

Berklee College of Music

Global Music Concepts and Application: A Methodology in Assorted Music

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Music in Contemporary
Performance (Production Concentration)

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Abstract

Coming from a diverse background, and having the incredible opportunity to have studied many different kinds of music through various teaching styles, I developed the passion to find a way to teach music using oral/aural concepts from diverse cultures. Through my culminating experience project as part of the Contemporary Performance (Production Concentration) program at Berklee Valencia, I decided to develop my own teaching methodology through the designing of a course entitled “Global Music Concepts and Application” for higher western music education. Through interviews with educators and students of various traditions, analysis of my education, background, course development, and teaching in different settings, I have put together a unique form of oral/aural musical education, that not only reflects my cultural upbringing, but my music, and attitude as a human being as well. With my course and methodology completed, I plan to promote them to different higher education institutions, as well as create online and different age/ level versions of it. My dream is to teach at Berklee Valencia, and be a part of teaching students to respect, explore, accept, and collaborate with as many different cultures that present themselves, without demonstrating cultural appropriation or discrimination while doing so.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Aural/Oral methodology, Global Music, Berklee.

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1. Introduction

The only professions that I have ever considered, are those related to music. Born in Milan, Italy, to a Swiss mother and an Indian father, and raised in the United States, I was given a very rich cultural upbringing, especially in regards to music. The three most listened to musicians in the Ramakrishna house were Beethoven, Ravi Shankar, and the Beatles. It occurred to me at a very young age that music is extremely diverse, and it is important to expose ourselves to music from every corner of the world. I was raised in rural Pennsylvania in the United States. There is a large blues and jazz scene, as well as folk in my area, but I never saw any collaboration between these genres. Coming from such a diverse background, I felt very incomplete not having a strong connection to my Indian and Swiss roots, since the majority of people in my area seemed to have very little interest in anything outside of the US. So, I would go to blues open mics with my father and see so many similarities to Indian music that I had grown up listening to, and come home feeling that something was missing in what I was playing. These experiences were one of many times where I knew I wanted to find a way to combine different kinds of music together.

I started formal lessons on the nylon string guitar at age 6, with basic western notation reading, scales, and simple repertoire. Though my first instructor stopped teaching music soon after to pursue music production, I was not discouraged and moved on to study the electric guitar with a local blues/rock guitarist. By the age of 10, my vocabulary on the guitar was heavily influenced by blues and rock phrases, and my memory of western notation was replaced by guitar tablature, chord symbols, and improvisation.

I never imagined myself being anything but a musician, but it never had occurred to me that I could be a professional musician. The guitar had solely been my best friend to sing along to Beatles songs, and to escape my anxiety and other health issues. This changed when my

father took me to a concert of Al di Meola. From then on, my focus was to become a professional performing musician.

In 6th and 7th grade, I decided to take the opportunity and study with sitarist Bina Kalavant (founder of the Kalavant Center in NYC), who rented a weekend home in the area I was living. Studying Hindustani music on the sitar for two years opened my mind to a whole new way of learning. This was my first formal exposure to oral/aural music education. I refer to the sitar lessons as formal aural education because even though blues guitar is taught in a similar fashion, it was more of a hybrid style with half notation (tabs) and half listening. My note taking in the Sitar lessons were just syllables referring to the scale degrees of the raga. Improvisation and melody were thought of in a more rhythmic and cyclical sense, and harmony was non-existent. But after studying in this way, I felt I had gained a much deeper understanding of music. An understanding that I had not found in notated music.

When the time came to decide where I would attend high school, a small charter (government funded) performing arts high school was holding auditions for students to study regular academics, plus half a day of arts (either visual, instrumental, vocal, theater, dance or ice skating). I enrolled in the guitar program, which immediately introduced me to both Jazz and Classical music education. I was learning to sight read Bach violin concerti, and learning to improvise over lead sheets in the Real Book. It was in high school that I was able to attend masterclasses with legendary jazz musicians and educators like Dave Liebman and Phil Woods, who both lived in Pennsylvania less than one hour from my home. It was in a masterclass with Liebman that I first received a glimpse of how music can be taught using more than one kind of music. “Lieb” started playing for us recordings of different wind instruments, such as saxophone, recorders, and even Shehnai (Indian Double reed). He explained how there are so many ways of ornamentation depending on the style of music. I was so impressed by his vast and diverse knowledge of music, that I felt like just studying one kind of music, and even music

separated into different classes (i.e. just harmony or rhythm) was not the way I felt music should be studied.

It was during this time that I began studying Flamenco guitar with Ruben Diaz (disciple of Paco de Lucia). After reaching out to Ruben in 2012 about some harmony of Paco, he invited me to start lessons with him via Skype. Ruben's teaching style is similar to the style of teaching I had encountered with Blues (hybrid between notation and aural), but on a much more intense and challenging level. He would write down the scale fingerings that Paco de Lucia had taught him, but also have me repeat and improvise phrases with him in a more traditional way. Counting aloud while playing, call and response, and listening are things that I learned from Ruben Diaz that I still use today in both my practice and teaching.

I was blessed to be a part of a high school that welcomed many students who challenged the binary norms of life. I realized that there had been a shift from the ideology of man and woman, gay or straight, and black or white, to a more open and accepting view. While this is still a battled topic, especially in the United States, I resonate with this principle, and in high school, realized that music must reach this stage as well. I began consciously playing and writing music that avoided genre labeling. Less labels means less borders and more acceptance and collaboration. This is still the main goal that I wish to achieve in music.

When I reached Berklee in Boston to study Jazz Composition and Arranging, the prospect of becoming a touring musician had apparently faded from my mind. I spent more time writing music influenced by all the music I had listened to, and helping colleagues learn about Flamenco, Blues, or Indian music. While at Berklee as an undergraduate, I began to notice that all my teachers were able to somehow balance teaching higher education, and still perform and compose frequently. This revelation came to me at a perfect time since I had begun to feel the need to teach the way I thought of music, even if it were just to my friends.

In the spring of 2019, I deferred from Berklee to create an educational program for elementary and middle school students at the Waldorf school in Pennsylvania, USA, where I had gone to school. Creating a curriculum for young students in the Waldorf setting (heavily focused on the absence of technology, and support of creativity and imagination), was the perfect introduction to teaching at an institution. My program consisted of call response, listening to music from different cultures, and learning diverse music either by ear or with western notation, similar to the way I had been taught in Flamenco and Hindustani music. When I returned to Berklee to complete my composition portfolio and continue lessons with Simon Shaheen (Oudist and Composer), whom I had studied Microtonal theory and played in his ensemble, my focus now included “how am I learning music?” and “how am I being taught this music?”. With Shaheen, I explored both western and eastern (specifically the Maqam system of the Arab world) styles of education, comparing and contrasting them thoroughly. Some days we would look at Bach, while other days Simon would teach about Taqsim and Maqam modulation through listening and imitating. By the time I had finished Berklee at age 23, I had studied Classical, Jazz, Blues, Hindustani, Flamenco, and Maqam. It is very important for me to continue expanding my diverse foundation, and I have been extremely lucky to be at the right place and time to study with all these teachers, who have directly influenced, helped me create a stronger identity in myself, and inspired me to follow their footsteps and teach as well. Graduating at Berklee College of Music in May 2020, I had a new goal in mind. This time, the goal includes every goal, and everything I have learned since I first started this journey at age 6. This goal has manifested into the Culminating Experience Project in the Contemporary Performance (Production Concentration) program at Berklee Valencia.

2. Proposed Culminating Experience

I grew up studying music in various different education systems, and always struggled on how to combine all of them together. I would see direct correlations between the North Indian Raga system when I studied Sitar, the Maqam system while studying the Oud, and even with the Western education system taught in conservatories and pre-college courses. Yet, I felt that they should all be included in one music education system, and that all topics of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, etc.) should be taught together. Through ethnography of different oral music traditions as well western pedagogical concepts, and research and interviews of existing educational systems, students, and teachers, I plan to create a style of teaching that brings together various educational practices of aural/oral music education and solidify them into one. I hope to help students thrive in communication, personal identity through exposure to music from around the world, and open mindedness to collaborate with each other.

3. Objective

My objective is to develop new methods for music education, that are more inclusive to the many different aural/oral traditions around the world, through the creation of a one semester long (15 weeks approx.) higher music education (college, conservatory, etc.) course. These strategies will not be based on a foundation of western European music education, but will focus more deeply on various systems such as Indian, Flamenco, Arabic, and African, and aspects also found in Jazz education, but that is not based solely on one tradition. A teaching method that will be used to teach general music, for any instrument and cultural/musical background, that teaches the topics of rhythm, and including melody, harmony, improvisation,

and composition, all together and in relation to each other, in a complementary fashion to western music education. The course will use methods that are common throughout all oral education systems, such as call and response, repetition, memorization, and improvisation, to give the student a stronger and more organic connection to the topics, and the opportunity to study music as one large entity instead of several different and separated topics.

3.1 Sub-objectives

- Collect repertoire from different traditions to help teach topics such as melody, harmony, etc.
- Create 15 lesson plans (1 semester's worth) with detailed objectives and lesson sequences based on the following course outcomes.

Course Outcomes

- Describe music using terminology from different musical traditions, such as North and South Indian classical, Flamenco, and Arabic Maqam, Western classical and Jazz.
- Analyze and compare/contrast music from these traditions
- Compose and perform music using different techniques found in different genres
- Recognize and recite simple and complex rhythms such as Waltz, Swing, Malfuf, Buleria, Teen tal, etc.
- Improvising using melodic and harmonic concepts from Hindustani, Maqam, Flamenco, and Jazz.
- Hold extra-curricular lessons for Berklee Valencia Students using the developing methods (private and group).
- Composing, performing, and recording music that is derived directly from the methods that will be used to teach.

4. Methodology

To solidify a system based on aural/oral education, I will mainly be using ethnography to collect data on oral music traditions, as well as educational research into existing programs using comparative analysis to help me influence the way I choose to design my own methodology and course. Besides immersing myself in different oral educational styles, from November to December 2020 I have been holding interviews on Zoom with students and teachers, and asking them how oral music education benefited them, what they wish they had received that oral music education did not give them, and what from their oral music education they would like to see as part of western music education. Each session has had a topic in direct correlation with the topics included in my course (i.e. Rhythm, Melody, Harmony, etc.). All meetings are being recorded, and the material discussed will be used in the spring semester to help build the curriculum for the program.

Once my syllabus has been developed, I plan to hold two sessions, in person or on Zoom (if necessary), and workshop these teaching methods with students. The first will be held in the second half of the Spring semester, giving me time to see what works and what doesn't, and having a second session in the beginning of the final semester to solidify my course.

I have been relying quite heavily on my laptop for interviews on Zoom, composing on Finale, and for writing and scheduling as well. I need to be able to promote my workshops for the spring semester, as well as a facility where I can host students (depending on Covid protocol). I hope to take advantage of the vast variety of instruments (specifically percussion) that the equipment room at Berklee Valencia has to offer, as well as the recording studios to record music as supporting material in my course development process. My general plan of action to properly execute my CE, has been to complete a series of interviews, and a portfolio of compositions in the Fall semester, focusing on product development (course curriculum) through workshops (trial runs), and recording music from the portfolio in the spring semester,

which leaves the last semester for finalizing the curriculum, and releasing the collection of music inspired by the course curriculum.

4.1 Justification

As described in the introduction, I have had incredible opportunities to study many different kinds of music in many different educational settings. This has directly contributed to my ability and passion to compose and perform music that has a foundation of diverse influences. The outcome of my course aims to give this same ability to my students. I believe it is necessary for students to see the intricate relationship between all aspects of music, but as well as many different styles of music. This is why my methodology in this course will teach rhythm, melody, harmony, improvisation, and composition all together, while using materials such as repertoire, from several different musical cultures. While western music education separates each topic to give their students a deeper understanding, and relies (partially or completely) on written materials (notation), I justify my course as a complement to the western music teachings by including all topics together, and teaching them through oral/aural techniques. I absolutely respect the western system, as I have studied it most of my life so far, therefore, my methods and course do not strive to replace the current system, but rather to join it by adding a different perspective to enrich the student's knowledge and learning experience. On a personal level, to say this project is incredibly important to me, would be an understatement. In 2014, I visited Berklee Valencia while visiting my Flamenco guitar teacher in Malaga. I had a feeling then that I needed to be here in Valencia, so I enrolled in Berklee Boston and did two semesters of study abroad so that I could finally apply for the graduate program and study at this campus for at least one year. I have come full circle in my relationship with Berklee as a student, as well as in my relationship with music. From studying music for

the past 18 years (75% of my life) to now creating a curriculum, is a highlight for me. Another justification for this program is based on my own struggle to combine the music of my ancestry (Asian and European) with the music I learned in schools. I have always wanted to bring music together, and consequently bring people together doing that. However, I have witnessed and felt such a struggle with the education system of the West in being able to do so. I would like students in my course to be able to carve a stronger identity for themselves, but also be open to collaborating with people whose identities are very different from their own. I have a strong belief that my program can truly be beneficial for music students on an academic level, but more importantly on a personal level. I would also like to help academic music feel the freedom that oral music tradition has, as well as, help oral music tradition receive the respect and exposure that academic music has benefitted from.

5. Execution



Figure 1. Poster for “How do we learn music” interview series.

5.1 Interviews

My first task was to interview students and faculty of various musical backgrounds, to see how their relationship with music education had affected their perception and of course career in music. By the end of the first semester I completed three interviews with four guests all asking them the same questions; How do we learn music? And more specifically, how did the presence or absence of oral music education affect our musicianship?

Chaitanya Natu is an exceptionally talented young Tabla (Indian percussion instrument) player from Pune, India. Since our first meeting as part of my CE, he has become one of my closest collaborators and colleagues at Berklee Valencia. Chaitanya comes from a very formal Indian classical music training on Tabla. The musical education system in India is quite different to other classical traditions. While some other classical music forms are associated with written down music, both Hindustani and Carnatic (the North and South Indian forms of Indian Classical, respectively) are taught almost completely with oral/aural methods of education. Chaitanya described the format in which there are several different *Gharanas* or “schools” of teaching, throughout India. Followers of each school are connected by bloodline, or through the guru (teacher) system. Each Gharana has different approaches within classical music, and many (but not all) established artists (for example Pandit Ravi Shankar- Sitar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan - Sarod) can be traced by their Gharana as a form of identity. Still to this day, Indian classical musicians will introduce themselves with their name and instrument, but also their guru and Gharana to give context. By knowing the artist’s school and teacher, one may already gather how the artist plays. Once you find your guru, or in many cases you are born into a family where your parent or grandparent is one, lessons commonly start at a very young age. Lessons are, as mentioned before, taught orally, with heavy use of call and response. In both Hindustani and Carnatic classical, Padhant (North) or Konnakol (South) it is the recitation of syllables that are in direct correlation to the percussion instruments like the ancient

Pakhawaj, or the more famous grandchild version called Tabla. Demonstrated for me by Chaitanya, the bols (syllables) were created to mimic the different sounds of the instruments in order to teach. This is basically solfege (Do re mi) but for rhythm. There are thousands of phrases that can be recited in a very conversational manner, and percussionists can predict how the phrase will end, or how to respond to it. When students take notes, they only write down these syllables in case they need to refresh their memory, but the foundation of this way of teaching is memorization through call and response, not being able to read and recite. There is a famous story recited by legendary Ustad Zakir Hussain, where he describes an event that occurred at the time of his birth.

"I was brought home from the hospital. The tradition is that the son is handed to the father, and then the father has to recite a prayer in his son's ear, putting him on his way," Hussain says. "My father, when he took me in his arm, instead of reciting prayer, he sang rhythms in my ear. And my mother was very upset and said, 'Why are you doing this?' And he said, 'Because this is my prayer.' " (Zakir Hussain with NPR)

As clearly shown in this beautiful quote, and from interviewing Chaitanya Natu about his own experiences, musical education in India is not about going to school, learning about music, and then going home. In fact, music students still go to regular school to learn academics. Chaitanya, to my astonishment, has a Masters in computer science from a reputable university on top of his Tabla accolades. It seems that in Indian culture, music is not a profession that one may go to just study and then earn a living, but more of a way of life, and sometimes a way of religious devotion, that for some may result in fame and recognition. In conclusion, the interview with Chaitanya brought to me the idea that teaching music is not just about teaching music in a professional sense, but in a much more organic and human way, relying on basic skills like memory, communication, and respect. We can ponder all of these

elements especially through a final quote in this interview by a pillar of Hindustani classical music, Sarod master Ustad Ali Akbar Khan:

If you practice for ten years, you may begin to please yourself, after 20 years you may become a performer and please the audience, after 30 years you may please even your guru, but you must practice for many more years before you finally become a true artist-then you may please even God.

Sergio Martinez has been one of the most important educational figures in my life, so I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to find out what has made him such a good teacher. Sergio specializes in Flamenco percussion, but has performed in a wide variety of music dialects ¹outside of Flamenco as well. Flamenco music has broad similarities to Hindustani music in its approach to musical education, but differs drastically when looking closer because of the differences between folk and classical music. Many cultures have initiated their own forms of classical music, some being older than others, but all have quite clearly stated rules in how to play or learn the music. Folk music such as Blues or Bluegrass as part of the African diaspora in the United States, or the hundreds of art forms that evolved through the journey of the Roma people from Rajasthan, India to Western Europe and North Africa. These indigenous forms of music have often been the outcome of the persecution and annihilation of groups of people that did not fit the agenda of the more powerful counterparts. The foundation of Folk music is pain and suffering, while the knowledge is the pillar of any classical movement. It is for this reason that classical music is taught in schools, while most attempts of teaching folk music in academia have led to cultural appropriation. Yet Flamenco, seems to be somewhere in between. Though in its original form, Flamenco is truly

¹ I refer to music dialects instead of genres, because for me, the goal is for musicians from any background to realize that we all speak the same language (music), but that we may speak it in different ways. If we can learn each other's dialects, we can be much more connected musically and personally.

the folk music of Andalusia (Southern Spain), and is the expression of the suffering of the Roma people that ended up there, Flamenco also happens to be a form that has had one of the fastest evolutions within its documented short history. Though the elements of Flamenco have been in existence for hundreds of years, the earliest, but most current form of Flamenco, is roughly just over 100 years old.

In resemblance to other folk music, the specific place or reason how Flamenco arose is unknown, but only around 70 years after its first documentation, the music went through a massive expansion of harmony, instrumentation, and worldwide popularity with subgenre combinations of African American, South American music, and other cultures. This is largely due to the genius of Paco de Lucia, who with his ensembles, collaborations, compositions, and virtuosic playing, brought Flamenco up to speed with many musical evolutions 3 times its age. It is because of the revolutionary movement of Paco de Lucia in the 1970's and '80's, that Flamenco cannot only be considered a strictly folk kind of music, since it now borrows from classical and other folk traditions. Getting back to my interview with Sergio, his musical education is quite similar to that of the evolution of Flamenco music, which undoubtedly has helped make him one of the most called upon percussionist in Flamenco today. His first exposure to learning music was playing along to blues records on the electric guitar or suffering through playing Tuba in school. What was incredible to hear about Sergio's development in music, is that even though he sometimes lost interest during different circumstances, his passion for music stayed strong and he continued his search until the cajon (a percussion instrument brought to Flamenco by Paco from South America) presented itself to him. Sergio did not start Flamenco percussion when he was three years old, but it is his vast exploration and experiences of being in different education systems that makes him so open-minded in his playing and teaching. As he explained to me, there is no set way to teach Flamenco as it is done mainly through observation on the part of the student. Though this

may seem similar to the way Chaitanya explained his music education, the main difference is that in Flamenco there is a lack of terminology that is used to teach. When a scale on the guitar is presented in a traditional manner for example, the only descriptor is how the scale looks, and that is what in the end the student mimics, whereas in classical music forms there will be a name and theory behind that scale. Now of course, classical (specifically western European) theory has been used to analyze, transcribe, and even teach Flamenco and many kinds of folk music. However, as mentioned earlier, using these techniques only gives a superficial understanding of Flamenco, and may lead to appropriation. Sergio has been teaching Flamenco at Berklee since he attended the Berklee Valencia Master's program, and has been using both western classical notation as well as having his students learn music "by ear" or through call and response. While from a teaching perspective this is a lot of work, teaching a certain musical dialect to students who speak music in a variety of different ways requires this. Since the 1970's revolution of Flamenco, harmonic concepts of African American Jazz have become an integral part of the Flamenco dialect. Without spending time to fully address that the way Jazz is being taught in schools is an extension of white washing black culture (in direct correlation to why we should not use western European theory to describe non-western European music), it becomes much easier to teach aspects of Flamenco, because there is already a set of rules that dictate how to teach Jazz Harmony. So, we are basically learning about Flamenco through a lens of Western European analysis of African American Jazz music. During my discussion with Sergio, through which these topics arose, it became clear that using Western European music theory or notation should not be the only method, if at all, for describing any non-western European music. If we can find a way to describe music, without necessarily using a terminology that is strictly based on one musical dialect, we can bring these different cultures together in a much more organic way. And in order to communicate better with each other, we, as students of music, should be exposed to

as many of these dialects as possible. Even if we are not fluent, by simply being exposed we can appreciate and learn to communicate much better. This applies musically, but also on a basic human foundation.

Musical communication in relation to education was also discussed as part of my interview with fellow Berklee Valencia colleagues **Mateo Falgas** from Spain, and **Joshua Wiredu** of Ghana. My goal of this interview was to shed some light on how music is taught on the African continent (though each area has a wide variety of contrasting musical dialects), because there is without a doubt no other continent that has been more influential to the growth and evolution of music than Africa. But the incredibly blossomed forms of African influenced music like Jazz, Blues, Rock, RnB, Hip-Hop, Rap, Samba, Son, Bachata, Reggae, Techno, and so many other dialects, are the result of the mass abduction and genocide of Africans for the purpose of slavery. Though my thesis does not address this issue, in order to understand how to teach music using multiple dialects we must understand the circumstances in which these dialects were created. Music is a vessel of communication, to safe keep traditions, and at the same time help us evolve. During his visits to the Turkana tribe of Kenya, as Mateo described to me in the interview, music was taught to him as “a heart-to-heart transmission instead of mind-to-mind”². The complexity of the music he witnessed was incredibly deep, but he was able to have a better understanding of what was happening through constant participation and repetition, as well as a strong sense of community and less emphasis on the concept of mistakes. These are the concepts that I associate with oral music tradition, and truly believe could have an incredible impact on musical education that is based around written theory and notation. Joshua describes his musical education in one of the most organic ways I have ever heard. His father had a selection of recordings that he would play throughout the day, rotating between Reggae, Jazz,

² Interview with Mateo Falgas on Zoom as part of the “How do we learn music” series

Pop, Western Classical, and Ghanaian folk. Joshua told me that because he had music playing constantly throughout the day “I got exposed to music way before I actively started playing it”³. He also described the importance of rhythm in Ghana, how everyone can play percussion, and how it is used in ensembles to communicate to other instruments, and cue different sections. But percussion is not always a drum or set instrument. During research of different folk traditions, especially in many West and East African countries, clapping or body percussion, as well as using elements of nature to create rhythm such as sticks or Liquindi (water drumming performed by Baka people of Cameroon) are used as rhythmic communication. One of the highlights of my conversation with Joshua and Mateo was the realization that if we, as the body of musical education, want to be inclusive of all musical forms and methods, we must realize that we are teaching a way of life; the much deeper definition of music. Though this may not directly apply to classical forms of music, this is essential to understanding or even appreciating folk art. However, though this may be unique to the expression of folk dialects, if we as educators can apply this to the way we teach, or even in the way we play or compose music, I have no doubt that the connections between us as individuals, schools of thought, cultures, and most importantly as humans, will become much stronger.

5.2 Research into previous courses attended

As mentioned in my introduction, I have been gifted with incredible opportunities to study different styles from some of the most important teachers in their respective fields. It is because of them, that my interest in combining aspects of each of their teaching into one

³ Interview with Joshua Wiredu on Zoom as part of the “How do we learn music” series

teaching method and course arouse. Though I cannot claim, nor should any student who takes the course I am preparing, to be a master of any tradition, I have realized that there are so many similarities between each and every musical dialect. If my style of teaching can help to create connections between various teaching and learning methods, rather than more walls (or genres), I will have reached the goal of this project. Since there are so many examples of the wonderful educators I have witnessed so far in my life, I have selected a few and analyzed their style of aural/oral teaching in relation to the course material that was taught.

I will start with my private lessons on the Sitar (Hindustani classical zither) with master sitarist and educator based in New York, **Bina Kalavant**. The only exposure I had to Indian classical, though very important, was growing up listening to it regularly and for many periods in my life daily. I was a 6th grader desperate to rekindle my relationship with my Indian culture, but had no idea how demanding the instrument or music was. I spent a whole summer babysitting to be able to go to New York and buy myself a Sitar at Keshav, a tiny shop packed with various Indian instruments. When I arrived for my first lesson with Bina, I was childishly ambitious to play like Ravi Shankar (or at least George Harrison). To my surprise, the first lesson (1hr) was spent without even playing one string on the instrument. I learned every name of each part of the instrument by drawing a sketch of a Sitar (which is not easy), and then labeling each part. In the second half of the class things got much more difficult. The sitting position in classical Sitar posture is similar to the game Twister, where your right leg arches over your left, and the bottom of the sitar (the gourd) rest on your bare foot, while the neck of the instrument balances on the arched right leg. I immediately realized that if this much effort was being put into how to sit and hold the instrument, the actual playing would be quite intense. But through this first lesson, Bina taught me respect and perseverance, how to prevent my leg from falling asleep by scratching my thumb toe nail. The following lessons were focused entirely on technique and posture, and soon after we began to play the instrument. Bina would

first play in its entirety whatever I was learning, and then break it down into small three to four note phrases, and sometimes less depending on how quickly I could pick it up. If one word could summarize these two years of lessons, it would be: Repetition. Even though, like Chaitanya did with the bols, I wrote the Sargam (solfege) down in my book, while in the lesson I would never look down at the note book to remember what to play. In fact, even when I was at home practicing, I would rarely look at the notebook because of how ingrained the phrases were in my mind after the lesson. To this day (12 years later), I still remember many of the phrases and exercises that Bina taught me in those classes because of her methods of call and response and repetition. To be able to teach in a way that the student can remember a melody after more than 10 years, is a statement to the teacher and style of teaching.



Figure 2. Sitar lessons with Bina Kalavant and family members.

In high school, I began focusing much more on the guitar and different ways of playing it. It was during this time that I was exposed to the music of Paco de Lucia and the Flamenco Guitar. After some very short research on the internet, I found a teacher specializing in Paco's technique, innovation, and repertoire who offered skype lessons to anyone in the world from his studio in Malaga, Spain. I emailed maestro **Ruben Diaz**, about some questions I had on Paco's harmony thinking I would never receive a response. I was right, but not in the way I thought I would be. A few days later, Ruben replied to my email inviting me to join his Contemporary Flamenco Guitar (CFG) studio through skype, and he would give me context in

order to one day give a proper answer to my original questions. I am certain that there has been no other person who has ever taught me more about the guitar than Ruben. He has dedicated his life to preserving the genius of his teacher Paco de Lucia, and has taught thousands of students all with incredible energy and passion for the subjects. Ruben had mastered online teaching decades before the Covid pandemic, and uses a mainly oral teaching methods with some chord symbols and tablature for reference. In my first lesson in person in Malaga in 2014, I remember vividly a finger nail of mine breaking off while playing picado (flamenco finger picking used for scales). Ruben, without missing a beat, put his guitar down and searched for my nail on the floor. After finding it, he pulled some crazy glue out of his drawer and proceeded to glue the nail back to my finger so that I could continue in the lesson. While this was much crazier than it sounds now being there as an 18-year-old kid, Ruben showed me then and there that he would do anything he could to help me learn what I wanted/needed to learn. Besides all the stories, techniques, practice routines, harmonies, and repertoire, what has stuck out most to me in his way of oral/aural teaching, and why I still study with Ruben when I can, is his enthusiasm and dedication to his students' goals. I cannot remember a time in which a 2-hour lessons did not turn into 3-4 hours by the time he was done. Eliminating the hierarchy of teacher to student, while still maintaining mutual respect and trust, is another concept that has become a part of my teaching methodology thanks to Ruben Diaz.



Figure 3. My first in person lesson with Ruben Diaz

Finally, I looked back at my studies with oud/violin and composition master **Simon Shaheen**. My relationship with Simon, unlike my lessons with Bina or Ruben, came through my institutional education at Berklee College of Music. Throughout my four years in Boston, I took ensemble, theoretical, and private instruction courses, all taught in using oral/aural methodology coming from the traditional Arabic setting that Simon represents. It was the first time that I experienced this methodology in a school setting, but also as part of a group class. Even in the course *Microtonal Theory and Application*, which is a very theoretical course describing the theory used in Maqam (the order of notes, scale, or raga used in Arabic music), Simon taught the large group of students by singing or playing the violin or oud. We were able to listen and feel what the theory really meant and how we could use it. As I first started by saying that every culture has similar techniques and methods, Simon Shaheen also uses call and response and repetition, especially in his ensemble and private instruction classes. During my one-on-one opportunities with him, we would focus on improvisation by trading phrases, or having me imitate his ornamentation or melodic concepts.

It is because of classes like these taught by Simon, or the Afro-Cuban percussion for non-percussionists (Eguie Castrillo) or Flamenco rhythm styles (Sergio Martinez), that I realized how important it is to bring oral music education to its institutional counterpart. These professors have done an incredible amount of work to preserve the way their music should be taught, and have found ways in which to create a compromise between academic educational vs oral/aural methodology. My goal is to take the concepts (musical and non-musical) they taught me, and bring them together to teach music as a whole inseparable entity to create stronger cultural connections.

5.3 Musical Dialect Conversions

While music from around the world has always been taught and celebrated by its uniqueness, my educational methodology is based initially on connecting musical dialects by their similarities. In order to teach multiple dialects together, I have collected and/or created multiple conversion diagrams that point out these relationships.

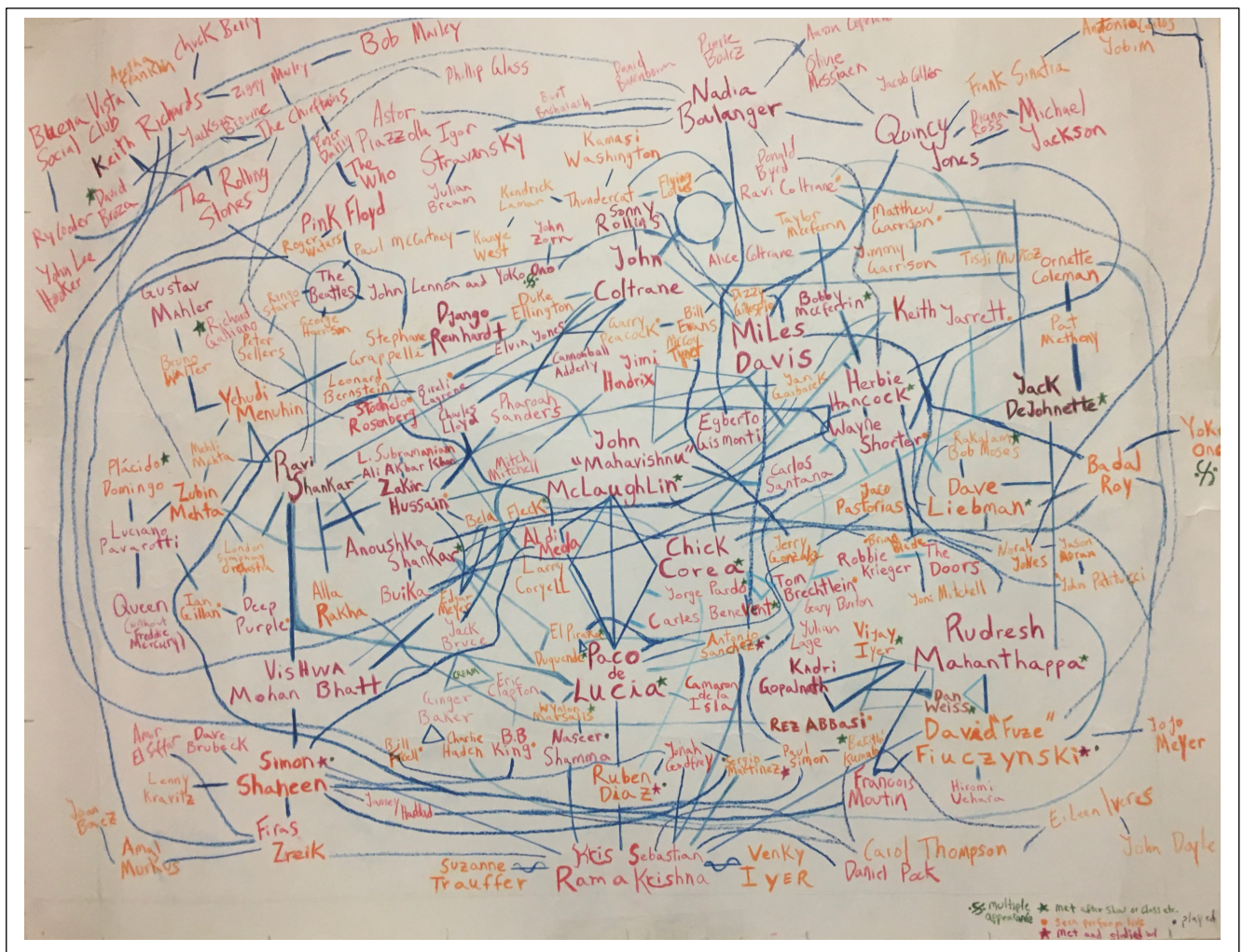


Figure 4. My musical influences connection chart

The diagram above, has been a project of mine since my third year in high school (approx. 2013). While it looks quite confusing, and perhaps similar to that of a conspiracy theory, it is only a connection between all my influences, regardless of genre, and how they eventually connect to me. It starts at the bottom middle with my name, and moves up to my teachers. Following the blue lines (streams), one may see how an artist like sitarist Pandit Ravi Shankar (1920-2012) connects with bassist Thundercat (1984-). I originally started this chart as a method for composition. If I wanted to compose a piece using Indian and Jazz influences, I could use that stream between Ravi Shankar and Thundercat as a listening and analysis guide to compositional inspiration. Over the past 7 years, this chart has grown beyond my own influences, but as a resource for colleagues to add their own. My goal with this chart is to create a software/app that will accompany my educational methodology. Using the diagram for listening and composing will make teaching and studying music much more connected.

12 Note Octave Pitch Name Conversion Chart				
#	Indian Sargam (movable)	Italian Solfege (fixed)	English Alphabetical (fixed)	North American (movable)
1.	SA	Do	C	Do
2.	komal re	re bemolle	d flat (b)	ra
3.	RE	Re	D	Re
4.	komal ga	mi bemolle	E flat (b)	me
5.	GA	Mi	E	Mi
6.	MA	Fa	F	Fa
7.	tivra ma	fa diesis	F sharp (#)	fi
8.	PA	Sol	G	Sol
9.	komal dha	la bemolle	a flat (b)	le
10.	DHA	La	A	La
11.	komal ni	si bemolle	b flat (b)	te
12.	NI	Si	B	Ti

Figure 5. Global pitch classification conversion chart

5.4 Work as part of PS-631 (Pedagogy elective)

In regard to the development of my course, the Pedagogy performance elective has been crucial. I have never studied how to teach before, only learning by experiences as a teacher and student. Learning specific teaching methods, and how to structure curriculum in western education has been tremendously helpful. Since, as described in my proposal, my goal is to establish my own teaching methodology through creating a course for higher western music education, analyzing how Berklee faculty and administration design courses gave me many ideas on how to create the clearest framework of my own course. As part of the assignments for the pedagogy class, I am finalizing a teaching portfolio that includes learning outcomes, lesson plans, grading rubrics, online teaching techniques, and a syllabus, all as materials to be used as part of my “Global Music Concepts and Application” course. Most importantly, writing down all these materials in an organized fashion has brought me closer to solidifying my methodology and overall teaching philosophy (which will be included in the portfolio for pedagogy course as well). I have attached a lesson plan and learning outcomes below to give a closer look at how my course has begun to lay out (See Appendix A for course work).

By the end of the Pedagogy course, I felt like my methodology had become much more organized and focused. While my teaching portfolio is still growing, since I plan to add not only material based on the “Global Music” course but also examples from the after-school music program and private teaching I’ve done, I believe my style of teaching is quite apparent. As a conclusive assignment for the course, I have included here as well the synopsis which is my teaching philosophy. This writeup is simply the skeleton or foundation of my methodology, which will help me design any class, course, or institution with cohesion.

5.5 Studio Teaching (1 on 1)

To apply the methodology I have been creating in the last few semesters, I found it very necessary to teach in person. Several of these classes were one-on-one classes with colleague Chaitanya Natu, who I interviewed during my research. Though these meetings were not directly the lesson plans of my “Global Music” music course, the methodology is the same. An aspect of my course, and broadly my teaching style, is a conversion mechanism for musical dialects. In the classes I conducted with Chaitanya, his goal was to learn more about western music theory. With my methodology I was able to convert his knowledge of Hindustani theory into the western system. The lesson outlined below is the step-by-step process in which I taught the student how to transcribe a composition of his using western notation

Step 1: Converting Indian numeric methodology of rhythm to quarter notes, eighths, etc.

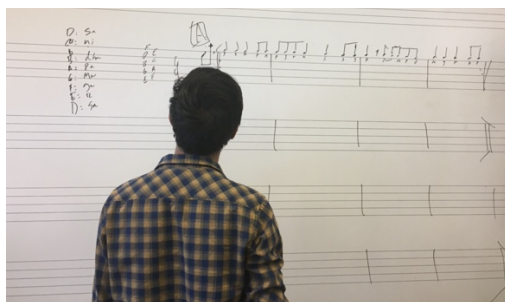
.25= 1 sixteenth note

.5 = 1 eighth note

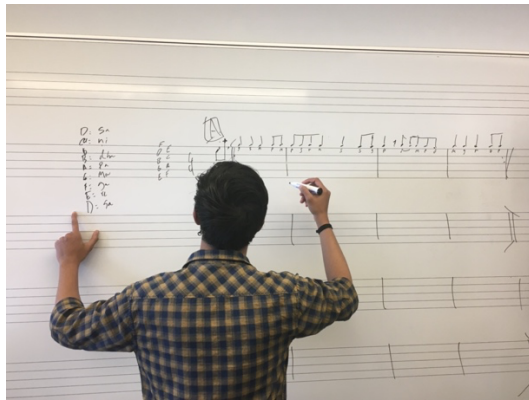
.75= 1 dotted eighth note

1.0= 1 quarter note

Step 2: Transcribing rhythm of given melody



Step 3: Assigning Sargam (Indian solfege) of the melody to the rhythms



Step 4: Converting Sargam to western solfege to letters

Sa – Do - D

Re – Re - E

Ga – Me - F

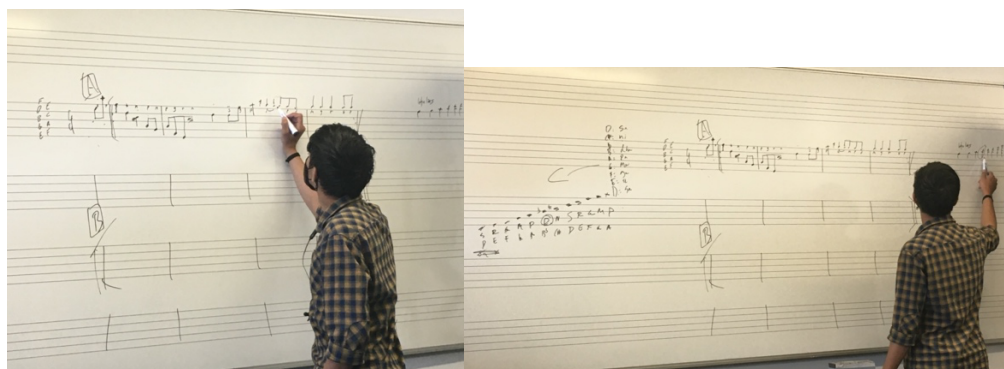
Ma – Fa - G

Pa – Sol - A

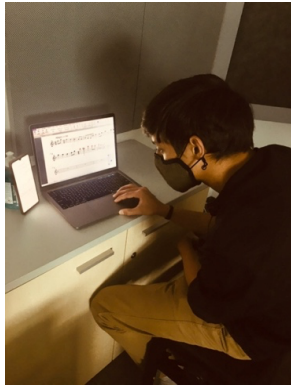
Dha – Le - Bb

Ni – Ti – C#

Step 5: Filling in the notes on the staff



Step 6: Inputting melody into software notation



5.6 Group Teaching

The group setting for teaching global music concepts is a special one. The end goal of my course and methodology is to foster collaboration, and there is no better way to do that than in groups. The first opportunity this year to do so was with the very talented students of El Sistema Athens, Greece. While my portion of the class was only around 20min long, I decided to use some of the material from lesson 1 (See Appendix A) where I teach a melody using call and response and repetition. While this class did take place on zoom, during a time of the day in Greece that is meant for quietness, I was able to successfully teach the class the melody, and have them in way a perform together in different groups (one establishing a drone or pedal, while the other playing the melody). I began by playing the whole melody, and then breaking it down phrase by phrase, and having the students repeat them after me. Then after doing the same with two phrases at a time, I asked the students if anyone would like to perform the melody for the class. To my delight many were able to recite the melody almost perfectly, regardless of their level. I then proceeded to “trade” phrases with many of the students in an improvisatory manner. At this point, I should have designated things for the rest of the students to do while I worked individually with others, but I was quite impressed with the general focus of the student body regardless. I have the utmost respect for the El

Sistema organization around the world, and hope to be able to bring more aural/oral teaching to their programs.

Finally, I had the opportunity to join Sergio Martinez at A Quelar Cabanyal, an organization who provides opportunities for the kids of Cabanyal, Valencia, to study Flamenco guitar, dance, and percussion. In these sessions I was able to apply the methods I have observed through my lessons with Ruben Diaz and Sergio (oral/aural methodology used in Flamenco) and work with the students to expand their knowledge of harmony inside and outside of Flamenco. It must be said that even though these students don't have as many opportunities as they deserve, they have more passion and intent to learn than any other student group I have taught. I hope to continue to work with A Quelar, and to as well learn from these students. To keep a mentality of a student while teaching is very important to me.

5.7 Composition and Performing

One of the most challenging aspects of the culminating experience project has been to form this course from a teacher's perspective, while at the same time fulfilling the roles that students will be able to do after attending the "Global Music" course. As a student, I have been collecting and arranging music of my own over the past two years that have been specifically written in way that has been influenced by many musical dialects. I have taken three of my own compositions and recorded them in collaboration with many fellow Berklee Valencia students. The first piece recorded is entitled "Whatever You'd Like It To Be", which in very simple terms is my musical philosophy. I created an arrangement of the piece for three guitars (2 nylon stringed, 1 electric), which is heavily influenced by Flamenco rhythm

Tangos (1 **2 3 4**⁴). While the rhythm is influenced by Flamenco, the melody is derived from concepts used in Hindustani classical ragas and Arabic Maqams. To elaborate, I started with the melody and composed it without any thought of harmony, and completely as a horizontal timeline. The scale I used is a combination between major and minor (major is the bottom tetrachord, minor on top), and added different pitch colors depending on whether the line was ascending or descending. This specific technique known also as *aaroh* and *avroh* (ascending, descending), is a fundamental aspect of the Indian raga system. All three pieces recorded have strong Indian classical influences, since it is half of my ethnic makeup, but I also bring techniques from other dialects either written by me, or in the case of my piece “The Sun Corner”, I invited Brazilian Berklee Valencia students and alumni to bring their own dialects to my already Brazilian influenced piece. To be open to the influences of a variety of dialects, is an important ingredient for musical evolution. I would like my music, and the music of my students, to be like an international airport; one place, with many different routes to many different places.

Besides my own music, participating in various projects (including other student’s CE projects) has been another opportunity to explore global music connectivity. My musical contributions as part of the *Adem Mehmedovic Quartet* has been one of the wildest combinations I have ever collaborated in. Based on the meeting of Serbian and Brazilian rhythms with Jazz harmonies, I introduced Turkish and Carnatic classical ornamented improvisations and melodic treatment of the Serbian melodies. But even though there is a lot of different dialects in the group (musically and non-musically), everything fits together tightly. Because in the end, we are playing music as one whole entity. This is what I want to contribute

⁴ Bold indicating emphasis on beats 2, 3, and 4

to music education. To give not only the opportunity for students to learn a wide variety of techniques, but to give them the knowledge to apply them in performance, composition or through improvisation. Applying my own collected knowledge has been incredibly informational to the solidification of my teaching methodology and course design.

6. Final Conclusions/Reflections

Overall, looking back on this whole process, I have been able to stick to the broad goal of which I wanted to achieve at the beginning of the Program in September 2020: To create a style of education that brings together different methods of oral/aural traditions to give a more inclusive and diverse approach to learning music. What I didn't realize until after going through all these processes of writing and executing my CE, was that elements of the teaching methodology I have been developing have been present in classes I have taught way before I knew how to design courses or thought of ever having my own unique teaching style. What my CE project has given me (that was not planned), was the ability to look back and analyze how I have studied music, how I have taught music, and how my own teaching philosophy and methodology are distinctively me. I did not consciously realize that not only do my methods reflect my heritage and upbringing, but also the way I compose and perform music, and more importantly how I am as a human being. Though this is by far the most philosophical abstract statement of the entire paper, I think it is the most essential to my project. Looking at the bigger picture, I hope to influence music education (and maybe even general education) to instill a sense of collaboration between various cultural practices within the student body, allowing them to be more accepting (by observing similarities rather than pointing out differences), and viewing themselves as part of a large entity instead of an individual vs the world. Through interviews, discussions, and teaching, I have noticed there is a much larger necessity and

interest in my methodology and what it stands for, than I had originally interpreted. This project has become more of filling a hole in an already existing space, rather than carving an entirely new one.

6.1 What did/did not work and why?

While I was able to complete all of my ambitious objectives to a certain extent, there are some things that I hoped to have delved deeper into. While my goal was to have a whole semester worth of lesson plans, I soon realized that it was more important to use the lesson plans that I have to further solidify my teaching methodology which was my main objective. I have the majority of the topics that I wish to get through, but forming them into strong lesson plans, with attention to Universal Design, Lesson flow, and many other concepts that I learned specifically in the Pedagogy course, will take more time. Once I have more lesson plans, I want to practice much more teaching of these lessons for trial and error. Many of the classes that I taught during the year have been one-on-one situations, and I look forward to trying out my methods for more group classes.

There have been numerous things, that, at the beginning of the year, I was quite skeptical of being able to achieve but have now been completed. I struggled to decide whether to design a full-on course, or something smaller, like a 3–5-day master class. Designing a semester long course for higher music education, however, has proven incredibly helpful to the advancement of my methodology. There are so many considerations to curriculum development, but after researching what students and teachers like/do, and observing how Berklee as an institution designs its courses, I am quite proud of my own curriculum. The hardest aspect of my culminating experience project at Berklee Valencia has been balancing the perspective of a teacher in my course, while simultaneously participating in activities that

I would want my students to do. I have made an effort to continue performing and composing music in a manner that aligns with the objectives of my methodology. I have collaborated with various colleagues in the Contemporary Performance (Production concentration) program, ranging from recording and arranging for other CE projects like Abhisek Ghosh and Chaitanya Natu (India), Adem Mehmedovic (Serbia), Ashley Luo (China), Robert Lee (Korea), as well as my own music. Contributing to these amazing projects, has given me insight into my CE, and has instilled in me an even deeper appreciation for the innumerable existing musical dialects (as well as a stronger curiosity for the many dialects to come).

6.2 Next Steps

Developing my methodology has also a business motivation behind it. Upon graduating, I hope to take my course around different European cities and hold masterclasses at local conservatories and higher music education institutions as a sort of musical education tour. This will be accompanied by performing in local venues at night and learning from local music scenes as well. Once I have finished the creation of “Global Music Concepts and Application” and done trials for it (education tour), the next step will be to license my program to various institutions (hopefully some of which I promoted my program at), and hold a summer teacher’s college for diverse and inclusive teachers who have the passion to use my methodology, and who may become a certified teacher in the “Ramakrishna Method” after completion of the summer teacher’s course. Adding to my methods I hope to branch into the technological aspect of teaching (which has proved so important during the last year), by creating an online version of the course, and developing my influence connection chart (p. 15) into an application to help musicians around the world connect together and learn about each other’s music. As of now my “Global music” course is geared towards higher western music

education students, I hope to design versions that cater towards different age groups and different levels of musical knowledge. The more people my course can welcome, the closer I can get to achieving complete inclusivity and diversity.

On a personal level, my goal is to one day teach at Berklee Valencia. I first visited the campus in October of 2014, and immediately felt a deep connection. I returned for two semesters in 2017 and 2018 as a Berklee study abroad student, and now am finishing my masters in Contemporary Performance 7 years after my first visit. To be able to teach the “Global Music Concepts and Application” course at Berklee Valencia is a dream that I will continue to strive toward. I have spent the entirety of my culminating experience project studying how Berklee works and modeling my course in the same format. This institution is incredibly diverse and inclusive already, especially compared to many other schools, but I truly believe that my course and methodology can help bring Berklee to the next stage of worldwide musical collaboration.

Thank you for reading.

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Appendix A: Excerpts of Pedagogy course work

Original Course Idea

Each topic will use techniques or formulas that have been used in non-western educational systems. Melody will be described through the building of scales in the styles of Ragas or the use of tetra chords in Maqam. Students will automatically learn that there are more than 12 pitches per octave, and will learn ornamentation as a basic step to creating melody, instead of an extra technique. For rhythm, the idea is to teach various rhythms in a cyclical form. This will include rhythms like Teental (16 beat Hindustani cycle), or Buleria (Flamenco 12 beat cycle), and compare and combine it with the Samba of Brazil, or the Arabic Malfuf (2/4). All topics will be taught by ear, with note taking only for the purpose of memorization. Elements of Jazz, such as modes, circle of 4th progressions (2-5-1s), will be used as well for Improvisation and harmony, while compositional techniques of various cultures will be analyzed to help students create their own style. The students will leave the course with stronger communication skills, personal expression/identity based on the exposure to diverse music, and open-mindedness with the ability to create intercultural collaboration.

Updated Course Description

As a complement to western music education, “Global Music Concepts and Application” collects rhythms, melodies, harmonies, compositions, and improvisational techniques from various non-western European based practices to teach musical global unity and collaboration. The course focuses on all aspects of music and how they interact with each other, so that the students may understand music as a whole in terms of musical dialects and concepts. Students will have the opportunity to perform, compose, and improvise using methods and techniques that may be foreign to their own musical background, but will be encouraged to incorporate their own traditions as well. Students will leave the course with a deeper, more inclusive, and diverse appreciation for music, and have the ability to collaborate between various musical dialects while still staying true to their own practices.

Course Outcomes

- Describe music using terminology/concepts from different musical traditions, such as North and South Indian classical, Flamenco, and Arabic maqam, Western classical and Jazz.
- Analyze and compare/contrast music from these traditions
- Compose and perform music using different techniques found in different genres
- Recognize and recite simple and complex rhythms such as Waltz, Swing, Malfuf, Buleria, Teen tal, etc.
- Improvise (singing and on instrument) using melodic and harmonic concepts from Hindustani, Maqam, Flamenco, and Jazz.
- Perform repertoire from different music traditions



Global Music Concepts and Application

Name: Kris Ramakrishna

Grade/Class: College level

Lesson # 1

1. **Lesson Objectives:** (measurable/observable, based on standards and frameworks)
 - Recite a simple melody (from memory)
 - Understand the melodic context of the melody (scale using numbers and solfege)
 - Demonstrate a simple tangos rhythm by clapping
 - Determine harmonic choices based on the melody
 - Improvise only using the notes from the scale of the day
2. **Assessment:** (based on objectives)
Singing/playing and clapping in small groups (one group singing, one clapping)
Improvise over the piece
3. **Required prior knowledge/skills:**
Basic western music theory
Basic ear training in rhythm, melody, and harmony
4. **Review and/or support for new skills needed:**
Review of major/minor scale and diatonic chords if needed
5. **Accommodations:** (special needs and/ ELL)
Pre-recorded examples of the music
Use of multiple musical languages to describe the topic
6. **Materials, Repertoire, Equipment needed:**
Smartboard/Whiteboard/blackboard, Way to listen to music, students should bring their instruments
7. **Lesson Sequence:**
 - A. Have students write down their thoughts on the music playing and have a few students discuss what they wrote.
 - B. Learning Activities and Pacing (number and list as many as needed, specific learning experiences and instruction, specific instructions for students and teacher reminders, including review, pacing is allotted time)
 1. Call and response of rhythm with students
 2. Introduce Tangos (Flamenco) rhythm with brief explanation of its origin
 3. Teach melody based on the scale phrase by phrasing using call and response
 4. Introduction of Scale using tetrachords (including different names of the scale)
 5. Have students guess harmonic options and then agree on a progression

C. Assessment Activity

1. Split students into two groups. One starting with singing the other with clapping. Then switch. Rhythmic and melodic accuracy.
2. Have students play either the melody, harmony, or rhythm on their instruments
3. Select students to improvise

D. Summative Activity/Closing/Wrap-up:

Ask students about the scale, melody, rhythm, or harmony

E. Secondary/alternative plans: (what could go wrong and how to fix it)

No one has their instruments – then sing and clap

No way to play recordings - play for them myself

No place to write – Use a keyboard or hand gestures to demonstrate the scale

8. **Agenda:** (to be posted in the classroom)

Rhythm

Melody

Harmony

Play and Improvisation

9. **Assignment and Due Date:** (if applicable)

Compose a melody using the same rhythm, melody, and harmony discussed in class.
Due next week.

Universal Design:

Engagement:

- Have students talk about what they thought of the music they listened to in class.
- If talking is a challenge or uncomfortable, students may write down their thoughts.
- Set goals like learn a melody or a rhythm in class
- Have students work in small groups, or if they prefer individually, to achieve these goals.

Representation:

While topics are mainly taught in an oral method, all topics will be available if needed in notation, and audio recordings.

Action and Expression

Students may choose whether to perform the melody by singing and clapping, on their instruments, or compose an example using the same rhythm or melody discussed in class.

Cultural Responsiveness

All course material is selected from various different cultures to give a more balanced and inclusive educational experience. While each topic will be presented and explained clearly, in no way does the course claim to give a full picture of any cultural expression, or give the students the validation to use cultural appropriation of any tradition that is not their own for artistic creation.

Ramakrishna Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy in regard to music education is in direct correlation to my diverse upbringing. Born in Italy, to a Swiss mother and Indian father, while growing up in the United States has instilled in me the importance of cross-cultural collaboration. I think of music as one language with a vast number of dialects (I avoid using the term genre because I believe genre has created borders instead of bridges). When musical creators and recipients visualize music as one language of the highest power, we can appreciate every dialect that is its DNA. While teaching, I try to instill the notion that what my students are learning is not only a profession or hobby, but a deep form of communication and feeling. I encourage my students to be open-minded, accepting, and curious about various dialects, and more importantly to find their own personalities, cultures, and goals in music. Through a strong focus on aural/oral methodology, I have applied my philosophy to various instrumental and vocal private instruction of various ages, and group settings including an after-school music program for middle school children (ages 10-14), and a course curriculum for higher music education called “Global Music Concepts and Application”.

Appendix B: List of previous courses attended

Private guitar lessons, Marc, Guitar Parlor. Riegelsville, Pennsylvania, USA. 2002.

Private guitar lessons, Matt Roman, Dave Phillips Music and Sound. Phillipsburg, New Jersey, USA. 2005.

Private sitar lessons, Bina Kalavant, Kalavant Center, Easton, Pennsylvania. USA,

Private guitar lessons, Ruben Diaz, Estudio Guitarra Flamenca Contemporaneo, Malaga, Spain. 2014.

Undergraduate studies, Berklee College of Music, Boston, Massachusetts, 2015

Graduate studies, Berklee Valencia, Valencia, Spain. 2021

In specific:

Qantara Berklee Ensemble, Simon Shaheen, Berklee College of Music, Boston, Massachusetts. 2016

Afro-Cuban Percussion for non-percussionists, Eguie Castrillo, Berklee College of Music, Boston, Massachusetts. 2016

Flamenco Rhythm Styles, Sergio Martinez, Berklee Valencia. Valencia, Spain. Spring 2017

Mediterranean Styles Survey, Cristobal Abellan, Berklee Valencia. Valencia, Spain. Spring 2017

Microtonal Theory and Application, Simon Shaheen Berklee College of Music, Boston, Massachusetts. Fall 2017

Pedagogy, Enric Alberich, Berklee Valencia. Valencia, Spain. Spring 2021