) reasonably authentic instruments’” (Informant 12). This respondent continues by agreeing that there may in fact still be room for flexibility: “But I would feel comfortable using a definition without borders.”

Yet another participant provides a detailed augmentation of some of the ideas expressed above, after beginning with this succinct thought: “I think my definition is ‘music that happened before yesterday’ for all intents and purposes” (Informant 14, personal interview, April 2, 2009). In other words, this person is saying that virtually *any* music could be considered “early” depending on it being in some way historically informed and presented. He then illustrates his perhaps extreme view by suggesting how that process may play out in context. In this case for example, the use of period instruments in music which is decidedly outside of

the realm of not only early music, but of art music in general, constitutes an “early music approach”:

...because it's the same general idea, that you assemble authentic instruments to recreate the classic English broken consort. You would do the same to put together, say, a Beatles tribute band, with authentic 1960s Vox tube amps, Rickenbacker guitars, the Hofner violin bass, the Ludwig drum set, all to get just the right sound. And it's really impressive if you do that with the authentic things than if you use today's digital technology which can duplicate those sounds almost precisely.

This insightful informant explains that this kind of attention to detail, such as using period instruments, helps to create an “other-worldly feeling,” or, as the previous respondent put it, “...the other nebulous, mysterious ingredient in early music is that it creates a sense of time travel, of playing with time and space” (Informant 13). This person, upon reflection, notes that all music manipulates time and space to some extent, but that, “...with early music, that manipulation tends to be a lot greater.”

Inclusion of Non-European Musics

The blurring of traditional boundaries noted by some respondents informs another aspect of an “approach over chronology” view of early music. Respondent interviews indicate clearly that challenging stylistic boundaries can lead to inclusion of widely disparate types of music under the same umbrella. Specifically, if the phrase “early music” can become synonymous with or replaced by the term “historically informed performance” (hereafter HIP), applying theoretically to *any* music, then musics not residing in the Western art music canon will be included in a sort of “extended” view of the term. Indeed, for many participants—audiences and artists alike—even “mainstream” (i.e.

European) early music represents a certain degree of exoticism or “otherness,” foregrounding the fundamental question whether or not early music is “Western” music. The answer may not be a simple one, as Shelemay asserts, “On the surface, early music seems to be the quintessential ‘Western’ musical experience...Yet a closer look raises many questions” (2001:18). She continues with an anecdote about the instrument exhibit at the 1997 Boston Early Music Festival being dominated by those of European origin, “but one could also find Celtic harps, penny-whistles, Native American nose flutes, and ocarinas.” In fact, she adds that an instrument builder at the conference assured her that “folk and traditional instruments are early instruments as well” (S. Larson in Shelemay 2001:18), thus metaphorically “opening the floodgates” for inclusion of virtually any culture’s music under the “early” umbrella.

When this kind of broad-brush inclusion of styles occurs, some musics do coincide with conventionally accepted boundaries between early music and “everything else,” while conversely, other musics do not. For example, most of what is termed “early” American music dates from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, despite the fact that European art music from roughly 1700 to 1900 is situated squarely in what is known as the “common practice period,” and thus is not usually subsumed under the early music umbrella. One respondent concurs, “...so yeah, early music could include ancient Greek music and it could include early American music” (Informant 14). Consequently, as the definition of early music is expanded in this way, so is its conception among its adherents, especially performers and presenters of early music concerts. Another informant notes,

“Within the early music community, I think many folks are aware of its broadening identity; there's pop stars like Sting singing Dowland and viol consorts playing on pop stars' albums...” (Informant 13).

Over the past two or three decades, collaborations with musicians from non-Western traditions have exemplified early music’s emerging “crossover” identity. One prominent example has been the work of Joel Cohen as he has incorporated Middle Eastern musicians into performances of various Iberian-centered Medieval musics. But in addition to the obvious social and cultural benefits of collaboration, these “extensions” of the realm of early music more importantly illuminate and challenge long-held assumptions about boundaries between musical cultures.⁴ Shelemay notes:

Beyond an explicit involvement with the cross-cultural, one finds a concept of early music performance as collapsing time and space, transcending arbitrary boundaries, and providing a new context in which old musical relationships can be re-evaluated. (2001:18)

Thus, commonalities between cultures are foregrounded over differences, resulting if not in unique new expressive forms, then perhaps, for some observers, in new musical relationships, i.e. what they may perceive as new, to an extent hybrid forms. This phenomenon emerges in Arizona as informant 11 puts it, in simpler terms, “I love early music because it is so fascinatingly *fusion*. The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* performed here by Bartholomew Faire explored that very nicely.”

⁴ Some influential recordings of Medieval repertoires like the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and the *Llibre Vermel* were made in the 1960s and 1970s, discussion of which is outside the scope of this study.

While the trend toward a more inclusive conception of the term early music appears to be strengthening, not all respondents in this study are entirely comfortable with it. One expressed concern about the accuracy (and thus likely the usefulness) of the term as its palette is ever expanded toward inclusion of other styles. He explains his skepticism: “I’m not convinced that non-European music should be subsumed under the label. This is not to be construed as belittling other traditions; it’s just a matter of truth in labeling” (Informant 1). These thoughts clearly indicate concern about a possible “slippery slope” by which the term early music itself would, over time, become at best, inaccurate and at worst, irrelevant. This may be an area for future inquiry because, although most informants were receptive to a continually evolving view of what constitutes early music, this person’s response suggests that others may have responded differently if they had been asked directly for their views on whether or not the term early music is itself useful and/or accurate.

Early Music Defined by Programming Choices

Some musicians provided not only their own views on what constitutes early music, but also their conceptions of the views of others: specifically, of audience members and the general public. A recurring theme was that despite aspirations and stylistic preferences of performers and presenters, early music has become (or perhaps has always been) by default defined as those styles which prove “easy” to present. Specifically, early music, or rather its at large *perception* has, over time, been shaped by multiple extra-musical factors resulting in a

majority of the most frequently performed music being Baroque. When asked to elaborate, informant 6 explained, “‘Joe on the street’ has heard *Messiah* and various Baroque things that are done annually; it's like the *Nutcracker*, *everybody* knows it, so it's easier to relate to for them.”

This tendency seems to have led to another in that, over time, those who presented early music sought to attract a wider audience by, again in the words of Informant 6, “...doing things that the public can understand, which is Baroque music; it has the same musical vocabulary as Mozart and Bach.”⁵ The corollary to this strategy of course, is that doing so represents no real challenge to audiences (or even to musicians in some cases) to expand their tastes, as illustrated by this anecdote:

We had Margaret Little and Susie Napper and they do this program of French Baroque music, the real deal, the real Louis XIV stuff. It's *weird*, it's not a Haydn symphony. It's pleasing but it's an aesthetic paradigm that people don't get...the rhythm is so... “whoa whoa!”... They came and did one of the best concerts we've ever *had* here and the audience was just, “What was that, get them out of here, what are they doing?” These are *world class* performers! (Informant 6)

Consequently, in some instances, aesthetic “safety” and economics began to dictate the programming of early music concerts, as presenters realized, “We can put together the money to start a permanent Baroque orchestra where we can do this stuff that has recognizable harmonic and musical content and there's no stretch to it...” (Informant 6). Participants also expressed the opinion that not only was musical familiarity a plus, but that audiences also based their concert-going

⁵ The fact that this informant, perhaps carelessly, implies that Bach's music somehow is not Baroque, does not obscure his point. It is an interesting slip, nonetheless.

decisions at least in part on expecting the “trappings” of what they considered to be Baroque music. Again, Informant 6 explains, “After a while, no one really cares that your violin is built differently. Plus, you can get an opera singer [rather than an early music specialist]; nobody really cares whether you can hear the articulations or not, she’s wearing that fancy dress...”

Most informants in some way or another echoed the thought that stylistic compromise for economic reasons is part and parcel of the early music world, although many noted that the trend is not unique to early music. Some asserted that an economically-driven prominence of Baroque music performance, while seemingly contradictory given the larger number of musicians required in many cases, is actually cost-effective because audiences are so significantly larger that ticket sales make up for increased expenses.

Given the prevalence of negative factors, one *positive* concluding thought emerges about the overall perception that, for many, “early music” is Baroque music. Over the decades since early music began to be taken “seriously” and less as novelty, the skills of the musicians involved have significantly improved. This respondent explains, “It’s not a complaint [the prominence of Baroque music], because the quality has gone off the scale, especially there are some singers out there that just blow my mind, but I don’t know that it represents the ‘island’ of the early music world” (Informant 6). Indeed, Laurence Dreyfus asserts that, “much of the recent improvement in HIP standards resulted from an influx of conservatory-trained musicians, themselves eager to escape the rat-race of the mainstream” (in Butt 2002:9). Thus, increased proficiency of musicians overall

and as noted in Arizona is at least partly (and likely more so) a function of the aforementioned historical crossover between Baroque music and what is considered to be standard repertoire, as formal musical training has, probably for centuries, included the study and performance of Baroque music as nothing less than “standard.”

In summary, performers’ attempts to articulate exactly what the term “early music” means for them vary and depend generally on factors informed by their respective “early music identities.” Regardless of the result of this self-inquiry, these attempts have been colored by one overriding principle, that is, that the goal of the matter is an elusive one. From shifting chronological boundaries to emphasis on performance approach to perceptions of early music both within and outside of the culture, the thoughts of respondents in this study have illuminated the difficulty of arriving at one all-encompassing definition for the genre.

A few who favored a strict chronological tact did suggest objective, black and white boundaries between early and other musics based on musical style, but most were unable to do so. Instead, even though based on chronology, most of these musicians combined chronological factors with other more subjective criteria. First, many articulated the malleability and chronically shifting nature of boundaries, this process usually being informed by cultural phenomena. Some informants’ ideas evoked issues of power and hierarchy within the subculture by minimizing their own thoughts in deference to others “more knowledgeable” in the field. Other responses touched on semiotic processes as musicians emphasized

the impact of the mere *perception* of labels within a culture on making definitive statements about an art form.

The primary theme that emerges from discussions with participants who emphasize performance approach over chronology in defining early music is that scholarship is the most important component. It follows then that sufficient research into musical, cultural, and historical circumstances pertaining to a repertory is not only necessary, but can, theoretically at least, be applied to virtually any music, thus qualifying it to be subsumed under the larger descriptive term HIP. When this occurs then, the importance of the term “early music” itself is diminished in favor of HIP, while at the same time, traditional boundaries between musics lose their import and may eventually disappear. Perhaps even more significantly, some musicians’ thoughts touched on issues of power as they noted that “independent thinking” among early musicians was an agent for change which sometimes resulted in new hierarchies within the subculture. That is, greater respect and/or credibility were sometimes afforded participants whose musical identities were infused with a degree of “scholarly-ness” in addition to high-level musical skills.

If, as some musicians assert, an accurate characterization of early music really has more to do with performance approach than with time frame, the possibility then arises that a much wider palette of styles could eventually come to comprise the repertory. Consistent with trends in worldwide early music circles, Arizona informants confirmed that a result of these processes may be a radical mixing or co-mingling of elements—including those from the world of popular

music—imprinting on early music a new type of “crossover” identity. Through such developments, Arizona informants implied that traditional musical relationships and assumptions will no longer be immune to challenge and the repertory itself may not be immune to “evolution” of sorts. Some respondents noted that one dynamic of these processes is that commonalities inherent in normally disparate musical styles come to overshadow differences between them, thus in some cases leading to various examples of hybridization which, in turn, serve to broaden early music’s identity. Others maintain, however, that the differences should still predominate, suggesting a process somewhat analogous to the principle of visual “figure-ground illusion” in which two completely different objects are perceived depending on how one looks at a drawing or diagram.

As noted above, some informants recognized the influence that labels themselves can have on the at large perception of a particular art form and that the realm of early music is not immune to this process. Indeed, the relative familiarity of Baroque music has made it especially easy for audiences to identify with, even when presented under the “early music” label. This notion in turn has significantly affected the programming decisions of early music presenters in Arizona, as they have been likely to “play it safe” and book Baroque artists in order to guarantee success at the box office. Thus, the situation is circular, with neither audience perception nor programming trends emerging as a “prime mover” in the equation. Instead, in Arizona early music circles, these elements have been found to feed off of and reinforce each other, sometimes at the ultimate expense of especially artists specializing in Renaissance and Medieval music.

CHAPTER 4
Early Music Participant Identity:
Shifting Aesthetics

Three of the most critical and illuminating aspects of early music participants' attitudes and motivations are: 1) how they first became interested in early music; 2) their own tastes regarding styles within early music and how those tastes evolved; and 3) how these factors shape their sense of identity. Some informants explained that they had almost stumbled upon early music, while others noted a clear progression from other either closely or not-so-closely related genres. Some chronicled in more detail how their aesthetics shifted over time toward early music, while others provided insights into how they see themselves as musicians within the early music subculture. Conversations with Arizona early musicians did not always indicate a correlation between childhood musical experiences and later involvement with early music, but most respondents in this study seemed to have at least an initial spark of interest by the time they were in their twenties. Many, especially singers, stated that their initial attraction to early music came in high school, where they had performed some works of sacred Renaissance polyphony as well as a smattering of sixteenth century madrigals.

One informant describes her initial attraction to early music while searching for recital repertoire, noting, "...I found this book by Noah Greenberg and W.H. Auden. It was this whole book of Renaissance songs and that's where I picked the material for my recitals" (Informant 2). She recalls her first aesthetic reaction to the music she had found in this succinct affirmation: "...and it was

just *gorgeous* stuff.” Thus, at least one early music participant’s introduction and attraction to early music was both serendipitous and relatively immediate.

A similar encounter with this unfamiliar repertory, stemming from a participant’s volunteer position as a church choir director, was influenced by her previous love of folk music. Concurrently, her aesthetic preferences had already been leaning toward smaller, more subtle, and less, in her words, “bombastic” styles. Here, she recalls these early encounters: “...there was a big stack of hymnals which I had collected over time and the hymns that I liked were the older ones, maybe connected to folk songs, not the big production numbers that are associated with later periods” (Informant 15, personal interview, August 4, 2009). This respondent’s preference for early music with its folk-like qualities and generally lighter textures manifests in the following anecdote:

For a while, I directed a little junior choir and I tried to get them to sing this very famous hymn, it’s in all the books, called *Where the Father’s Love Begotten*, and it’s a chant, from the twelfth century and they *hated* it, they didn’t want to sing that at all, but I remember I really liked the older stuff.

Another informant also provided a detailed account of her attraction to Renaissance music through a prior interest in folk music, while at the same time also noting an established love of Bach—a position that she perceives as being somewhat unusual. She also explains the genesis of her taste for Renaissance music and how she perceives its differences from Baroque music:

I think that’s one feature of it [Renaissance music]. I always loved folk music, the sixties were my time. The only time I really liked pop music was the sixties...Dylan, Baez, Pete Seeger and all those people, so I think for me, the similarity and the folk-like quality of especially Renaissance, but Bach has always been a top favorite of mine too, and a lot of people who like Baroque don’t like Renaissance, they like the big wall of sound

that Bach is, whereas Renaissance is more quiet and it's often religious or love songs, that tend to have a more quiet quality. Of course Bach is religious too, it's just a different way...(Informant 2)

Interestingly, she notes her perception of her own tastes as being somewhat unique, adding, "I don't think as many people share that with me, liking the quieter, introspective stuff..." Many responses gathered from other participants in this study, however, contradicted that view, as most preferred Renaissance and Medieval music over Baroque. Nonetheless, early music here takes on a sense of representing the "other," as the respondent notes that her taste in "the older stuff" was unique in her musical community.

Still another musician explains, "John Renbourn's recording of Byrd's *Earle of Salisbury's Pavan* is what led me to the realm of early music, and Phil Pickett's use of shawms and recorders...on [folk/pop musician] Richard Thompson's albums led me to discover the New London Consort."

Other Arizona musicians' tastes again illuminated the differences between periods within what is usually considered "early music," specifically here between Baroque and Renaissance music. Informant 15 explains that the director of an ensemble she plays in is "more later period, she likes Baroque," adding, "...and I don't object to Baroque but that's on the edge for me. At the workshop we had taken a course in Medieval music and it ended up being our favorite. When we bring that stuff back to the group, she looks at it and rolls her eyes."

In evaluating evolving musical aesthetics, another informant also noted his distaste for large, thick textures, this time by contrasting early music (perhaps including Baroque music) with music of the Romantic period: "You get lost in the

Phil Spector ‘wall of sound’ in the Romantic period, whereas in early music you can hear the individual parts, even if it’s an ensemble, you can hear each thing...” (Informant 16, personal interview, August 4, 2009). He goes on to describe his enthusiasm at the new-found realization that allowed him to reconcile any feelings of guilt about not liking music that he felt he *should* like, i.e. “classical” music: “Everybody just lumped classical music together, and so I’d think, I just don’t like classical music. There are some *pieces* that I like, but as a genre, not. So actually discovering that there was this other kind of stuff was kind of cool.”

Another informant provides a detailed and telling glimpse of her shifting aesthetic away from Romantic music and toward various types of early music through this anecdote:

I remember one workshop that Vicki Boeckman gave, who’s an American, who went to Denmark to study and decided to stay. She played a Romantic period piece, *To a Wild Rose*, and she would just say a word or two here and there...and she was saying ‘Beautiful! and so on,’ and I remember thinking, ‘This is really awful, it’s *so* schlocky.’ And I actually thought about it: here’s Vicki Boeckman, a world-class recorder player, and *she* thinks this is beautiful, and I don’t, and I think, ‘Maybe I just don’t really *like* this stuff anymore!’ (Informant 17, personal interview, April 3, 2009)

She continues by explaining that at one point, she had decided to test her newly shifting aesthetic and give common practice repertoire “a chance,” subscribing to a magazine which included a sampler CD with each issue. Indeed, her suspicions proved to be true:

...so I was playing the CD, and it was almost as soon as it started, I remember thinking, “I can’t even really listen to this, I don’t even have the patience to sit through this,” and I *felt* bad, in a way, thinking, “these are professionals, this is somebody’s philharmonic whatever, and this is a great composition by so and so...”

This person's experience may be exaggerated, but it nonetheless highlights the essential elements of an aesthetic shift toward the generally lighter textures of most types of early music.

Discussions with Arizona participants revealed that sometimes in conjunction with a general shift in musical taste, practical issues at least partially influenced their involvement with early music. Informant 2 began her early music journey as an undergraduate vocal performance major, later becoming a fine recorder player and public school teacher in her thirties:

I knew from early on [that] I was not going to be a professional singer...that's a terrible pressure, especially if you have allergies as I did, you're fighting that off... I don't think I sang any more Renaissance songs until I played them on the recorder, which didn't come until I was a schoolteacher...

Thus, this person's return to early music was brought about both by negative circumstances—the hurdles involved in pursuing a career as a vocalist—and by positives, as entering the teaching profession became an overwhelmingly logical choice. Economics, not surprisingly, played a major role in that decision:

...so when I did finally get back into music, when I got married, someone said you should investigate teaching in public schools, because it was much more money than I was making as a secretary. I was pretty close to the certification and they needed teachers badly...

For this informant, familiarity with the sounds of early music made the transition to a new instrument natural, as she notes, “I didn't come back to early music until I got into recorder and rediscovered it...” Additionally, being able to again perform some of the literature she had enjoyed earlier in life tempered at least some disappointment she may have held about not becoming a professional

singer. She explains, “I joined a chapter in New Jersey, and the music they were playing was Renaissance music, and I'm thinking, ‘I've heard this before, and how great, now I can do all this on recorder.’”

Another respondent who had begun as a vocalist, this time during her junior high school years, not only gravitated to another instrument, but chose (again perhaps for practical reasons) to augment performance with scholarship:

I decided that I wanted to take harpsichord so I studied with Jim Anthony at the university. And I wanted to be a musicologist, so when I was a freshman I went into that. I got a bachelor of arts [degree] in music with the intention of going on to musicology, and started a master's degree. (Informant 4)

However, this person's performance desires eventually outweighed any of the possible future benefits of scholarly pursuits, (e.g. the security of possible academic employment). In fact, the music described in the literature she was studying proved to be too alluring to resist bringing it to life:

I went overseas to work some more on my thesis topic which was around French harpsichord character pieces. But the more I did the musicology part of it the less interested I was because I didn't have...I didn't care whether that blot on the manuscript is a blot or a note, I wanted to do the music!

While the above examples show musicians making a conscious decision to move toward early music based on practical considerations, conversations with collaborators revealed two additional, perhaps somewhat “passive” means by which the same shift came about. The first is through their chosen instrument, or rather through the literature associated with their instrument. One example of this process is that of musicians who play organ, whose interests often fall into one of two camps. That is, as one informant points out, organists' aesthetic preferences

often develop along “Baroque and modern” lines or along Romantic lines, but not often both. “I find that organists, in general, are either interested in the Baroque and modern or the Romantic. There’s a lot of similarities between Baroque and modern and it’s very different from the Romantic stuff” (Informant 5).

Additionally, mentor relationships of organists (and all musicians) can contribute to the process of molding one’s aesthetics: “...then I went off to Westminster Choir College and studied with Joan Lippincott for my graduate work and she’s definitely a Bach specialist, so I was getting again the performance practice stuff of the Baroque period” (ibid.).

Another avenue by which musicians are often attracted to early music is through professional appointments, commonly through employment with churches. The above informant continues by noting that, upon attaining an assistantship with a church, “... the music director that year was the president of the Arizona Early Music Society and invited me to be on the board, so that’s kind of what got me drawn in, plus the church had a very nice harpsichord.” He adds that he considers his “graduate work in early music” to be a result of “... being there and hearing all the good stuff being brought into town...”

Identity: Early Music as Counterculture

One especially revealing aspect of many musicians’ attraction to early music, documented often in literature on the “movement” (Cohen 1985; Haskell 1988; Shelemay 2001; Taruskin 1995 et. al.) and also borne out by conversations with participants in this study, is that of a counterculture identity. Many

performers are drawn to early music, at least in part, by a desire to self-identify through involvement in something substantially unique and different from the cultural mainstream. In fact, the drive to distinguish oneself as an individual in what many perceive as a modern, anonymous twentieth and twenty-first century society often leads to engagement with artifacts of the distant past (Cohen 1985: 9-10). This process of course usually situates participants in conflict with many current societal norms. Joel Cohen notes, “Like those in the modernist camp, the early music performers often find themselves in opposition to the prevailing values of the day” (ibid.). In his book, *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance*, John Butt agrees: “If HIP [historically informed performance] did share anything with modernism it was in its counterculture credentials, its distance from a supposedly conservative mainstream” (Butt 2002: ix).

This sentiment was echoed in several interviews with informants, as one explains, “Being an early music enthusiast gives me some ‘geek cred’ [credibility], which I like. Everyone likes Bach, but not everyone gets excited about Du Fay, Josquin, or Ockeghem” (Informant 10). Another musician elaborates, adding that her attraction to musical uniqueness began relatively early and also was, in a sense a “multigenerational rebellion”:

I think certainly as a child, it was alternative for me. It was not only alternative from my parents, but it was also alternative from my peers. You know, my peers were all doing this other thing [rock music] but I had *my own*, you know, this weird, “nerdy” interest. (Informant 4)

Further commentary by this collaborator indicates, however, that there exist different degrees of “alternative-ness” in different, even closely-related contemporary cultures: “...and what shocked me when I went to Britain is that it wasn’t like that [alternative], and not only that, but there, early music is very much associated with “Oxbridge,” it’s an upper-crust thing as opposed to being an alternative thing” (ibid.).

Conversely, the idea of early music involvement as representing countercultural tendencies does seem to vary according to not only geography, but also to time period. Specifically, Informant 6 discusses an early manifestation of interest in ancient music in Britain as being very much a counter-culture phenomenon:

When we were young, it was wildly radical, it was like being in the SLA or something. And earlier, in the beginning of the twentieth century and through the 1950s and 1960s, it was a very peculiar, you know strange [lifestyle]...people who lived out in the country in England, Dolmetsch and his weird little cadre of hangers-on...and the reason they played harpsichord, it wasn’t because they *liked* the music or they wanted to resurrect the harpsichord, it was because it was *weird*, and they enjoyed being weird.

John Butt expresses a similar sentiment by noting that, “Critics both of the avant-garde and of HIP analyze the phenomena as though they were pathological disorders.” He adds that “By overthrowing accepted models of musical taste, HIP threatens many of the supposed certainties of civilized society” (Butt 2002: 9).

Thus in addition to foregrounding an important aspect of early twentieth century interest in ancient music, informant 6 points out the revealing, not uncommon view that these pioneers of the British early music movement valued

their alternative identities even more than the music itself. Yet other Arizona participants, albeit a minority, mentioned that for them, the attraction to an alternative identity and the love of the music were equally important, or that they became so over time. One musician explains, “I loved the harpsichord as a child. I think I originally liked it partly because it was countercultural, but I loved the sound of early music for its own sake” (Informant 3).

Again, Informant 6 was also at first attracted to early music precisely because it was different and thus allowed him to define himself in a unique manner. He asserts that ultimately, he developed a more essential identification with early music through simply being able to excel at an art form and to do so in collaboration with others of the same ilk. When asked, “Was it the weirdness that kept you in,” he offered this insightful response:

No, it was the visceral feeling of doing really good music with dedicated people who had the chops to do it. When you’ve got a group of singers who are dying to extend their vocal technique to the highest level, to do some “crummy” thing that doesn’t even register on the music scale for most of the audiences in the world, and you get a “buzz” out of that, that’s really remarkable.

He adds that in addition to the fulfillment attained from experiences like the above, there is also something extramusical or even spiritual about the nature of the music itself which acts as a powerful force in his involvement:

...and then you know I guess you could say it was the pieces, I mean the way the harmonic system of say, conductus or organum works, it’s something I respond to like meditation, a very physical thing, like Ayurvedic breathing, a meditation kind of thing. You know you’d stagger out of a three hour rehearsal and just go, “Whoa man! Life is bitchin’!” And I still feel that, and that’s what it’s all about for me.

So for many musicians involved in early music, including those participating in this study, motivation often stems from the opportunity to self-identify with something which is decidedly “off the beaten path.” Many then develop a more fundamental, lasting connection to early music in their lives, through experience and deeper knowledge of the literature they perform. In some cases, as with the last informant, this deeper knowledge allows for self-expression of a unique and profound nature, at the highest levels of proficiency, which then significantly affects other, non-musical aspects of their respective lives.

Identity: Self Truth in Choice of Repertory

Some informants in this study articulated unique methods of self-identification not stemming necessarily from a need to take a counterculture stance. One musician’s individuality manifest in expansion of his early music palette to include folk musics of different eras, locales, and cultures not usually included in the umbrella term early music. He finds that performing too many different styles can create identity problems, however, specifically in perception by others:

I notice that I *would* like to be involved with all kinds of different things, like we’ll get people asking, “Do you guys know of any musicians who do Irish music?” “Well yeah, we do.” “Do you guys know of any musicians who do Middle Eastern music?” “Yes, we do,” but there is a stigma to doing that. (Informant 12)

He continues by maintaining that any stigma is unwarranted, however, citing examples of prominent musicians who have successfully crossed stylistic and genre boundaries:

Removing the point of view from myself, it's hard to imagine a musician, well let's put it this way, it's hard to imagine Benny Goodman playing the Mozart clarinet concerto, but he did, and he did it well, or it's hard to imagine Andre Previn doing jazz, but he did, and he did it really well...

On the other hand, early music singer Ellen Hargis offers a different view on the same general principle, albeit while limiting her comments to one culture rather than multiple ones:

I sort of take the philosophy that despite the conflicting evidence, I try to be a single singer. I have one voice. Even if I were projecting myself back and saying, "okay, I'm at some court in the seventeenth century and I'm singing this pile of songs," I probably wouldn't have, at that time, tried to be five different people from five different districts, but would have made a reasonable approximation and sung in my own voice and my own pronunciation. (Hargis interview in Shelemay 2001:14-15)

Hargis' thoughts elicit similar comments by another informant in this study, who augments the concept with commentary on performers staying within their "comfort level":

You can't be someone you're not, I mean she [Hargis] stays within a certain repertoire anyway, so I'm not really sure if she does things that are a huge reach for her. I haven't done anything that's a huge reach, the stuff that was the least in my comfort zone was when we did the *Cantigas [de Santa Maria]* because it was so early and I had never studied anything or played anything that was so early. I mean there wasn't much action for the recorder, I was playing a lot of drone notes, that felt really foreign and I never got really comfortable with that particular music...

Thus this informant's personal experiences with performing music which was somewhat uncomfortable for her imply a potentially fragmented musical identity, which may be problematic for some performers. Others, however, like the prior respondent (Informant 12), obviously consider their musical "cores" as fundamentally multi-faceted. It is then easy for these performers to develop a

more integrated identity precisely by avoiding such genre limitations. Indeed, that respondent's noteworthy comments above might serve as a potent argument in reconciling the dissonance created by his "multi-stylistic" tendencies, but he stops short of actually attempting that reconciliation. Rather, he transcends the issue by affirming the viewpoint, common among successful performers of any stripe, that ultimately one must satisfy *only* oneself, even if that means going "against the grain." He explains:

There are lots of really good early music players who specialize in certain types of music, and that's all they do and that's perfectly fine. For me though, that's kind of a hard sell, because I know that I would not be satisfied myself, there's just way too much great music out there.

So for some musicians, it is a conscious personal decision to choose to perform whatever music one wishes to perform, whether staying within one style or branching out into several, possibly disparate styles. Richard Taruskin quotes Howard Mayer Brown's statement that "a performer 'seems to need the psychological protection of actually believing in what he is doing.' He cannot settle for a survey of the problem, he must, by performing, propose a solution" (Mayer Brown quoted by Taruskin, in Kenyon 1988:202).

A plausible "solution" is echoed by the insights of several other Arizona musicians. Although not unique to early music (or even to music as an art form for that matter), one respondent suggests that the pursuit of excellence can be relative, if one's focus is directed only toward perfect execution of the "aesthetic moment":

In the performing arts it comes at the point where you're preparing yourself to say, "This is my best work at a certain moment," and you

know, it's not the accumulation of work, it's *right now*, are you doing this thing exactly to the full-out best of your ability, the best it can possibly be done under the circumstances, and are you willing to die for that, right now, just to make this moment perfect...(Informant 6)

He elaborates by describing the process of attaining ultimate personal fulfillment, rather than pleasing an audience, through performing:

...it's the time constraint of live performance that makes you do that. It's not like, "Oops, I'm gonna take that section again," it's you walk out on stage and you blow their heads off, or at least you do *your* thing, like surfing a really big wave...you'd better hang on!

Convictions like this can serve to encapsulate the most significant forces behind choosing early music as a field of pursuit. Certainly Joel Cohen's again insightful thoughts on the basic principles involved in artistic fidelity are close to the mark in effecting such a summation:

The finest performers in this field have had to shake out their own territory, have had to create their own values and standards. They needed to do so to make *their* music come out the right way; and they needed to make the music come out the right way because the things they had earlier been trained to hear and do did not rest well with their souls. (1985: 9)

Cohen continues by reiterating the relationship between early music involvement and negotiating one's place in a modern, fast-moving society:

The decision to make early music one's life has to do above all with finding one's place in the confused and tumultuous modern age. We pay the strongest and most intensely detailed attention imaginable to the music of the distant past in order to define ourselves with greater truth and clarity in the here and now. (1985: 9-10)

This chapter has examined a variety of views among Arizona early music participants on the three main manifestations of identity formation. In some cases,

informants chronicled the evolution of their respective musical tastes, shifting away from other types of music and toward a repertory which, by association, afforded them a more unique sense of self. Several Arizona musicians described this evolution as stemming from an interest in folk music. One explained that she perceived and was attracted to folk-like elements in some plainsong and that this realization was part of her gradual move toward early music. Another Arizona musician identified her tastes as being unique in that she liked both folk music *and* Bach, but others insisted that they shared those preferences, thus suggesting that a fondness for both of those musics is not in any way contradictory.

Two recorder players expressed opposing views on Medieval music, one describing her enthusiasm for it after attending a summer workshop and the other admitting being uncomfortable with it after playing a concert of fourteenth century music as part of a mixed-ensemble. Still another Arizona musician described his gradual realization that he preferred “lighter textures” wherein individuals parts are more easily perceived. One informant articulately described a phenomenon in which she went through a process of actually doubting her new-found preference for some types of early music. She admitted even feeling guilty, prompting her to perform a sort of “listening test” whereby she objectively proved to herself that her suspicions were indeed correct: that she now really did not like styles that she previously had thought that she “should” like, in this case especially Romantic music. Finally, some Arizona early musicians explained that much of their identity had been shaped by either the literature of their chosen

instrument or by a professional appointment, such as a church, which facilitates early music activity.

Several Arizona musicians noted that early music involvement does impart upon their respective self-images a uniquely “nerdy” or “geeky” quality. One respondent had begun to gravitate toward early music as a child and noted that her “counterculture” stance was not only in reference to her parents but also to her peers. Another participant articulately described the counterculture leanings of some early music pioneers, noting that he too was first attracted to the repertory through a similar need to be “different,” but has since remained in early music for a different reason. That is, he insisted that he continues to perform early music not because it creates for him a peculiar, “off-beat” image, but because he has uncovered more profound and long-lasting benefits from performing the music, benefits that in large part, he does not derive from other styles of art music.

The third primarily identity-related theme which emerged from interviews with Arizona early musicians was that those who are most successful are those who ultimately carve out a niche for themselves which accurately reflects their own inherent preferences and tendencies toward performance—and no one else’s. One problem articulated by some informants was that there are so many different early music styles to which artists can devote their energies that it sometimes results in musicians developing a fragmented sense of self. Some musicians who are uncomfortable limiting themselves to performing only one style of music noted that they find themselves stigmatized by “jack of all trades—master of none” labeling.

But one musician cited prominent artists who have successfully crossed stylistic boundaries, in these examples the boundaries between jazz and art music. Thus, this Arizona musician asserts, if one makes musical choices based on sufficient self-reflection, the result will be a well-integrated, grounded identity which will shine through the haze of outside negative perceptions. On the other hand, some local performers insisted that they feel more comfortable limiting their activities to a more narrow spectrum and thus derive satisfaction and musical fulfillment by choosing that strategy. Finally, one Arizona artist suggested that whatever approach an artist employs in staking out a place in the musical world, the extent to which fulfillment is achieved is the extent to which one devotes oneself to “being” in that world as genuinely as possible.

In conclusion, one other concept emerges, to an extent in retrospect, from my conversations with informants about identity. That is the issue of whether or not there exists among musicians some form of early music identity specific to Arizona. While my questioning was on the whole not specifically directed toward this idea, it is possible to infer some general, composite informant perceptions here. One which surfaces in looking back at my interview data is that Arizona early musicians do in some cases consciously or unconsciously make inevitable comparisons between the local “scene” and those of the established early music “centers” like Boston, New York, or San Francisco. These comparisons also sometimes extend beyond simply the early music centers to other locales known for their fine arts vitality. To the extent that comparisons like these influence

informant perceptions and negotiations of place, an argument could then be made for the existence of an actual Arizona identity.

Similarly, another perception that emerges from my interviews deals with economic issues unique to Arizona. Here, the thoughts of informants involved with the production and presentation of early music sometimes seemed “colored” by a perception of inferiority, often expressed as, for example, “doing what we can with the [minimal] resources we have...” thus also perhaps contributing to an “Arizonan” early music identity. With respect to an identity relating specifically to repertory, my informant interviews did not indicate or imply an existence of such. In general, the types of repertory performed in Arizona mirror those of most other locales. One possible exception *may* be the occasional performance of Meso-American music, but even this “southwestern-oriented” literature does not define a specifically “Arizonan” identity. This is an area which may be fruitful for further inquiry.

CHAPTER 5

Early Music as “Other”

Several Arizona informants’ attribute their attraction to early music at least in part to some technical, usually objective and somehow unique musical elements. That is, these musicians identified as the primary force drawing them into the world of early music some facet of the music itself which is neither extra-musical nor exclusively subjective. In this regard, informants might say, for example, “I like the harmonic structure” rather than, “It puts me in another time and place.” Generally lighter textures of some early musics, along with a perceived “intimacy” resulting from those textures, emerged as common themes among some participants. Sometimes this thinking was juxtaposed with reasons for not liking music of other periods. One informant explains this with specific reference to Romantic period music: “The idea of the ‘bigness’ is sort of what I don’t like about the Romantic period. Mozart’s okay, but then again his orchestra’s kind of small...” (Informant 16). Smaller textures sometimes also imply an inherent simplicity in some early music styles. One informant, a singer, explained, “I did some Renaissance songs by Campion and Dowland and I thought, ‘These are just so beautiful, they’re perfect and simple, easy to communicate’” (Informant 2).

Some respondents, in addition to identifying intimacy as a primary element in early music, expanded on the concept with the most frequent, specifically musical reason given for preferring early music: the prevalence of counterpoint. Informant 16 elaborates:

...and so I always felt like early music was more intimate, and [simultaneously] in some ways more complex, like with the counterpoint. I had played a lot of big band music, with the brass going... [gestures to signify syncopated, staccato accents] and in a way it's kind of the same thing going on, a jazzy feeling in there...

Thus, this musician cites not only smaller textures and counterpoint as being factors in his preference, but expands his thoughts to comparisons with other, unrelated styles, specifically jazz. The importance of counterpoint was articulated differently by some musicians as they noted the “structures” of some early music as corresponding to inherent personal attributes. This collaborator explains, also in a context of comparison with Romantic music:

I would say my own personality and makeup, that I would describe myself as a logical person, and the whole counterpoint genre is more “mental” to me than the Romantic genre. The whole idea of counterpoint and fugue and the early polyphony, just the style of that whole era suits me better...(Informant 5)

This seems to suggest that some participants view their preference for early music styles from an acute self-awareness of their own intellectual leanings. Other Arizona informants explained their preferences in more general, subjective terms, such as one describing early music textures as being “quaint and complex at the same time” (Informant 11). Several others attached some subjective interpretation to a technically musical element, such as this collaborator describing the contrapuntal aspects of some styles by noting an unexpectedness to various events in the music:

In early music, there is an element of the unexpected sometimes. Depending on when it was composed, parts don't go together but [rather] bounce off each other, winding in and out but never coming together. Or

unusual harmonies pop out, taking you by surprise. (Informant 18, personal interview, April 4, 2009)

Still others used even more subjective language like “fun and quirky,” “more exciting,” and “more wily” (Informant 11). One respondent described the visceral experience of singing the music of Bach in a large choir:

The guy who directed it never had us in sections, so you were always surrounded by the bass, the alto, the tenor. I was singing soprano, and just to hear all those pieces come together, I remember the performance, and thinking, “Wow! I am in the middle of all this!” It was just the construction of it, the intricacy, the polyphony, all the different voices...(Informant 15)

She continues by augmenting her thoughts in comparison with a similar experience with a less favored style, again Romantic music:

I can remember once with a huge choir, we did the choral movement from Beethoven’s *Ninth*, and that of course was an overwhelming experience, but I was in the middle of the sopranos, and all I could hear was the soprano line, and it was just so much noise. I mean not that it wasn’t a glorious piece of music, who wouldn’t want to sing that, but you’re in the middle of all those sopranos, it’s just not as enjoyable, at least not for me.

Still another informant drew comparisons in describing his experience of contrapuntal early music, this time citing examples far outside the canon of Western art music. Admitting that his comparisons may indeed be “a stretch,” this informant explains:

...but when you hear people playing African drums, there’s all these different rhythms going on sort of at the same time, and it creates a lot of interest. And I think much of early music is a lot the same way, there’s this interweaving and the different stuff that’s going on. And again it may sound strange, but I like to listen to the Rolling Stones and they do the same thing, it’s just not just the simple chords of rock and roll, they intertwine and play with it. (Informant 16)

Continuing the general theme of attraction to the structural complexity of some early music, informant 11 employed a unique comparison outside of specifically musical vocabulary:

A lot of early music, both vocal and instrumental, is beautiful in the way that Celtic knots are beautiful and similar to the ear as the knots are to the eyes. They weave in and out making patterns that come together in very satisfying ways making an overall picture. It *feels* right, to put it unscientifically.

Thus, comparisons to other art forms can sometimes illuminate a particular technical aspect of the music. Still another Arizona musician employed a similar analogy as he compared various early music instrumental settings to a visual artist's available palette of colors, specifically implying an openness to the genre that lends itself to creative interpretation:

Is it keyboard instruments, is it bowed instruments, is it plucked instruments? You know, it's all of the above, it's just how are you going to apply it, and then as I say, you have the doubling of voices, when do you do it, when don't you do it, what are you going to double with? There's no standard, you get to make it up and that's why you can have the same piece performed by three different groups and have it sound completely different. So yeah, there's a life to the music that isn't the same as the Beethoven through Brahms era especially...(Informant 5)

The notion of creative interpretation in early music was critical for this person, and for others, as many expressed in different ways that early music has "a life of its own," or at least a different *kind* of life than music of most other periods.

Participant Views on a "Culture" of Early Music

Perhaps the most important component of a modern view of "ancient" music is that it is essentially, in some way, "different" within its overall cultural

context. In general, early work in anthropology and ethnomusicology has represented what Gupta and Ferguson describe as “historical engagement primarily with materials and musics from outside Europe and North America...” resulting in a “close association of both of these disciplines with the unfamiliar, conceptualized within a framework of difference, and often characterized as exotic” (in Shelemay 2001:3-4).

Indeed, many early music people identify some manifestation of exoticism or “otherness” as part of their attraction to the genre. One perhaps uniquely illuminating perspective for analysis of this view is a hypothetical one. That is, what are Arizona musicians' views on whether or not they feel themselves to be part of an “early music culture” or sub-culture, or even if such a culture exists? Here, rather than attempting to direct responses in any way, I afforded my collaborators “free rein” in their interpretations of the meaning of culture and their respective place in it, fully expecting these to vary significantly.

For one informant, commenting on this topic was predicated specifically on the need to first accurately define “our” culture as a referent against which to conceptualize a temporally removed one. This musician explains it thus:

It’s hard because, well for instance, what’s our culture? Our culture is...well it depends on your age and your cultural references, so to a person in their forties or fifties it would be all the rock bands of the Sixties and Seventies, all the oldies we listen to, TV shows we grew up with...(Informant 9)

Another collaborator eloquently presents an especially unique view on the problem of cultural reference as he asserts that all cultures, even our own, are

nothing more than constructs informed by interpretation of multiple, often arbitrarily filtered influences:

I imagine that one of the points of schmoozing with another culture is that one's imagination can create a fantasy picture of that culture which will make it seem better than our own. But our own cultural musical styles can make *our* culture seem better than it is! So, I conclude that the sense of cultural contact that I feel when I hear music of our culture and the sense of cultural contact that I feel when I hear music of another culture is about the same—they're *both* fantasies...unlike some people, I have no illusions about how certain other cultures allegedly have particularly good ways of being human that we've missed. (Informant 8)

On the other hand, whether idealizing a previous culture or not, some informants claim that their own specific expertise in the field of history affords them the feeling of being part of an “other” culture. One explains, “My minor was in history, and especially European history, so I learned a lot about the milieu that the music comes from, and that has always been a fascination to me as well” (Informant 4). This musician asserts that this non-musical part of her background contributes to her cultural positioning, adding, “I’ve researched it, performed it, I’m more comfortable with it, I can sightread it better [than other musics]. I have huge gaps in my knowledge of nineteenth and twentieth century music, just because it’s not really my interest.”

Another view is that certain repertoires, even those temporally removed from our time, are still part of “our” culture by virtue of the continuous performance tradition discussed in chapter one. That is, the premise is that the music of the so-called common practice period, while still removed from modern culture, is nonetheless part of our culture since it is the music that we hear and perform on a daily basis. On the other hand, early music, having not enjoyed that

continuous performance tradition, necessarily imposes on modern listeners and performers a leap “outside” of our culture. When asked if he considered there to be a fundamental difference between the cultural context of “standard repertoire” performance and that of early music, this respondent explained it this way:

There could be, in the sense that the people who listen to classical music are going to be familiar with Brahms and Beethoven and Mahler and all that stuff, but they may be unfamiliar with anything prior to J.S. Bach, so if we grew up listening to classical music but not early music, then the classical music might have been part of our culture and the early music is maybe something we discovered later. (Informant 12)

The possibility that music of even the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, like much contemporary art music, may actually *not* be part of modern culture for some listeners was expressed by this informant:

You know there are things that people play on modern instruments...I have a recorder trio and last night we were reading through a modern piece, and it's very dissonant and it had a lot of strange rhythms and was highly chromatic...we liked some movements, we didn't like others, we're just messing around with it, but is that our culture because the composer was a German person from the twentieth century who had obviously learned some serialism, some atonality, maybe some minimalism that were all infused in the composition we were trying? Is it early music? No, but it was definitely music for three recorders so somehow it was idiomatic to those instruments without being early music, so that's not my culture either, that's just kind of a visit into the world, into the mind of a composer. (Informant 9)

Similarly, many respondents in one way or another note that for some people, early music simply provides a window to an earlier time, occasionally even extending the principle to other facets of cultural history. This informant touches on the influence of the “ancient” on contemporary cultural practices: “From a historical perspective, it's interesting to watch how the

Medieval/Renaissance *Zeitgeist* has influenced the sacred and secular rituals of today” (Informant 19, e-mail survey, February 18, 2009).

Some collaborators who agree that early music somehow represents a culture other than our own suggest that there are processes by which that culture can *become* our own over time. Informant 9 submits that this may occur in degrees simply as audiences become more familiar with earlier musical styles and how those styles communicate what is unfamiliar at first: “It may be something that we’re visiting, and if we perform it then we’re sharing it with other people and if it generates interest then it *becomes* their culture...” To the extent that is true, it follows then that it is necessary for a musician to internalize the cultural essence of early music in order to accurately perform that music, whether simply for his or her own enjoyment or for an audience. Another respondent explains this view in detail, from the perspectives of both musician and listener:

Music is music. If you're performing it, you gotta know and understand the music you're performing, and you gotta do it well. If you're performing it, I don't think it *can* be exotic for *you*, even if it's exotic for the audience; it's gotta be your music. Naturally, different styles have different mechanics, but if you know the music, you know what to do. As to being a listener, I don't know. I listen to a lot of varying styles, periods, cultures...I guess the associations are different, but I suppose those associations are personal rather than reflections of a character inherent in the music.
(Informant 8)

Although discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the issue of *authenticity* in early music informs another opinion offered by my respondents on their perceptions of culture vis-à-vis early music. That is, despite best efforts to the contrary, modern musicians cannot help but relate to ancient musics in a manner which to some extent reflects modern culture. Informant 12 describes it

this way: “To me, early music has always represented a culture other than our own, while at the same time being a part of *and* a product of or modern world.”

This musician adds that he feels himself to be “both an insider and an outsider” to a culture of the “other” often seen as being represented by early music.

Some commentators expand the same principle by submitting that since a true historical context cannot be created through modern presentations, we must therefore apply creative solutions in order to imbue them with an aesthetic and intellectual integrity equal to that of the pieces we perform. Joel Cohen puts it this way:

Our devotion to the music of the distant past has led us to serve it better through knowledge of its proper historical context. To complete that context, to fill in the gaps that mere knowledge cannot complete, we must call forth the same effort of creative imagination that is contained in the musical works themselves. (1985:95)

To that end, that is, to creatively showcase an art form in a culturally reverent context, one Arizona ensemble director’s strategy is to acknowledge the limitations inherent in presenting early music, not least of which is that true authenticity may repel modern audiences:

You can't reproduce the context, you cannot do it. You can't do it in Baroque opera, you...you just can't do it so you do what you can. Benjamin Bagby wrote an article where he says “*if* you are really true to what you're doing, you may not like it!” But there's just no way to reproduce the audience, you know, the issue of perception: what does the audience *think* you're doing? Let's say you're doing a troubadour song, there's forty-nine verses, and they, the *original* audience understands all the words. I can't reproduce that, you can't even get them to sit in the chair for that long. (Informant 6)

He continues by comparing similar yet temporally removed forms, in this case secular, narrative song, emphasizing the essential problem inherent in attempting to transfer context from one ancient culture to our modern one: “But you can get them [audiences] to sit and listen to Arlo Guthrie doing *Alice's Restaurant*.” Upon my suggestion that the reason that is possible is that *Alice's Restaurant* is funny, the informant replies, “Yeah, but who says the troubadour song isn't funny?” thus, substantiating his theory that the “problem” is one of context. This of course, foregrounds the point that it is virtually impossible to experience an early music event without being influenced in some way by modern sensibilities.

Early Music and Time-Space Manipulation

In his 1997 article, “Even at Birth, Opera Wed the Stirring and the Silly,”

Anthony Tommasini writes:

...the “other-ness” of the past remains ever-present, both a motivating force and a strong drawing card for some practitioners and many in the audience (as well as critics in the media), who revel in productions of works “you read about in history books but never hear.” (Tommasini in Shelemay 2001:9)

Thus Tommasini touches on another important avenue by which involvement in early music develops. Specifically, “the otherness of the past” and reading about works “in history books” translate, for some participants, into a sense that early music serves as an agent of “transportation” to another time and place. Of course, as one respondent notes, “Actually, all music does that, even jazz, that’s what all music tries to do,” but to the extent that music from before the “common practice

period” is actually situated in a culture other than our own, “the effect is exaggerated” (Informant 12).

Another informant puts it more succinctly, asserting that, “This music is like a time capsule, like no other medium is,” adding that early music, “...takes me back there with all the sights and sounds as surely as if I was reliving it” (Informant 11). The sense of time travel, for some informants, is often most potent upon their first few experiences with earlier musics. Perhaps in these instances, the contrast between “this (new) ‘old’ music” is at its greatest, as this informant reflects:

We think about Medieval castles or monasteries or banquet halls, things like that because I remember a couple of the first pieces of early music that I ever really heard, one was Russell Oberlin singing some Dowland lute songs and I had this whole Medieval perception—I didn’t know it was Renaissance music—but I had this imagery come up when I heard that. (Informant 12)

This recollection implies that a vivid historical awareness is often a component of experiences with early music. In some instances, this sense of historical “re-placement” is, for some lucky participants, enhanced through direct contact with artifacts—including locations—of the time represented by a particular music. Informant 16 recounts a visit to Denmark that he and his wife took in which they enjoyed this kind of experience:

...and of course also the history is there too, the first concert we went to, up to this castle, and it’s Christian IV’s castle, and this guy’s playing this little Praetorius organ, he’s playing the *King of Denmark’s Galliard*, in the King of Denmark’s house! There’s just all this historical stuff...

Still another Arizona musician draws comparisons with other, historically-oriented, non-musical activities, adding that these endeavors all somehow enhance life in modern society:

For me, I think early music's ultimate appeal is similar to the experience of Civil War re-enactors, or people who collect vintage cars, or even the enjoyment one gets from watching an old movie: the experience of "playing with the past" has a complex, therapeutic effect that combines aesthetics, community, identity and a host of other nuances. (Informant 13)

That participant also articulates an essential difference, for him, between this kind of experience and that of mainstream classical music performances, noting a primary drawback due to the familiarity of the latter:

More than other music styles, early music has a transcendent quality; a classical performance is typically so mired in its own rituals of presentation that it becomes a monumental effort to allow the music to be anything other than a superb composition played well. My personal ideals of the early music experience, whether it's playing or listening, is to have and/or create a transformative experience that plays with notions of time and space...(Informant 13)

Another respondent echoes these comments, more directly noting that more modern styles of music often lack some of the "rough edges" she enjoys in early music:

The later periods are beautiful and slick. It's the difference in (sic.) a quilt bought for "beaucoup bucks" in an upscale boutique and your grandmother's hand-sewn quilt made from pieces of cloth cut from some of her old dresses that you remember. Which one will comfort you most, which will mean something to you? (Informant 11)

Thus, some people derive a different kind of gratification from experiencing early music in a more personal context. Another musician recalls a similar type of experience with time and space manipulation. She explains the

“other-worldly” joy of being a member of the pit orchestra for performances of Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*, first noting that many perhaps unsuspecting mainstream opera lovers were so taken aback by that music’s aesthetic that they left the concert hall.

Half the audience thought it was crap. I have no idea why. I just love that sound, and I can’t even tell you what it is, but put me in the seventeenth century in Venice and I’ll be very happy except for the lack of deodorant! (Informant 9)

Finally, Shelemay offers a more formal summation of the common thread found in the experiences of these informants, as she asserts that “...one finds a concept of early music performance as collapsing time and space, [of] transcending arbitrary boundaries...” (Shelemay 2001:18). Thus it appears that, unlike with most mainstream European art music, issues of time and space manipulation provide unique perspectives on commonly accepted cultural boundaries and are part and parcel of early music’s *raison d’être*.

Authenticity in Early Music

The word authenticity is much bandied about these days in early music circles. It is an unfortunate buzzword, since its current meaning in musical circles...is too narrow. The word has far deeper resonances than current usage tends to permit. You will not, therefore, find it popping up very often in the pages of this book, despite its regrettable and current popularity. (Cohen 1985:10)

Thus, in one short paragraph, Joel Cohen summarizes what, in his and the minds of many others involved in early music, has come to be perhaps the most turbulent point of debate among practitioners and audiences alike. The idea of

authenticity in early music performance finds its way into discussions in almost all circles of that world, between presenters, musicians, audience members, and even critics. Cohen's comments reinforce that there is indeed a "problem" with the concept of authenticity. Some early music practitioners "refer to the expression as a 'loaded word,' adding that 'it is what we don't know that is fun.'" (Na'ama Lion in Shelemay, 2001:21)

One Arizona musician exemplifies this observation, substantiating through his statements the existence of what some describe as a "love-hate relationship" with the word (David Douglas in Shelemay 2001:21). At the same time, the informant makes suggestions for other, possibly more useful terms: "...but you start talking about authentic, oops, *authentic*, gotta stop using that word! I don't want to use it because I want to say mindful, or maybe appropriate..." (Informant 6). He continues with insights on the challenges that authenticity poses not simply to performers of early music, but to listeners as well, as he notes, "...the thing that local modern audiences don't want to face is a re-configuration of their aesthetic expectation." Finally, this collaborator emphasizes the importance of context, and specifically *awareness* of context, involved in both performing and in listening to early music:

...and when you're talking about performing early music, in my mind it's something that existed in a context, for a reason, and it came out sounding like that because of specific circumstances, and then later, those circumstances no longer applied.

Another view is articulated by this musician, who suggests that with a degree of aesthetic sensibility, some semblance of authenticity is at least

approachable, while still acknowledging that true authenticity may prove difficult for modern listeners to digest:

...like Gregorian chant, that's really hard because the earlier you go also the fewer things are known about it, they have to look at paintings and treatises and even then...too bad there weren't recordings, too bad because we would probably be shocked at how different...you just have to use your own musical background to figure it out. I'm not a big authenticity "freak," I like it to be reasonable...but I think a musician who's sensitive, artistically, has the right to go with what they feel. (Informant 5)

Still another participant adds a perhaps cynical note to the idea that true authenticity in early music may be unpalatable. Specifically, this person suggests that issues surrounding authenticity are in many cases influenced by non-musical, even economic factors. Even if a hypothetical authenticity were achievable, concert presenters, according to this person, might still avoid it because they find it necessary to "play it safe" in order to draw audiences:

It's possible you might not like it, you know, if you are really true to it, but [the presenters say] "we can't have that if we're trying to run a concert series, no we've got to have something that's kind of pleasing in some kind of way." (Informant 6)

Finally, a comprehensive, unique perspective on the issue of authenticity may be gleaned from examination of two extreme views in the debate. First, some musicians consciously make no attempt at all at any sort of "re-creation" in their performances of early music. One respondent asserts, "But I'm playing the stuff, I don't think about re-creating it, I just think about enjoying it, and hopefully having other people enjoy something that they might not have heard before" (Informant 9). At the other end of the spectrum, modern, innovative scientific methods and technologies have been employed by researchers to attempt to re-

create particular styles in exhaustively accurate detail. Joel Cohen describes one such program which attempts to reconstruct the style of Josquin by objectively codifying detailed characteristics of that music:

The objectivity of these methods [of style analysis] invites the use of the computer, whose logic ensures rigorous adherence to the criteria that have been laid down, and which can handle complex data in large quantities. For the latter reason the computer lends itself well to the systematic examination of an entire stylistic field, as in the Princeton project on the style of Josquin's music. (Cohen 1985: 93-4)

Cohen continues by first conceding the usefulness of modern tools for analysis before warning that discretion must be employed lest such experiments amount only to "scholarship run amok":

We performers need the discipline of scholarship. We need the tools of modern research, and we need the results those tools have obtained for us. What we *don't* need is the mindset of the technocratic priesthood. There are dimensions of any artistic activity that cannot be harnessed to the yoke of scientific cognition. (Cohen 1985: 95)

With those thoughts, Cohen seems to imply that true authenticity in any art form, but especially in early music, may reside more in the inherent subjectivities which comprise the essence of that art, than in attempts to re-create a bygone cultural context. Taken as a whole, the comments of several informants in this study clearly echoed Cohen's insights.

When considering early music as representing the anthropological "other," the comments of Arizona musicians fell generally into two broad categories. First, some respondents spoke of specific, objective, usually musical criteria which, for them, differentiated in fundamental ways certain early music styles from other styles of Western art music. The other broad area noted by some Arizona artists as

characterizing early music as “other” or somehow exotic was that of cultural and/or historical context. Informants provided varying responses when asked to elaborate on the concept of an “early music subculture” or culture in general as they experience and conceptualize these terms. Additionally, the concept of cultural “difference” highlighted for participants in this study the related idea of authenticity in early music. Here, a consensus developed suggesting that, for whatever reasons, active pursuit of authenticity in early music is at best, marginally helpful and at worst, detrimental to a quality performance. Rather, participants suggested that a better approach would be to first, re-frame the terminology away from the word “authentic” and toward labels such as “mindful” or “appropriate.” After effecting such a shift in focus, many Arizona musicians then agreed that some level of “informed creativity” in presenting early music could indeed result in more valid performance contexts, from both aesthetic and cultural perspectives.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In this study, I addressed several aspects of early music performance in Arizona since the early 1960s. These include what types of activities have occurred over the years, roughly when those activities began on a regular basis, and who some of the primary movers were. In addition, the project described some of the trends in organized early music activities over that time. Although presenting some background historical information on both the early music movement as a whole and its manifestation in Arizona in the late 1900s, I chose to make my study “deep” rather than “broad” in accordance with what Geertz and others term “deep description.” Similarly, Merriam asserts that “ethnographic or ethnomusicological ‘truth’ is not a single fixed entity, but rather a range of entities within a particular distribution of variation, and it is the limits of the variation, rather than a supposed absolute, which lead to an understanding of the phenomenon” (1964:50). I focused most of my interview content with Arizona musicians on defining these limits from which to extract and catalog a meaningful “range of entities.”

For some informants, especially in the first years of early music activity in Arizona, I found that attraction to early music was based in large part on the opportunity to own and play unusual instruments. In this respect, the Arizona experience does differ somewhat from that of the worldwide revival in that it occurred much later, that is, in the 1960s, while the phenomenon in the overall movement was at its strongest in the early part of the twentieth century—some

fifty or so years prior. But more important than identifying this practice as a “raison d’être” for some participants is to discern reasons for this. That is, does early music attract fundamentally different people than do other styles of Western art music?

This question of course directly relates to issues of identity discussed elsewhere, specifically its “counterculture” aspects, but in retrospect, taken together, conversations with informants in this study do coalesce into a perceivable “archetype” of sorts. Merriam asserts that “the problem of [the musician’s] social status, both as seen by himself and as judged by the rest of society” is another fascinating aspect of musician behavior and thus identity (1964: 133). Some Arizona musicians identified with the perception that being involved in early music represents to some degree going against the grain of current sociocultural mores—that is, of being part of a “counterculture.” Indeed, Merriam again elaborates on this phenomenon, drawing an analogue to the jazz subculture:

The distinctive behavior patterns which characterize the group seem clearly to revolve about a central theme—the isolation of the group from society at large, an isolation which is almost equally psychological, social, and physical. Jazz musicians and their public tend to cluster together, to hold antisocial attitudes, and to segregate themselves physically...(1964:141)

Thus, the unscientific image of persons involved with early music which emerges from my study suggests that early music aficionados perhaps have more wide-ranging interests—both musical and non-musical—than do those who participate exclusively in “standard repertory” art music. With respect to musical

participation, many “mainline” professional and semi-professional level performers are “forced” by their chosen work environments to be extremely focused in their endeavors, making it more difficult for them to pursue a wider range of activities. On the other hand, some early music participants have relatively minimal or even no background in “traditional” classical music circles. Certainly there is overlap between the two “worlds” but this is clearly one area that invites more intensive study.

My study revealed some sense of identity conflict among musicians in the early music community. This conflict was especially illuminated by two examples in which informants devised their own “self-tests” of musical preference in order to resolve the issue for themselves. These two participants as well as others articulated a strong correlation between an integrated, stable sense of identity and personal fulfillment. But why should this conflict exist? Underlying some of my informant responses was what I interpreted as a degree of societal/cultural peer pressure, by which informants may have felt that they “should” like so-called “classical” music, more specifically that of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods. This perceived societal edict then resulted in a certain level of “guilt” for some respondents as they realized that in fact, their tastes resided elsewhere, in the relatively marginalized styles represented by (especially) pre-Baroque music. Some participants, like the two noted above, did describe their process of resolving this issue, while others seemingly transformed their internal conflict from guilt into a positive experience, that is, they came to embrace the “fringe” or

even counterculture aspects of their aesthetic, integrating those aspects into their sense of identity.

The issues pertaining to identity articulated by informants in this study also correlated closely with those dealing with the idea that early music is somehow fundamentally “different” and thus represents, in some ways, the anthropological “other.” Extending the concept of early music as “other” beyond simply describing the music, I asked Arizona musicians for their comments on a real or hypothetical culture of early music. My initial focus here was to ask if my informants felt themselves to be “insiders” or “outsiders” of an early music culture, but this strategy soon proved problematic. Among several reasons for this, the primary obstacle that arose here—in retrospect not surprisingly—was that there emerged nothing close to a consensus on the exact nature of such a culture or whether or not one actually exists. Some respondents sidestepped the question, with others noting that it is difficult even to define modern culture because it is so dependent upon individual circumstances. Perhaps the most intriguing response to this question is one in which one informant asserted that he was neither an insider nor outsider to any supposed early music culture of “other,” arguing that both it and “our” culture are merely fantasies: constructs of our own thinking and relative perspectives. Indeed, this concept was articulated in 1961 by J.L. Fischer, as recalled by Merriam:

...form in the “expressive aspects of culture...is social fantasy, that is the artist’s fantasies about social situations which will give him security of pleasure,” and that thus, no matter what the overt content, there will always be expressed “some fantasied social situation which will bear a definite relation to the real and desired social situations of the artist and his society.” (1964: 252)

Many informants also agreed that the Arizona early music “scene” reflects overall attitudes toward the concept of “authenticity.” That is, that there exists in Arizona, as in much of the worldwide early music community, an intense “love-hate” relationship with the word. In addition, some informants also argue that if early musics were presented in *truly* authentic ways, most modern audiences would not like it and would in fact be repelled by it. But perhaps more illuminating is that this issue too seemed to correlate closely with that of informant identity as several articulated, in different ways, the idea that one must ultimately do “what you can do” with creativity, knowledge, and sensitivity, thus creating at least some semblance of appropriate—if not truly accurate—musical context.

My overriding goal in this study was to discern and attempt to understand the philosophies and motivations of a cross-section of Arizona musicians with respect to their involvement in early music. To this end, I was able to draw relevant conclusions in three broad areas: 1) musicians’ conceptions of early music itself as a genre or style period; 2) musicians’ ideas about their own respective identity formation and sense of “place” within the world of early music; and 3) musicians’ views toward early music being somehow fundamentally different—representing the anthropological “other”—than other types of Western art music.

In all three areas, the study found general trends of agreement among most participants, with perhaps the elusive task of devising some all-encompassing definition of early music eliciting the most varied responses. Still, musicians’

views on self-identity and early music as “other” also illuminated some thoughtful and well-articulated principles, generally expressed by a few very experienced early music performers.

As previously noted, this study could represent a preliminary stage in a comprehensive examination of all facets of Arizona early music. These could include, among others, a more detailed historical record of all early music activities, incorporating, for example, performances not only by established early music entities but also by other groups not exclusively devoted to those styles of music. In fact, before deciding to narrow the focus of my study to the attitudes, philosophies, and *modus operandi* of musicians themselves, I began to compile a comprehensive list of all performances given by the early music societies and the universities, using old concert programs as primary sources. Aware that even these would miss some number of independent performances, my initial thought here was to determine the stylistic “mix” of early music presented over the years in order to uncover for example, which styles may have been over-emphasized or vice-versa. I envisioned then asking my informants to comment on the results, specifically whether, for their tastes, there may have been too much of one style and not enough of another and why they thought so.

Similarly, a larger project might include a more detailed examination of the economic factors related to Arizona early music performance. Here, specific attention could be focused on financial support provided by all types of institutions, including societies, universities, general arts funding organizations, independent patrons, and the like. The results of an analysis like the above “style

mix” may provide not only an accounting of how economic processes have played out over the years, but perhaps also some clues as to how the early music societies and other institutions may work to avoid or minimize some obstacles in the future.

More analysis might also be done on the foundational issue of early music identity, this time expanding the population sample beyond only musicians to those groups in any way involved with early music. These would include concert promoters, audience members and patrons, university administrators, and arts journalists, to name a few. Obtaining information as to the motivations of non-musicians could stimulate potentially revealing comparisons with the musician group as well as further illuminating the “definition of early music” issue.

Finally, I hope that a by-product of my research here may be that the work contributes in some small way to the aim articulated by Kay Kaufman Shelemay in which “gaps are bridged” between various factions of musical scholarship as Western art music becomes unquestionably a field for ethnographic inquiry.

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APPENDIX 1

Informant list

Informant 1 is a male in his 60s. Contacted in e-mail survey, March 2, 2009.

Informant 2 is a female in her 60s. Personal interview, July 17, 2009.

Informant 3 is a male in his 60s. Contacted in e-mail survey, January 14, 2009.

Informant 4 is a female in her 50s. Personal interview, June 4, 2009.

Informant 5 is a male in his 30s. Personal interview, June 4, 2009.

Informant 6 is a male in his 50s. Personal interview, June 4, 2009.

Informant 7 is a female in her 40s. Contacted in e-mail survey, January 20, 2009.

Informant 8 is a male in his 60s. Contacted in e-mail survey, January 14, 2009.

Informant 9 is a female in her 50s. Personal interview, October 24, 2008.

Informant 10 is a female in her 30s. Contacted in e-mail survey, January 10, 2009.

Informant 11 is a female in her 40s. Contacted in e-mail survey, January 21, 2009.

Informant 12 is a male in his 30s. Personal interview, November 15, 2008.

Informant 13 is a male in his 50s. Personal interview, April 1, 2009.

Informant 14 is a female in his 50s. Personal interview, April 2, 2009.

Informant 15 is a female in her 60s. Personal interview, August 4, 2009.

Informant 16 is a male in his 60s. Personal interview, August 4, 2009.

Informant 17 is a female in her 20s. Personal interview, April 3, 2009.

Informant 18 is a female in her 30s. Personal interview, April 4, 2009.

Informant 19 is a female in her 50s. Contacted in e-mail survey, February 18, 2009.

APPENDIX 2

Foundational Interview Questions

How and why did you become involved in performing early music?

What is/was your involvement in performing early music in Arizona? In what time frames? What are your specific genres or styles of interest?

How do you personally define early music? What time periods, genres do you see the term including? Which do you feel should be excluded? Is it your impression that others in Arizona would agree, or do you see a diversity of ideas toward the problem of defining the genre? (Or, do you not see it as a “problem?”)

What considerations do you take into account in choosing repertoire?

What does early music bring to your life that other styles don't? (Aesthetic fulfillment, community/identity, other?)

Do you feel that there is in fact something different about performing early music than other types of classical music, i.e. the so-called “common practice period?” If so, what and does this relate to the concept of “otherness” or exoticism, something that is somehow foreign or unusual in a way?

Does early music represent for you some sort of re-creation of something from the past, again as opposed to that of the common practice period, and if so, why is this re-creation important to you?

Hypothetically, take as a given that early music does represent another culture. Are there things that you feel modern culture shares with that “other” culture which enhance your feeling of belonging or do you feel more like an outsider?

What are your thoughts on improvisation in early music?

Do you derive any non-musical benefits from being involved with early music? E.g. social interaction, etc.

How have the economics of performing early music played out with respect to your involvement?