

In Their Own Voices – Immigrant Musickers in a Changing City

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Abstract

The following paper is drawn from a larger research project undertaken during 2008-2009, in which I closely examined the immigrant music community in St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. To this end, I interviewed over twenty-five people, most of them immigrant musicians, and in some cases viewed performances and rehearsals, created jam sessions, and participated in various music-making activities over an eight-month period. Here, I will present portraits of some of my consultants from that time, whose negotiations in their music-making activities demonstrate the diverse ways they see themselves in the Canadian multicultural milieu and the issues faced in relocation. I will highlight some of their experiences that provide insight into the social integration process and later, explore the limitations of certain culturally-integrative activities that the city of St. John's supports.

Keywords: Immigrants, Music-making, Integration, Multiculturalism, Identity, Innovation

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Introduction

St. John's, the capital city of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants and international students moving to the city since 2001 (Statistics Canada 2006), with roughly 500 new immigrants arriving annually (Goss Gilroy 2005, 4). Relatively small, compared to Toronto, Vancouver and other urban centres in Canada, St. John's has previously supported a relatively ethnoculturally homogenous population, or what is believed to be. This rather quick influx of immigrants is creating many points of cross-cultural contact that can offer insights into some of the challenges immigrants and long-settled Newfoundlanders are facing, an area of research which has largely been unexplored in St. John's; the Anglo-Celtic traditions that are conjured when one thinks of Newfoundland have attracted nearly all of the Newfoundland-based research.¹ As the province owes its existence not only to indigenous peoples, but to immigrants from England, Ireland, and France, great efforts have gone into documenting, analyzing, and promoting European settler traditions. Statistics Canada records on immigration, however, provide evidence that people from different countries, many outside of Europe, have flowed to and from the island, people whose stories and contributions have received little comment. What about these voiceless "others"? As more permanent ethnocultural communities form in St. John's, I believe it is essential not only to document a changing city and its varied issues, but to also provide opportunities for other voices to enter the discussions.

My focus in this paper is to give voice to some of these "others," in the case here, recently-settled immigrant musicians that I consulted with in 2009 as part of the final research project for my Master of Arts Degree. Their contributions to this discussion will demonstrate the diverse ways they see themselves and their roles in the newly-multicultural city of St. John's and the country at large. Their experiences will reveal some of the issues they face in their music-making activities, and the innovations they make as they go through the social integration process. Later, I will examine one of the frames that my consultants perform within and discuss its benefits and limitations for both immigrants and long-settled Newfoundland "locals." Lastly, I hope that this exploration and the voices of my consultants provide insight into some of the difficulties faced in relocation. This is especially important for Newfoundland and Labrador; the province is taking initiative to recruit more international newcomers to fill employment niches, yet has the lowest immigrant retention rates in Canada.²

Portraits of Immigrant Musickers in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

I have pursued my research with an aim of exploring the "doing" or process of music-making, rather than the product, and find it helpful to think of my consultants, their activities, and my own, through the lens of "musicking." Christopher Small states, "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composition), or by dancing" (Small 1998, 19).

Liz and Margarita

Upon arriving in Canada, Liz, an engineering student at Memorial University, and her younger sister Margarita, decided it was important to present their country of origin, Colombia, to the St. John's public and chose dance as a medium for this. Liz expresses that, "We had to come up with a dance that you know where it is from. With salsa, people know it's from different parts. We wanted a dance that represents our country and we found cumbia." Unfortunately, they found that, "guys here are too shy [to dance], and nobody wants to shake their hips" so the sisters began to choreograph performances with the two of them together, a difficult task, considering that cumbia is a courting dance between a male and female.

Distinct national heritage is only one part of their presentational choices. The form of cumbia the sisters chose to create is very "traditional" and in fact, they had relatives in Colombia make and send the traditional cumbia costumes to St. John's before they would perform. Upon meeting another Colombian dancer in the city, Carolina, Liz explains her and Margarita's reaction to Carolina's dances:

Carolina came here with her husband and also saw this need, [to present Colombia] so they created a dance, the cumbia. We saw them and told them the music they were using wasn't really cumbia. It sounds like it, but the cumbia doesn't have words, more like the sounds of special instruments, like flutes. Theirs, you can tell that it wasn't traditional. There were different instruments added. It's cumbia, but you have to show the roots, that is what we were looking for. She decided to join us."

Negotiations and new choreographies ensued, and in the end, Carolina brought some of her more modern music into the group. Now the dancers sometimes blend differing stylistic elements, modern and traditional, for instance by using music that combines traditional cumbia sounds, the "special instruments," and also features contemporary vocals.

Most interesting to me in getting to know the two sisters, is the great amount of information each wanted to share, not so much about Colombia, but about their specific region of origin, and for instance, stylistic distinctions in the cumbia and music of their home city of Barranquilla. Again, speaking of negotiations in the choreographies, Liz states that, "[in] our city we dance it with our hips and a specific posture. Carolina does not dance in that way. She moves her hips in a circle. These are simple things and you cannot see because there is a skirt." The three women also discussed this posture, and the Barranquilla style, in this instance, prevailed. Carolina, however, introduced a braid-like pattern of movement that incorporated all of the dancers, a movement more associated with the centre of Colombia. What is apparent from these differing ideas is not only regional and national identifications, but ways of using musicking to enact one's place in Canada. In this case it was a matter of demonstrating national distinctiveness to a wider public through the blending and sharing of regional and temporal traits (Liz and Margarita 2009).

Sancita

Sancita came to St. John's in 2001 from Bangladesh to study at Memorial University. Upon completing her studies, she began to work with the province's only federally-funded agency for promoting diversity and settling immigrants. As an employee, Sancita is invested in a notion of multiculturalism centred around inclusivity and cultural sharing. A well accomplished dancer who also studied tabla in both India and Bangladesh, she enjoys educating the public about multiculturalism through dance presentations. Using the name Bollywood Jig, a clear reference to both South Asian and Newfoundland traditions, Sancita's group creates and performs dance routines that incorporate and blend the movements and music of Bollywood, hip hop, bhangra, and to a lesser extent, kathak. This aggregation of styles is meant to showcase the multicultural possibilities of dance and music, and through performance, educate the public about diversity and cultural sharing.

Speaking about the music chosen for performances, Sancita claims, "Bollywood style is multicultural. There is no specific technique so it's multicultural, from hip hop to folk to classical. It has movements that anyone can learn. Even the music I choose to teach it is very multicultural." About Bollywood specifically she states, "If you look back 20 to 25 years ago, Indian cinema is what it used to be called, now it's Bollywood. Here you get a glimpse of what I am talking about. It used to be focused on their stories, and their music, which you do see now as well, but with globalization it all became a medley, a mix."

Bollywood Jig, all women at the time of research, encourages participation from people of all dance levels, genders, cultures, and age groups. Although the group is quite successful in the city, Sancita admits that finding men to dance in Bollywood Jig is quite difficult, and they have had only three men dance in the past five years, despite the male roles the Bollywood tradition supports. She choreographs accordingly, with less partner dancing, and more "feminine" hip movements: "In Bollywood dance we have so much use of the hip, but mainly for females. That hip move changes when I have a male dancer. I do unisex choreographies, but I would change a couple of hip movements for the male dancers...like in a less feminine way." Sancita also has to adapt her teaching style, at times, to suit Western norms. At one of the rehearsals I attended, she was challenged by one of the local students in the class when her teaching style became too critical, an obvious product of the South Asian guru system in which Sancita was tutored, one where the teacher is always shown the greatest respect. I witnessed Sancita struggle with this student and eventually back down, giving some compliments to the group, in essence changing her teaching style to accommodate cultural difference.

As she articulates, the music indeed often features a blend of cultural elements such as bhangra and hip hop, which she believes communicates Canada's multicultural ethos to audiences. But more specifically, the educational aspect of this group is to present people of different cultures dancing together to music that is also multicultural. At the rehearsals, I observed this ethos as Sancita places

more concentration on perfect group formation, rather than style and technique. Furthermore, she sees something in this music that is easily transmitted across cultural lines. For example, she believes that the verbal aspects of hip hop translate easily to forms she is familiar with, for instance in dancing spoken syllables in kathak, and as such, the form can be easily be understood cross-culturally (Chakraborty 2009).

Shahana

Shahana, a professional singer and songwriter from Bangladesh, moved to St. John's in the 1980s and later became an employee with the International Student Association at Memorial University. Shahana's understanding of multiculturalism formed during her time in Canada, in a similar way as Sancita's did, and her musical experiences in St. John's are filtered through this lens. Shahana's understanding, however, is subtly different from Sancita's. She explains,

After several years of multiculturalism, mainland Canada's society has evolved to integrate its various cultures into its main social fabric. As a result, numerous events and festivals take place that include several communities and encourage inter-cultural interactions, and this has become the way of the mainland Canadian mainstream. For instance, ten years ago, Canadians were not very interested in watching or playing Football (soccer). However, that interest is now growing. Newfoundland is very new to multiculturalism and is only beginning to get a taste of this type of surrounding. Because of its unicultural history, it is very gradually learning about multiculturalism and is slowly developing its own way to deal with a newer, culturally richer society. (Email communication, June 5, 2009)

She relates the barriers she faces in enacting her professionalism and "fitting" into the St. John's musical "social fabric:"

Until I came here I was related to the music community [in Bangladesh], the radio and television artists there. Here, one thing I found out after I came, was the way radio and television is organized and programmed is quite different. In Bangladesh, all stations have their own musicians and groups. All over the country, you go for an audition and pass, then there is gradation, which is how many times you will do the program, such as monthly. My regional program started just after grade ten. Until moving here I did my program every month in different stations.

She states further, "I liked that system. It was so convenient. When you are coming, you just show up with music because all the musicians are there, and everybody knows [the music]." In St. John's, she faces difficulties adapting to the different media systems, and has challenges finding musicians sufficiently competent in Bangladeshi music:

There was nothing here for how I used to spend time. I used to perform, and also did public performances. It was limited here, with no opportunities to

perform. Another inconvenience is there is no drum player. Some tried tabla and I performed with them, but they were not professional[s].

In the few performance opportunities Shahana has accepted, she admits that her song choices were often determined by the competency of the other musicians in the performance.

Shahana's idea of her role as a musician in Canadian society points toward weaving different and distinct cultural elements into the social fabric. Newcomers should simply continue engaging with life in a similar manner to their home countries, which eventually leads, perhaps, to influencing the larger Canadian community. Although Shahana faces difficulties in continuing her professional-level musicking, she adapts and has found a new way of expressing herself, which takes on many aspects of remembering. Shahana has become a songwriter while in St. John's, and focuses much of her writing on the environment in Bangladesh, writing about the different seasons, or the sounds of animals that she remembers (Shahana 2009).

Illir

Illir, a teenager recently arrived from Bosnia, and originally from Kosovo, is a singer, and has started to learn to play the keyboard he acquired from his uncle. He relates that in the refugee camps in Bosnia, he and his friends would often musick together "just for fun," something he insists is still the point of his musicking. I have been lucky enough to see Illir and his cousins in St. John's engage in this "fun." Many times I have watched as the young men find "rhythms," or beat loops, on the internet and sing and rap over top of them, laughing, teasing each other, and reciting commonly heard shout-outs well-known in hip hop culture. Unfortunately, Illir is often unsatisfied with his creations as the quality of the recordings is greatly reduced because of his older equipment. He explains that as soon as he finds a job and has some disposable income, he will purchase professional-level equipment which will allow him to actualize his creations properly, and in turn, share more of them.

Interestingly, Illir communicates with his old musicking friends in Bosnia via MSN messenger. He relays that his friends in Bosnia will send him a "rhythm" through instant messenger, which he then downloads onto a disk and uploads into his keyboard. Illir then practices singing, rapping, and creating melodies over top of this rhythm. Once satisfied with his creation, Illir records the new music, uploads it onto his computer, and sends it back to his friends in Bosnia. This musicking "fun" that Illir is beginning to explore in St. John's, is a way also a way for him to stay connected transnationally (Illir 2009).

Jesse (pseudonym)

Jesse, originally from Angola, and an Afro-pop musician for over thirty years, has toured much of Africa and Europe during his successful career, meeting many heads of state and garnering awards from various countries. After immigrating to St. John's from Kenya in 1999, Jesse immediately sought out musicians and taught

them the styles he was familiar with: St. John's first Afro-pop band was soon born. Jesse relayed many stories from his professional career during our interview, accentuating his accomplishments as a professional musician. I wondered initially if Jesse was remembering, or perhaps attempting to validate his experience to me, but I soon found out that he faces challenges to being recognized as a professional in the music community in St. John's. Like Shahana, Jesse wants to continue his musical career in the city, and encounters barriers to enacting his role as a professional musician. After numerous attempts to secure funding support from provincial arts organizations, Jesse has been unsuccessful and unable to realize the full vision of his music projects, despite the fact that the city "loves [this] music." Jesse understands himself to be very accomplished and relates his ideas about the lack of support from funding bodies:

Black artists come to me and ask what they can do. I send them to the organizations and they are denied. We black artists, we will never, ever achieve our goals in this province if we don't get funding from these organizations. People here love the music. I see the crowd, we sold 4000 CDs, but in the eyes of these associations, they see nothing.

Furthermore, he believes that many of the judges in the funding organizations simply choose music that is familiar to them, which sometimes doesn't support the tastes of the entire city. Jesse has decided to be a mentor for other African musicians who come to St. John's and may face similar difficulties. His new-found goal may indicate a different interpretation of his place within St. John's—an initiator of and leader for pan-African musical unity (Jesse 2009).

(Re) constructing

Through the above consultants we learn about the challenges they face, such as securing funds, enacting chosen identities, finding other musickers, negotiating new media and forms of musicking, and developing different teaching styles. What emerges from their struggles, however, are innovations which demonstrate the lengths individuals will go to in order to express themselves. Some of the immigrant musickers have to experiment with new modes of self-expression, such as Shahana's compositional turn. Others, like the Colombian dancers and Sancita create different musicking activities that allow them to present their individual conceptions of "home" and perceived societal roles in multicultural Canada; these notions, we learn, vary greatly between individuals.

These differing conceptions of "home" and roles in St. John's are connected to the (re)construction of identity, an aspect of the immigrant experience that has been well documented.³ These musickers have different understandings of how one should "fit in." Some view themselves as teachers or educators to the wider public, others as professional musicians, and some as leaders in their respective cultural communities. Interwoven in these conceptions are different ways of relating to one's "home" country and enacting these relations publicly. Shahana and Jesse seek to continue their musicking just as they had in their countries of origin. Each, however, faces challenges and adapts; Shahana now enjoys remembering Bangla-

desh through her writing, while Jesee, is relating more to pan-African unity in St. John's, and enacts this through his mentorship in the African music community. The Colombian dancers enjoy showcasing a more "traditional" national distinctiveness to audiences, although they favour speaking about their specific region of origin in Colombia. Sancita, on the other hand, blends cultural traditions and enjoys educating the public while Illir learns new ways of expressing himself to remain connected with his friends in Bosnia.

These diverse interpretations offer new perspectives when looking at the trans-national identities of immigrants. Transnationalism is to maintain "dual identities that can be said to involve both the globalization and the localization of culture" (McMahon 2005, 354). What the consultants here demonstrate is that people often maintain these identities in very specific ways such as temporally or regionally, with great variation between individuals. For example, we learn from the Colombian dancers that group members have to negotiate differing transnational relations. Although Carolina was intent on presenting a more modern version of cumbia, with movements drawn from the central region of Colombia, many of her ideas did not make it into the performances of the traditional cumbia Liz and Margarita envisioned.

My consultants also offer different ways of thinking about the "global flow." Arjun Appadurai argues in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), that researchers should "think beyond the nation-state" (1996, 158) in this period of global dissemination, in which electronic mediation and mass migration, the "global flow" of images and information, create a world in which "neither images nor viewers fit into circuits or audiences which are easily bound within local, national, or regional spaces" (4). Some of the musickers presented here, however, are "bound" within their "home" countries, and very specifically. Others identify as being a part of a larger area, such as Africa. Yet still, some experiment with the "global flow" and maintain more of a "postnational" affiliation, but often do so to remain connected to "home," as in the cases of Illir and Sancita.

All of these diverse interpretations, associated issues and innovations have to be negotiated by the immigrant musickers I've described above in relative isolation and in reaction to more powerful forces and discursive frameworks. It is interesting to look at some of the challenges and adjustments through the lens of the Canadian social integration model which is "the process by which newcomers become a part of the social, cultural, and institutional fabric of the host community or society while at the same time retaining their own cultural identity" (Friederes 2008, 80). This process is "an endeavour distinctly defined as a 'two-way street' process, where both immigrants and current citizens are expected to adapt to each other, to ensure positive outcomes for everyone in the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres" (Biles, Burstein and Friederes 2008, 4). My broad look at immigrant musicking in St. John's has made me question whether the adaptations of the host society are comparable to those of the immigrant musickers. That being said, different organizations in the city are involving themselves in the process and are providing more opportunities for immigrant musicians to

perform, often with the intention of promoting cultural diversity within the city of St. John's. My consultants are thankful for these opportunities to perform their musick, as are long-settled Newfoundlanders for the entertainment the performances provide. I think it is important, however, to examine these events and the ways in which performers are framed.

“Sharing Our Cultures”

All of the immigrant musickers described above have been implicated in a variety of “multicultural/diversity” display events that are held in the city on an annual basis. Founded on the basis of teaching and sharing one’s cultural or national heritage through musical performance, the organizers of cultural display events aim to educate the public about Newfoundland and Labrador’s cultural diversity and as such aid social integration and immigrant retention rates in the province. Events such as “Sharing Our Cultures,” held annually at a large museum, or Memorial University’s annual international student’s talent showcase, which in 2009 had a theme of traveling around the world to experience other cultures, are just two examples.

The performances at these events showcase nationality through musicking to an observant audience through distinct framing; the performers are introduced as “so and so, from such and such country” and by means of the event, each act of musicking is presentational in nature. The recent work of Thomas Turino is helpful in this discussion (2008). Although the concepts of presentational and participatory performance have a long history in the literature,⁴ Turino builds on them using Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of social field (1984, 1985), suggesting that one must conceptualize music making “in relation to different realms or fields of artistic practice” (Turino 2008, 25). Each field is structured around “the types of activity, artistic roles, values, goals, and people involved in specific instances of music making and dance” (2008, 27). The presentational field “refers to situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing” (2008, 26). The participatory field, on the other hand, “is a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role” (2008, 26). The performances at the “multicultural/diversity” events fall clearly in the presentational realm and a certain level of professionalism is palpable as the performances are usually well-rehearsed.

With a goal of presenting culturally diverse music and faces, these events provide a crucial first step in social integration, displaying ethnic diversity, and as such are provided with government funding. Although useful and greatly appreciated by audiences and immigrant musicians, there are limitations to what is communicated in the performance frames present at the events. The story below will help demonstrate some of the constraints on both performers and audience interpretations.

Performing “Albania”: Illir’s Story

At a diversity event held in April 2009, Illir was described as presenting music from “Albania.” Illir’s music, in fact, relates much more to global hip hop culture than a home country. Dressed differently for the occasion, he wore baggy pants and a baseball cap turned slightly to the side, styles commonly associated with the hip hop artists Illir admires. The audience seemed confused by his nonchalant character and spirited conversations with friends in the audience, all of whom were yelling shout-outs well-known in hip hop culture. Not only was Illir enacting the more participatory audience-performer interaction well-established in his family’s musicking, he seemed to be performing as a DJ, not as an “Albanian.” Knowing Illir quite well, I understand that he is not interested in displaying his Albanian roots, but rather, in creating music to share with others, particularly when that music combines elements of hip hop. Unlike some of the other musickers presented here, Illir makes no comment about wanting to represent his country, or even himself. Although he is clearly interacting with his (second) home, Bosnia, often composing Albanian hip hop-influenced melodies and rhythms to do so, it is Illir’s engagement with global popular culture that defines his music more. By virtue of the performance frame, Illir becomes locked into an ethnic identity. He is not showcasing Albania through music in the way the Colombian dancers present their home country. This experimentation, as he states, is “just for fun.” Moreover, as Illir’s musicking clearly falls more in the participatory realm, using studio art and the Internet to musick with his friends in Bosnia, his performance in the presentational event, although enjoyable, did not relay the same “professionalism” as the other performances; some audience members responded poorly, laughing and whispering during his piece.

Within Frames

The multicultural discourse underlying events like this has been critiqued by sociologist P. Li, in that it “tends to view ethnic culture as essentially homogeneous and primordial in nature. Accordingly, members of an ethnic group develop an ethnic identity on the basis of a common cultural heritage” (1999, 164). Indeed, the goals of a many of my consultants’ musicking has little to do with wanting to present a national or an ethnic heritage. One of the limitations, then, is that the audience may not always understand the goals behind the musicking, as Illir’s performance exemplifies, and further, the diverse ways in which one may relate to one’s home(s), if choosing to enact this relation publicly.

Given the set of data, I would like to refine Turino’s conception of the presentational field, by elaborating new categories for diasporic performances, categories which can perhaps be incorporated into the framing at the “multicultural/diversity” events in St. John’s:

- 1) *Nationally/Regionally/Culturally Presentational*: This field of musicking has a goal of presenting one’s “home” country, region or cultural heritage to an audience through music or dance. For example, the Colombian dancers choreographed a traditional cumbia, Colombia’s national dance, to present to long-settled St. John’s residents.

2) *Musically Presentational*: Although threads of national presentation are often woven into this field, it is oriented toward creating music for the purpose of presenting it for public or private consumption, and in some cases, to maintain trans-national ties. Many in this realm were professional musicians in their countries of origin, such as Shahana (Bangladesh) and Jesee (Angola). The goal within this realm is not always about producing music for public consumption at large. Some consultants engage in this musicking at small group gatherings. For example, Sancita and Shahana, both from Bangladesh, often musick together for Bangladeshi New Year's celebrations at friends' homes.

3) *Multiculturally Presentational*: The goal of this realm of musicking is to present one's conception of multiculturalism. Sancita's creation of Bollywood Jig, an inclusive group in terms of age and culture that encompasses notions of cultural sharing and blending, allows her to communicate her understanding of multiculturalism, one founded on blending and inclusivity.

Furthermore, although we are well aware that cultural traditions change, are fluid, and open to interpretation, the snapshots of cultures, or countries, at these events, do not provide the opportunity for audience members to experience musical traditions beyond the product. As the consultants here demonstrate, there are many negotiations involved in the process. Following Ricardo D. Trimilios, that these culture bearers "look the native," a certain amount of credibility may be given to the knowledge and music they display (2004, 38). This credibility becomes problematic when one looks into the adaptations that often take place in creating and performing one's musick. For instance, Sancita insists on the importance of male dancing in the Bollywood tradition, but what is presented is a non-male performance. Moreover, although Sancita at one point had two male dancers, she admits that she changes the choreography now, with less partner dancing, and even feminizes some of the moves, such as those of the hips. Similarly, Shahana is unable to fully realize the Bangladeshi music she wishes to because a professional tabla player is not at her disposal.

Surely, nearly all presentational performances do not provide the opportunity for audiences to see the development and negotiations in a performer's musick. Christopher Small argues that revealing the process is an aspect of musicking that is essential for proper understanding:

Music is not a thing at all, but an activity, something people do. The apparent thing "music" is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at closely. This habit of thinking in abstractions, of taking from an action what appears to be its essence and of giving that essence a name, is probably as old as language; it is useful in the conceptualizing of our world but it has its dangers. It is very easy to come to think of the abstraction as more real than the reality it represents, to think, for example, of those abstractions we call love, hate, good and evil as having an existence apart from the acts of loving, hating, or performing good and

evil deeds and even to think of them as being in some way more real than the acts themselves, a kind of universal or ideal lying behind and suffusing the actions. This is the trap of reification, and it has become a fault of Western thinking ever since Plato, who was one of its earliest perpetrators. (Small 1998, 2)

The revelation of process is perhaps even more important in the case of immigrant musickers whose musicking is often emergent, “selected and reformulated as representative of a group’s identity, [which] serve as a means of identifying, affirming, and valuing uniqueness and personal history” (McMahon 2005, 353). In her research with Sudanese refugee dancers in New York, Felicia Faye McMahon presents many of the group’s negotiations in choosing repertoire and presenting it. She advises the reader:

It is not enough to say that the traditions of this small group are emergent... [Fieldwork] reveal[s] several forces acting on these traditions performed outside of their original context. It becomes apparent that diasporic authenticity can be defined when we recognize that, like all tradition, it involves a to-and-fro movement between culturally shared knowledge and group negotiation, ever affected by changing internal and external tensions. (2005, 354)

About adaptation, she states,

...it is important to remember that every consensus has a “history,” made from a collection of differing opinions that do not just disappear as one tradition is negotiated. Under new circumstances, when new variables act on tradition, tradition is set in motion. Each time there remains the need to identify new variables and conditions that play a central role in the production and reproduction of the collective identities of diasporic communities. (2005, 376)

The points the author makes are much in line with the information I have been given, in that my consultants “traditions” are incredibly dynamic, especially upon relocation. In line with Christopher Small, I think it is important that this somehow be communicated to audiences.

To be clear, I am fully accepting of the fact that many of my consultants are presentational musicians, and greatly enjoy the performance opportunities the diversity events provide. That being said, interacting with my consultants – speaking, learning, sharing, musicking – allows me to better understand them, their cultures, ideas, and the immigrant experience. I am provided the opportunity to see the dynamism of traditions, the variety of roles conceived and enacted, the transnational relations, and the negotiations. As a researcher, I have an advantage in that I can interview the presentational musickers, interact with them, and move past the display of performance. This opportunity also allows me to question the underlying factors and great diversity in all of the musicking and the in-

dividuals producing it. Observation, questioning, and negotiation are integral, not only to the process of social integration, but are also essential to understanding the full depth and potential of a multicultural society. How, then, can we offer this same advantage to the “everyday ethnomusicologists” who attend events, some for entertainment, but others who may want to learn about people, cultures, and countries via musick? Is this even possible?

My suggestion of different performance frames at diversity events may afford more information to audience members, but my wider suggestion is that we provide opportunities for immigrants and locals to musick together in more participatory activities, for instance at “jam sessions,” social dance activities and ensembles. A more participatory atmosphere that allows for interaction with the “other,” can often invite “embodied experiences” (Kisliuk and Gross 2004) and perhaps more thorough interpretations. An embodied experience can

facilitate an understanding, or at least an awareness, of both macro and micropolitics. In learning to dance and sing in new ways, one becomes vitally aware of issues of self and other, and of “here” and “there,” challenging the distancing that takes place in much disembodied scholarship. (Kisliuk and Gross 2004, 250)

This face-to-face interaction may foster a better environment for the “two-way street” model of social integration to manifest itself, as people learn with and about each other. As the Newfoundland and Labrador government moves forward in their attempts at social integration and increased immigrant retention, as do other cities, we might want to consider if the diversity display events are fully meeting the goals of teaching diversity and aiding with integration. We might also consider initiating and sponsoring more participatory events, alongside the presentational performances, where long-settled locals and immigrants can musick together, and perhaps negotiate, (re)construct and adapt to and with each other.

Conclusion

Similar to the “diversity/multiculturalism” events, I realize that I, too, have only provided snapshots of my consultants. I have, however, offered a glimpse into their musicking and their (re)constructions, both personal and musical. Indeed, there are limitations to this platform as well and I am unable to provide the reader with an opportunity to hear or view the “products” of these musickers; an important aspect has been left out. Of most importance here, is that their voices show us the struggles they face along with their innovation and perseverance. Interwoven are their diverse understandings of multiculturalism, themselves and their musicking. I hope their voices not only enter the discussion in the city of St. John’s, but that they also enter the wider conversations on relocation and immigrant musicking.

Endnotes

1. The majority of scholarly work and holdings in the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive was, at the time of research, about Anglo-Celtic traditions. A few exceptions, mainly theses, have provided some diversity through enquiry into the Lebanese,

Portuguese, and Chinese communities, which have a longer history in the province. Since the time of this research, a new project, St. John's Many Voices, is exploring the history and present-day activities of a variety of ethnocultural communities in St. John's, NL.

2. See for instance the *Newfoundland and Labrador Immigration Strategy* (2007), and also Goss Gilroy *Retention and Integration of Immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador: Are We Ready, Final Report* (2005).
3. See for instance Diehl 2002, Chambers 1994, Stokes 1994, Turino 1993, Reyes-Schramm 1986.
4. Turino acknowledges Keil 1987, 1995, Progler 1995, and Graves 2005.

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