

# Ethno on the Road

Ethno on the Road and Världens Band: Beyond the Ethno Gatherings

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- ung folkmusik från hela världen -

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# Abstract

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This report investigates Ethno on the Road (EoR), one of the *reverberations* that takes place within the ecosystem of Ethno Sweden. EoR is a touring band comprising five participants who attended the Ethno Sweden gathering and two music facilitators. The band aims to represent the Ethno gathering by performing music that was learned there and sharing some of the ways in which the gathering encourages people from different parts of the world to collaborate and share their music. The band could be considered as an outreach project, where Ethno is performing to various Swedish communities. It is, therefore, a point at which Ethno may be encountering audiences who are not familiar with the Ethno Ethos.

The report investigates five research questions considering the influence of Ethno in three areas: practice within the band; performance and outreach; and, professional and personal development. EoR is positioned in relation to globalisation, cultural appropriations, and social justice, with a focus on authenticity and agency. I argue that folk music is used as a catalyst for young people to further develop their own understandings of themselves and the cultural “other”. Furthermore, EoR highlights encounters between participants and audience members and how this interaction impacts understandings of and rationales for music-making and, potentially, acts as a form of social justice. There is also consideration of the impact Ethno has had on the lives of EoR 2019 and some members of the Världens Band who attribute their formation to their participation in Ethno Sweden 2010 and EoR 2010.

This report is based on observations and analysis of two performances of EoR 2019. Data also includes a focus group interview with the Världens Band, follow up interviews with a music facilitator and members of EoR 2019 as well as fieldwork conducted in Ethno Sweden 2019.

The 3-year Ethno Research project, led by the International Centre for Community Music (ICCM) at York St John University in collaboration with JM International (JMI), is made possible through a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

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# Ethno on the Road and Världens Band: Beyond the Ethno Gatherings

## INTRODUCTION

In this report I will investigate how EoR 2019 draw upon the ideals of Ethno in three areas:

- Embodying Ethno ideals within the band;
- Performance and outreach; and
- Professional and personal development.

As members of the Världens Band attribute their formation to Ethno Sweden and EoR 2010 their experiences over the last decade have been contrasted with that of EoR 2019 participants in order to deepen the understanding and impact participation in EoR may have. Two members of Världens Band participated in one of the songs I observed during an EoR 2019 performance, drawing a further connection between the two ensembles. Participants in EoR 2019 highlight the importance of using folk music as a tool for intercultural exchange as well as issues of authenticity and agency when performing in a small, multicultural touring band. The reflections of the Världens Band demonstrate a deepening of thought surrounding issues of musical appropriations, personal development and inter-cultural collaborations, highlighting some ways in which encounters at Ethno and EoR have impacted the lives of these musicians.

Image 1: EoR 2019 and some members of Världens Band performing in Järna. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.



The findings for this report relates to three Ethno-research questions:

- 1) In what ways and to what extent do participants continue to embody the ideals of intercultural harmony espoused by Ethno-World even after “aging out” of the gatherings?
- 2) In what ways and to what extent did the Ethno experience influence life choices?
- 3) In what ways and to what extent has Ethno-World impacted the European and worldwide folk/ traditional musical Ecosystem?

Research questions drawn from thematic analysis are:

- 4) How do EoR and Världens Band negotiate issues of power, authenticity and agency when they learn and perform folk music from around the world?
- 5) What is the significance of an EoR performance as a means of outreach to the wider community?

The audiences for this report are members of the Ethno network and academics who work at the intersection of community music and ethnomusicology. Following the introduction, this report is divided in three sections. Section A addresses research questions one and four. Section B considers research question three and five and Section C investigates research question two. An executive summary is provided at the end of the report.

A central experience within Ethno is connecting with people from different parts of the world therefore it is vital to explore Ethno within the wider parameters of globalisation.<sup>1</sup> Locke (2004, p. 186) aptly states, “a world music ensemble is an arena where the politics of globalisation are played”. Whilst the literature on globalisation is extensive, there is some consensus that it is a process of exchange and connection that occurs on multiple levels (Appadurai, 1990; Steger, 2003; Stokes, 2004). There appear to be two broad viewpoints: globalisation is causing a homogenisation of culture, where societies around the world are becoming similar and losing their unique cultures, and, that globalisation encourages connection between people which can develop deeper understandings of people from different cultural backgrounds (Wallach and Clinton, 2019). Appadurai (1990, p. 308) emphasises that

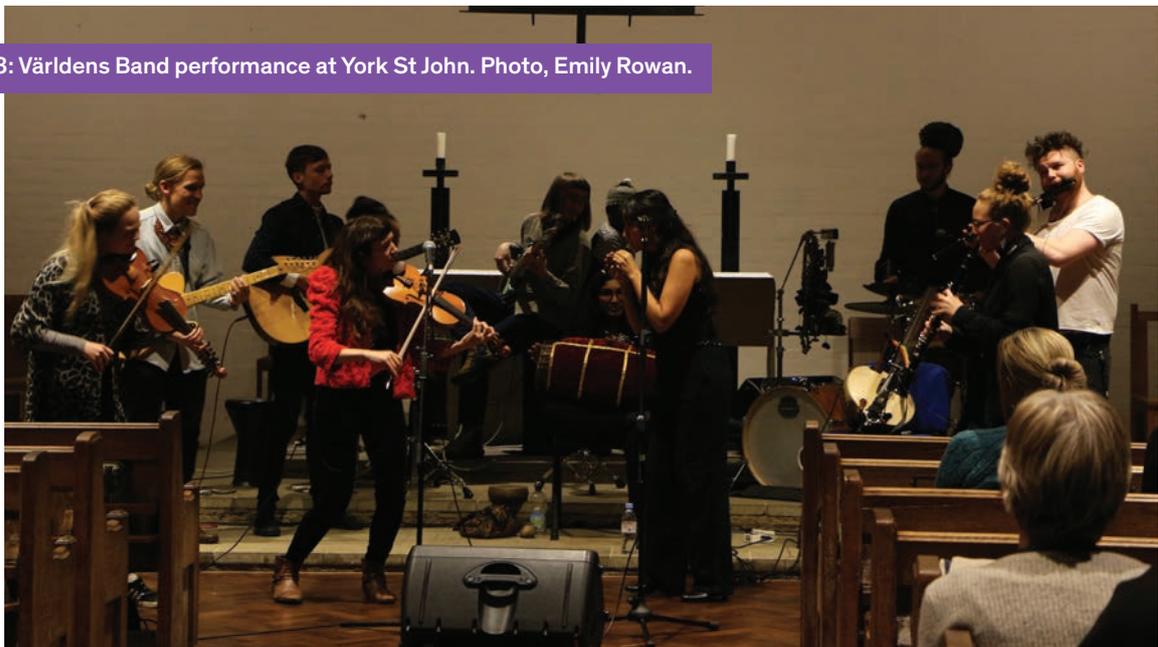
**the critical point is that both sides of the coin of global cultural process today are products of the infinitely varied mutual contest of sameness and difference on a stage characterized by racial disjunctures between different sorts of global flows and the uncertain landscapes created in and through these disjunctures.**

EoR and Världens Band performances demonstrate 'sameness and difference' by their hybrid musical arrangements and their visual appearance on stage. This can cause a tension between the balance of intercultural engagement and musical appropriations. These tensions will be interrogated throughout this report through the lens of community music and ethnomusicology perspectives.

Image 2: EoR 2019. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.



Image 3: Världens Band performance at York St John. Photo, Emily Rowan.



# BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

## Ethno Sweden

Ethno Sweden is a residential folk music gathering that takes place over ten days during the Summer in the town of Rättvik. Young people share music from their cultural heritage with one another and perform these pieces at the end of the Gathering. It is part of the Ethno-World network, of which it is the oldest and the largest, having held gatherings since 1990 and welcoming over 90 participants annually.<sup>2</sup>

Ethno Sweden was the first Ethno for all but one of the EoR 2019 participants. They highlight how the gathering introduced them to new concepts, either by 'opening up things musically', 'showing new music or ideas' or putting people together from different parts of the world regardless of their racial background (Fieldnotes, 2019, Participant interviews, 2019, 2020). One EoR participant compared Ethno Sweden to a flower that blooms only once a year at night-time, the "Queen of the Night" saying, "For me Ethno Sweden is like the epiphyllum, it's only open at night [...] it's like a utopia (EoR Participant A, Interview, 2020). She highlights the uniqueness of the camp by metaphorically describing how the demographic, selection of music, and social encounter of Ethno Sweden 2019 will only happen once. All the EoR 2019 participants emphasised that EoR was "completely different". One participant described EoR as "reality" compared to the "utopia" of Ethno Sweden (EoR participant B, Interview, 2019).

## Ethno on the Road

Five participants at Ethno Sweden are invited to be part of EoR. It is a touring band described by one of its music facilitators as, "a few young people meeting and having this intense way of working and putting music together" (Lars, interview one, 2019).<sup>3</sup>

The tour begins in November, four months after Ethno Sweden. For the first week they prepare their set, comprising a balance of pieces learned at Ethno Sweden and new tunes brought by each participant to share with the group. Two artistic leaders facilitate the tour, which is produced and co-ordinated by the Ethno Sweden organisers.<sup>4</sup>

EoR 2019 was part of a school catalogue for the Music in the Southern Areas of Sweden (*Musik i Syd*) region. This is a catalogue of concerts that are offered at an affordable cost to schools funded by the local county councils (Lars, interview one). This is an unusual opportunity for EoR, which resulted in interesting parallels between EoR performances within schools in comparison to the Folk music circuit. EoR 2019 performed in about ten schools as part of the catalogue as well as evening concerts for a paying audience, totalling 19 concerts in two weeks.

The tour itinerary was:

- November 1: Folkmusikens Hus, Rättvik
- November 2: Lyran, Skattungbyn
- November 4–5: School gigs, Blekinge
- November 6: Puls, Ronneby
- November 7–8: School gigs, Blekinge
- November 9: Workshop and concert, Monsteraas
- November 10: Workshop and concert, Hogsby
- November 12: Folkets hus, Olofstrom
- November 13: Futurum, Järna
- November 14: Stallet, Stockholm (Facebook page)

Image 4: Map of tour itinerary.  
Sarah-Jane Gibson. Google Maps.

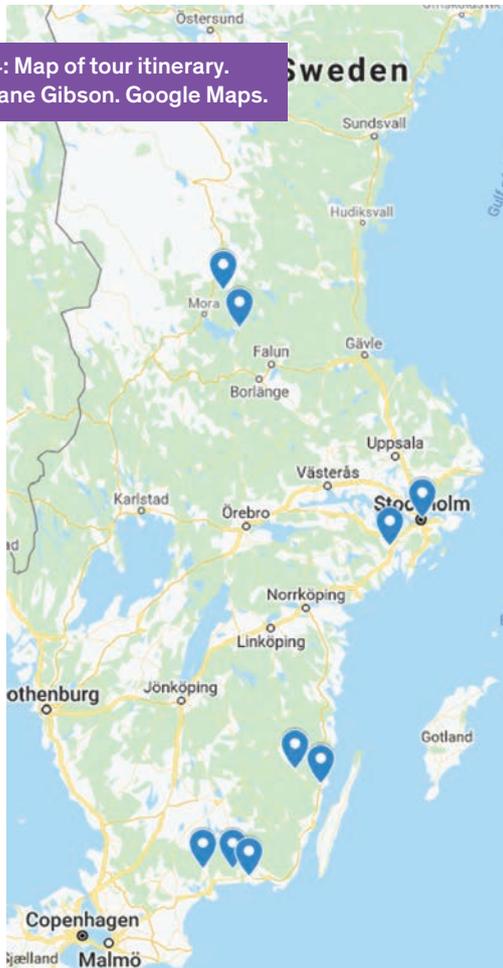


Image 5: EoR 2010. Four members of Världens Band were in this group. Photo, Peter Ahlbom.



## Världens Band

Världens Band comprises 13 musicians that perform an eclectic blend of original compositions and folk fusions.<sup>5</sup> The band formed in 2012 and has released two albums, *Transglobal Roots Fusion* and *Dadjalo* (Världens Band, 2020). They are described by Balossa-Bardin (2018, p. 82) as:

**a live-music band with a fixed line-up and an egalitarian peer-based intercultural music-making ethic. Indeed, the band was formed in order to create a gender-balanced, ethnically diverse and instrumentally eclectic orchestra where each member was to be perceived as important as the next, abandoning hierarchical roles such as the lead singer or a main artistic leader.**

The Världens Band describe Ethno as the 'seed' for their formation because almost every member attended Ethno Sweden 2010 (Världens Band focus group, 2019). Some were also selected to be part of EoR 2010. Many of the approaches used by this band are inspired by Ethno Sweden and some band members remain involved in the Ethno-World network.

## Methodology

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted on 13th-14th November 2019 by observing EoR's sound checks and performances at Futurum in Järna and at Stallet in Stockholm. Each member of the band was interviewed and on-line follow up interviews were conducted at a later date with two participants, one artistic leader and an audience member. A focus group was conducted in October 2019 with some members of Världens Band who have also been part of Ethno or EoR.

My position for this report is two-fold. I participated as an audience member, however, was unfamiliar with the social context within which the band was performing. I was also unable to understand any commentary that was given in Swedish. Therefore, as an audience member, I could be considered an outsider to the contextual framework of the performance. However, due to my research at Ethno Sweden, I had established relationships and shared experiences with EoR 2019 participants, aligning with observations about deepening relationships that develop through ethnographic fieldwork.<sup>6</sup> My shared experiences at Ethno Sweden also meant that I had personal experience of the learning process that members of EoR had experienced, influencing my perception of the band's performances.

## SECTION A: COLLABORATIONS WITHIN THE BAND

This section considers the research question: In what ways and to what extent do participants continue to embody the ideals of intercultural harmony espoused by Ethno-World even after “aging out” of the gatherings? The following ideals drawn from the gatherings were evident in EoR2019 and the Världens Band:

- Respectful musical exchange.
- Constructing a unique musical identity
- The creation of a ‘new’ hybrid sound.

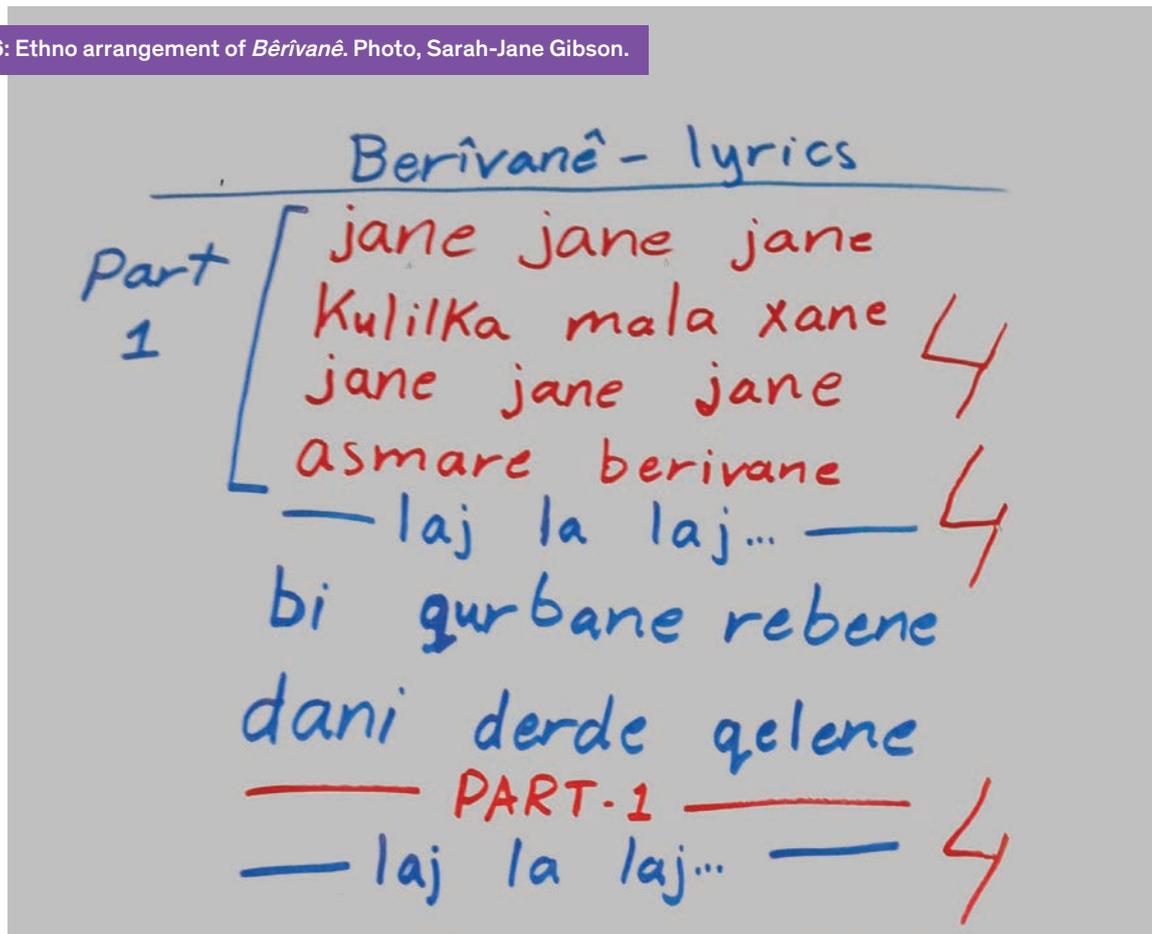
A further issue came to the forefront during fieldwork with EoR2019, resulting in the question: How does EoR and Världens Band negotiate issues of power, authenticity and agency when they learn and perform folk music from around the world?

EoR comprises a group of people from different parts of the world performing to a predominantly Swedish audience relating to concerns within cultural globalisation regarding power, agency and exchange (Born and Hesmondalgh, 2000; Stokes, 2004; White, 2012a; Wallach and Clinton, 2019; Campbell and Lum, 2019). Of particular importance is an awareness of exotising the cultural “other” by positioning them in relation to a dominant culture, rather than the cultural understanding from which the cultural “other” derives (Said, 2003; Taylor, 2014). Another term relating to this is that of ‘essentialism’, where a representation ‘depicts the group as having fixed characteristics and sharp boundaries’ (Wallach and Clinton, 2019, p. 121). Both definitions relate to questions of agency, considering how much input a culture bearer has in how they are being represented. It also draws attention to the matter of cultural appropriations and the manner in which music from one cultural group is used by another (Campbell and Lum, 2019; Hess, 2019). In relation to EoR it is vital to understand the context within which learning music takes place. I argue that the three ideals adopted by both EoR and Världens Band have the potential to enable a culturally democratic world music ensemble.

### Respectful musical exchange

One of the songs EoR performed was *Bêrîvanê*, a song shared by two Syrian musicians at Ethno Sweden. I had missed the session where the song was taught to the singing group at Ethno Sweden, however, during one of the breaks, the two musicians taught it to me.

Image 6: Ethno arrangement of *Bêrivanê*. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.



One of the musicians was a guitarist and the other a saz player.<sup>7</sup> The song opened with vibrato chords strummed on the saz, and then moved into a pulsating riff. Then, the saz played the opening melody whilst the guitarist strummed the chords. The saz player continued to play the melody and began to sing whilst the guitarist kept a strong rhythmic pulse. When it was time for me to join in, the saz player indicated by nodding at me. I responded immediately, listening, watching and learning. The piece ended with no instrumentation. Instead, we sang the chorus and clapped a syncopated rhythm.

Link to Video 1: Ethno Sweden performing *Bêrivanê*  
[https://youtu.be/gLwu\\_sQQAPY](https://youtu.be/gLwu_sQQAPY)

When the ensemble rehearsed *Bêrîvanê* throughout the rest of the week, the two musicians moved to the centre of the group, facing the ensemble in a position that classical musicians would identify as the “conductor’s space”. They led the song with artistic leaders interjecting to make suggestions or asking for sections to be repeated. Whenever we finished singing the piece, the artistic leaders would ask the musicians if they were happy with the sound, leading me to feel that the two musicians had strong ownership of the piece. As a member of the ensemble, I still associate this piece with the two musicians who taught it to me.

The ethnographic description outlines the manner in which *Bêrîvanê* was taught at Ethno Sweden. Participants learned the piece not only from a culture bearer but from people whom they were having meals with every day and socialising with whenever there was a free moment. Knowledge of the piece was related to the friendships developed with the two musicians, resulting in an understanding of the deeper social context behind the song (White, 2012b). For example, I knew the background of the culture bearers through our conversations during lunch times. They shared videos of performances outside Ethno Sweden and, occasionally, gave glimpses into their personal lives by sharing what it was like to live in Sweden after growing up in Syria. As the ethnographic description demonstrates, the rehearsal of the piece was strongly associated with the people who shared the song and they were defining the piece for the rest of the group (Schipper, 2010). The respect and friendship between EoR 2019 and one of the culture bearers is evident in a series of comments on Facebook underneath a video clip of an EoR performance of *Bêrîvanê*:

**Culture bearer: Good job, guys. I am very happy for you.**

**Participant A: (responds in Arabic).<sup>8</sup>**

**Participant B: Hey, sorry my pronunciation.**

**Culture bearer: Responds in Arabic to participant A.**

**Culture bearer: Responds to participant B: It was so wonderful.**

**Participant C: Love you, thanks for the amazing music you shared with us.**

**Culture bearer: Love you too, bro. It was great to share the song with you.  
(Facebook, November 1, 2019)**

Noting how members of EoR 2019 learned *Bêrîvanê* is important because their performance took place without the presence of the culture bearers. The lack of a culture bearer puts their performance at risk of being seen as an example of cultural appropriation, described by Campbell and Lum (2019, p. 174) as, “stemming from colonialism, oppression, and an unequal balance of power between dominant and minority groups and involves the taking of various cultural practices, expressions, and symbols of minorities, especially indigenous groups, without their permission”. Bithell (2014, p. 303) however, highlights a stark difference between an “outsider who takes an object or idea from another culture without consulting its rightful owners and turns it to his own profit” with musicians who have “deep-rooted connections with [...] places and have worked intensively with primary culture-bearers who have also become their friends”. The manner in which *Bêrîvanê* was shared at Ethno Sweden reflects a

process that moved beyond the “taking” of a tune, towards deeper connections and understandings of the music’s origin, demonstrating a process of respectful music exchange (Higgins, 2020). This process is also identified by Hess (2019) who suggests that prior to effective musical engagement in an intercultural setting, mutual respect needs to be established. EoR2019 may have been performing a piece without a culture bearer, however, the learning process was cultivated out of respect and friendship, demonstrating an example where music has been adopted through “a series of personal connections and initiatives” that move beyond common conceptions of cultural appropriation (Bithell 2014, p. 201).

Respect is also evident in how the Världens Band collaborate. One band member explained, “we are always trying to respect that we are specialists in different parts. We try and have everyone involved, but the person who brings the tune must have his or her word regarded more” (Världens Band member A, focus group, 2019). Respectful musical exchange appears to have been initiated at Ethno Sweden and has continued into EoR and further into the collaborative work of the Världens Band.

### **Constructing a unique musical identity**

Respecting the culture bearer as they share their music is balanced with the exchange of music. Sharing one’s own folk music tradition has special value for some Ethno participants, as they are able to bring something unique to share with other people. One EoR 2019 participant explained how the use of folk music brought a unique sound to the gathering, rather than jazz or pop, which he felt was more universal. The abundance of unique sounds led him to feel a small part of the universe, but also made him feel like a better musician (Participant C, field notes, 2019).

Having a “unique sound” to share may prevent participants from appropriation, or mimesis, when a musical tradition is adopted due to a lack of identification with one’s own cultural background (Averill, 2004, p. 100). Averill (2004, p. 101) argues that identification with one’s own cultural background is vital, stating that

**for the world music ensemble to become a space of encounter, performers are not expected to renounce their musical selves, but to bring a set of cultural and individual experiences to the ensemble as a precursor to the production of a genuine understanding of both cultural difference and commonality.**

Hess (2019) also argues for the importance of exploring one’s own identity as the first step in the praxis towards creativity. She describes this praxis as “exploring ones voice, finding ones voice and learning to assert it in the world, and valuing the voices and contributions of others” (p.48). The connection with a unique musical identity solidifies the process of ‘respectful musical exchange’ between participants, as there is an opportunity to share something from one’s own Tradition and receive something from another Tradition (Higgins, 2020).

Feedback from EoR 2019 and Världens Band as well as previous and forthcoming research suggest that Ethno inspired confidence and connection in a musical identity (Ellström 2016; Gibson, 2020).<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Bithell's (2014, p. 305) research found that some community choir members who engaged with music from other parts of the world also gained a "renewed interest in their own heritage, together with the sense that they should have something of their own to show or share with their overseas friends". Within the Världens Band there is also a recognition of being first "steeped" in their own traditions, that do not need to be folk music traditions, recognising that a musical identity does not have to relate to a folk or national identity (Världens Band member A, focus group, 2019). What appears to be more necessary is that there is a musical tradition that a member is able to share with the group

The balance between respectful musical exchange and constructing a unique musical identity is reflected on by an EoR 2019 participant. She observed how the hybrid performances of music from her Tradition had "something from my Tradition inside, but [...] not the real heart or passion". She also recognised that when she was playing music that was not from her Tradition, she did not have the "same feeling as someone from within that practice" (EoR participant A, interview, 2020). By performing pieces from both her own Tradition and the Tradition of the "other", she became aware of a fundamental difference between her understanding of her own musical style compared to that of another person's musical Tradition. This understanding suggests that rather than appropriating musical styles, participants gain a deeper respect for musicians of Traditions other than their own.

### Creating a 'new' sound

The literature acknowledges the complexity of maintaining "authenticity" within a different social context (Harnish, Solis and Witzleben, 2004; Mantie and Risk, 2020). Within EoR and Världens Band participants expressed a desire to combine musical traditions, focusing on fusions, rather than performing "authentic" styles. Balosso-Bardin (2018, p. 97) notes that the Världens Band prefer the creation of a "new sound" over "perceived authenticity". Similarly, EoR2019 participants were excited about "different ways of expressing music" and creating something "new by combining traditional sounds" (EoR Participant A, interview, 2020). Hess (2019, p. 98) argues for the benefits of hybrid music, suggesting that it "may provide a means for youth to construct music that speaks to their realities" suggesting that "this practice shifts music from 'untouchable' to accessible, allowing youth to understand that art is meant to communicate and that they can construct it so it speaks for and to them". This is evident in the excitement EoR and Världens Band share in creating musical hybrids.

Link to Video 2: EoR performing *Bêrivanê*  
<https://youtu.be/FM5JEEwwJu8>

## Risks of hybrid musical arrangements

The use of creating hybrid musical arrangements within EoR is described by artistic leader Lars as a means of introducing new musical styles to people. Both Lars (Interview) and Balosso-Bardin (2018, p. 98) describe the choice to use Western harmony as “finding the common ground” in order to enable connection with the audience and “enable collaboration” within the band. Taylor (2014) critiques this approach, arguing that it is difficult to find a balance between music that sounds familiar to a European or American market, but possesses elements of “otherness”.<sup>10</sup> The risk is that “otherness” begins to appear as an example of exoticism, which Hess (2019, p. 135) describes as an added “spice’ [...] for youth studying unfamiliar musics”. During the focus group session, a Världens Band member recognised these risks:

**This is the dangerous thing with Ethno because it started in Europe, with European values and ideas, in music as well. When you go to an Ethno, most of them are based on having a melody, accompaniment and rhythm and we always talk music theory in Western terms. There’s this big risk that it’s Western culture being implied on other cultures and being told that this is the right thing. I started realising these things [...] because of Ethno.**

**I have a very concrete example with our first singer [in the Världens Band]. He was playing his mbira and he had his way of tuning it which didn’t work together with our instruments and we were young and not conscious of how different music cultures are. And we said ‘why can’t you just change the tuning’ and he said, ‘no it will lose the African spirit’ and we were like, ‘come on, that’s not a real thing’ – but of course it is and when you read about it more [...] it was tuned in a [...] natural harmonics series, so [it] would vibrate and sound in a certain way, which it doesn’t if you tune it with equal temperament. (Världens Band member G, focus group, 2019)**

This Världens Band member recognises the flaws in blending musical styles in order to find the common ground. He became aware of this through the band’s collaborative experiences, demonstrating a deepening awareness of the dominating influence of Western culture through the process of working with musicians from different musical backgrounds. The band still use the Western harmonic tonal system in their arrangements but do take account of cultural dominance on a social level. For example, the Swedish members within the band recognise their own dominance in the group and actively work for a democratic organisation. They still recognise that not all the voices are heard during rehearsals and a “handful of voices seem to dominate the decision-making process leaving less vocal and/or less culturally dominant people to feel frustrated” (Balosso-Bardin, 2018, p. 93–94). Even with an awareness of cultural

dominance, there is a constant need to negotiate within a multicultural band to ensure that all the voices within the group are given equal recognition. This can take much time and discussion but is essential in multicultural groups striving for an egalitarian approach (Brinner, 2009; Gibson, 2018).

This dilemma of cultural dominance was also apparent in EoR 2019. Almost every participant spoke of the need to compromise within the band. One participant said that it felt like there were “more voices controlling the sound” in the small group compared to the bigger ensemble at Ethno. This participant concluded, “we can’t put our own styles into every song’ (EoR participant D, fieldnotes, 2019). However, one occurrence during EoR 2019 does suggest a Swedish cultural dominance. An EoR member reflected on learning a Swedish tune and an insistence upon a particular rhythm:

**I know they were trying to protect their rhythm. So that’s totally different because in Sweden we have to make Sweden’s rhythm. But, for example, when we were playing Colombian music, I know that it was not real traditional Colombian music [...] because we changed the rhythm and some feeling about it. (EoR participant A, interview, 2020)**

The participant reflects that it was due to their Swedish location that it was important to play the Swedish rhythm correctly, supporting the Ethno ideal of respecting different traditions. However, the lack of balance between respecting and learning a Swedish rhythm in comparison to a Colombian rhythm is perplexing. The element of respectful musical *exchange* is lost and draws attention to concerns surrounding cultural dominance and agency. If, as Averill (2004, p. 101) argues, the world music ensemble is to be considered “the space of encounter, rather than the mastery of codes”, then musical performances will not be authentic. Rather, the performance will appear as “very honest and unpretentious” (Locke, 2004 p. 179). When it came to the Swedish tune, the emphasis was on performing it authentically, preventing participants from putting “their own styles” into the song. This challenges the Ethno ideal of creating “new sounds” and the opportunity “to offer a new expression by the individual musician or the musical collective” (Campbell and Lum, 2019, p. 172).

One of the facilitators did explain that EoR do like to include some “authentic” folk music within an EoR programme as a means of introducing different types of Traditional music to the audience. (Lars, interview two, 2020). The Swedish piece may have been intended as an example of an authentic sound, but this might not have been explained clearly to the EoR 2019 band members, as frustration was expressed when it came to how and when different styles were or weren’t incorporated into musical pieces (EoR Fieldnotes, 2019). It also suggests a dissonance when combining performances of “authentic” styles and hybrid styles. How does one justify which styles are hybrid compared to the ones that are performed authentically? If it appears that the socially dominant group’s music is also performed most authentically, there is a suggestion of cultural dominance and exoticism of the “other” music.

Lars (interview two, 2020) reflects that, “they should not be dominated by Swedish music. That’s not the purpose of it. But then [...] what happens almost every tour is [...] that they are more interested in Swedish music afterwards”. The interest in Swedish folk music is not surprising, as ecological environments and social context can have an impact on artistic development (Bartleet, et al, 2020; Coessens, 2014). However, if the aim of EoR is not to have a dominance of Swedish influence, this needs to be taken into account when the band are negotiating their musical performances.

## The importance of critical reflection

It is vital that Ethno recognise that engagement with and the sharing of world music unearths some uncomfortable truths about society. Stokes (2004, p. 55) argues “the globalization of music cements the hegemony of significant racial and gendered hierarchies in many parts of the world” further supported by Wallach and Clinton (2019, p. 126) who write “all observable musical practice results from concrete, often violent histories of unequal exchange”. In relating this to ensembles of world music, Averill (2004, p. 108) argues, “no form of representation stands outside relations of power”. In his context he calls for ethnomusicologists to “confront” the “political implications of their own performance of cultural difference” further challenging facilitators by saying,

**we may unwittingly indulge our student participants and our audiences in a form of concert tourism that superficially nods to multicultural diversity without challenging preconceived notions or acknowledging the noisy clash of cultures, politics, and musics in the contemporary world.**

The importance of interrogating attitudes when it comes to using or sharing music from another culture is vital (White, 2012b, Bartleet, 2019, Campbell and Lum, 2019, Hess, 2019). Born and Hesmondalgh (2000, p. 47) argue “developing greater critical acuity about the techniques and forms through which power is deployed in western music contributes in a complementary way to the larger project of questioning and unsettling those modes of power”. This suggestion is supported by Averill (2004) and Hess (2019). Averill (2004, p. 109) argues that if ensembles such as these are used as “spaces of dialogic encounter” it could become a “part of student’s intellectual, personal, aesthetic *and ethical* transformation”.

Community musicians address this complex issue through the process of critical reflection (Bartleet, 2019; Hess, 2019). Whilst it may not be the intention of the facilitator to act in a culturally dominant manner, they need to constantly reflect on their own positionality within existing power structures (Campbell and Lum, 2019; Hess, 2019). Hess (2019, p. 127) asserts that awareness of the risks in engaging in activist- music education can “better equip” music facilitators and that it is better not to avoid these forms of interactions but use “slips” as “opportunities for conversation

and growth” (p. 141). Trimillos (2004, p. 48) considers the opportunity for critical reflection as a positive experience for the participant, describing the world music ensemble as a place in society where assumptions can be questioned and critiqued.

Higgins (2020) has already identified Ethno as a space of critical reflection. For EoR, cultural dominance is an area where constant critical reflection needs to occur as the smaller size of the group and the touring experience intensifies the encounter with the “other”. EoR participants appear confident that they are not appropriating the music of a culture bearer. However, the manner in which some music and not others is blended to create a hybrid style suggests that further critical reflection and collaboration may be needed during EoR rehearsals. For, as Campbell and Lum (2019, p. 84) explain: “Diversity emerges not only in the actual musical selections that comprise a program but also through [...] the contributions that various people make to preparing the music and fashioning the programs”. Such an approach would enable opportunities for intercultural engagement, which Bithell (2014, p. 302) describes as examples of “people behaving in ways that are sensitive and responsive, of mutual engagement, rather than one-sided exploitation.”

## Conclusion

In this section I have considered two research questions. The first focused on the extent to which participants continue to embody the ideals of intercultural harmony espoused by Ethno-World after “aging out” of the gatherings. Through thematic analysis of a focus group interview with Världens Band and fieldwork with EoR 2019 three ideals drawn from the camp appeared to have been adopted by both groups:

- Respectful musical exchange
- Constructing a unique musical identity
- The creation of a ‘new’sounds

The complexity of intercultural exchange became particularly evident in how the groups’ negotiate a Western dominance in the creation of ‘new’sounds which led to a second research question: How does EoR and Världens Band negotiate issues of power, authenticity and agency when they learn and perform folk music from around the world? Världens Band appear to approach this issue through constant negotiation and discussion within their group, whilst it is less clear how EoR address this issue. As a result, I recommend the importance of critical reflection as an approach to bring awareness to these issues and enhance intercultural understandings within the group (Higgins, 2020, Hess, 2019, Bartleet, 2019, Campbell and Lum 2019, White 2012b, Born and Hesmondalgh, 2000, Averill, 2004, Trimillos, 2004, Bithell, 2014).

## SECTION B: PERFORMANCE AND OUTREACH

This section investigates the impact EoR performances have within local communities in Sweden. Findings suggest that the EoR audience falls into two categories: the folk music scene and school concerts. The folk music circuit is a bounded local group, whilst the school concerts can be considered a means of outreach. All participants mentioned their enjoyment performing to the former audience, however, some participants felt that more work could be done with regard to outreach and impact during school performances. Shelemay argues “musical communities provide particularly striking case studies of processes of boundary formation since specific musical styles can lead the way in either closing off a community or in opening it up to outsiders” (2011, p. 379). EoR provides a compelling case study as the group experienced the tension between performing both within their community and to an outside audience.

The focus is on the Ethno Research question: In what ways and to what extent has Ethno-World impacted the European and worldwide folk/ traditional musical Ecosystem? As this fieldwork was based in Sweden, the findings relate to Sweden specifically, rather than a European and worldwide folk/ traditional musical Ecosystem. Findings suggest that EoR largely perform an ideology to an audience who share this vision. This audience could be considered a subculture (Slobin, 1993). The research question raised through thematic analysis is: What is the significance of an EoR performance as a means of outreach to the wider community? This is due to concerns within EoR 2019 that the band needed to increase their visibility to a wider audience and potentially engage in greater social justice causes.

### Performance frames

Baumann (1977) argues that performances occur within a certain context that is evaluated by the audience according to culturally specific criteria. He refers to this as performance frames.<sup>11</sup> Most pertinently, Baumann (1977) emphasises the importance of the audience response to the success or failure of a performance.<sup>12</sup> As the audience is responding according to a culturally specific criteria, it is vital to understand the social context within which a performance takes place and the standards by which audience members are perceiving what they are experiencing. Turino (2008, pp. 52–53) elaborates further:

**Contemporary classical concerts and singer-songwriter performances typically cue interpretive frames in which the audience is expected to pay close attention to the musicians and the music, the frame for a presentational rock band playing in a bar is often more relaxed.**

Turino (2008, p. 63) expands the concept of a performance frame to genres, defined as “sets of shared values amongst fans of a given genre”. This is important when considering an EoR performance as it appears that the ideology of Ethno, or at least the artistic leaders engaged in EoR, may be the driving force behind their performance goals. The importance of moving beyond identifying music as a genre to including an ideology is recognised in studies of popular music (Frith, 1996; Hersch, 1996; Fonaraow, 2006). Interviews with the EoR artistic leader and the Världens Band suggest that seeing a group of people from diverse backgrounds performing together on stage and “having fun” is essential to the performance expectations of the bands, rather than performing a piece of folk music to an expected “elite” or “authentic” standard. EoR performances therefore fall within the ideologies and standards of a “participatory frame” rather than one focused on performance (Turino, 2008).<sup>13</sup> This was evident in my observations of the EoR performance in Järna, the first performance of EoR that I attended.

The outline of the event was:

- 6.00pm: Indian workshop
- 6.30pm: Dance workshop
- 7.30pm: Irish folk band
- 8.30pm: Ethno on the Road

Workshops took place in a small room adjacent to the main auditorium. Whilst all these events were occurring, food was being served in the hallway between the two spaces. What was striking about this performance was the unstructured nature of it. Audience members moved between the three spaces regardless of whether a session had ended, often to get food. There was no clear division between audience and performer prior to their performance. EoR participants mingled with their audience eating a meal at the same time, participating in workshops and watching other performances, if they wished too.

The performance was informal with some audience members engaging with the music through dancing, whilst others sat and listened to the music. At times, members of the audience would speak to the performers on stage, particularly when working out what folk dances to apply to certain songs. EoR was being situated within a broader frame, with folk music workshops and prior performances preparing the audience for the final EoR set.

Image 7: Audience participation at Järna. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.



In the ethnographic description above the frame of the performance is evident. This is a participatory folk music event with EoR as the headline band after an evening of socialising and learning. Moving tables back and dancing shows an engagement with the music that is considered acceptable according to the standards by which the audience and performers judge a successful performance (Baumann, 1977). When performing within a frame where the audience and performer share expectations, it can generate a feeling of connection between both groups.

The importance of connecting to the audience was addressed by all the members of EoR (Fieldnotes, 2019). Lars mentioned how the smaller band changes the relationship between performers and their audience, explaining that, “the sense of giving something is much stronger because there are fewer of you on stage [compared to the Ethno Sweden concert]” (Lars, interview one, 2019). One EoR2019 participant recalls her connection with some audience members at the bands’ first performance, describing her connection through non-verbal means: “It’s lovely for me that [...] they don’t talk to you, but you can feel their feedback” (EoR participant A, interview, 2020). Interaction between audience and performer “is created and maintained through visual, auditory, emotional and physical means” (Hytonen-Ng, 2013, p. 109). Achieving this level of connection requires some shared understanding between the audience and the performer of what amounts to a successful performance.

## Shared ideologies and performance

Shared expectations within performance frames also relate to the audience and performer sharing a particular ideology, or ethos (Fonarow, 2006; Leante, 2016, Gibson, 2018). Hess (2019, p. 59) reminds us that music is “inherently political” and the way in which it is framed is “crucial to learning to think critically and challenge assumptions”. She argues for the importance of recognising ideologies as it lays a “foundation for developing a practice of critique” (2019, p. 109). Hess (2019, p. 143) also stresses that audiences may use performances to understand themselves better, or to “produce themselves in a certain way”. In EoR performances, there appears to be a ‘story’ of political activism within the audience, which they see reflected in the EoR performance, falling into White’s (2012b, p. 195) suggestion that world music listeners value cultural hybridity because it represents an ideal vision of “a world without racism, without hate, and with a multitude of colours living together in harmony and style”. Lars (interview two, 2020) highlighted this in some of his descriptions of interactions with audience members:

**A lady had been taking care of some illegal immigrants and this concert was so strong for her to see that people from around the world are equal and can share music together. She came to me [...] and we had to fight the feeling of standing side by side and fighting for the same cause: the cause of fighting racism and taking care of each other.**

He then related this to Ethno, mentioning the ideology behind their performances:

**The big thing with Ethno is having young people from all over the world and watching them having fun on the stage. I think that is one of the big boosts for the audience because that makes them feel like we have this feeling of unity in the world. (Lars, interview two, 2020)**

In an earlier interview, he describes how the audience can, “see how alike we are and how much fun we can have even though we are from different parts of the world” (Lars, interview one, 2019). Both quotes suggest that the aims of EoR performances are to celebrate diversity and demonstrate how everyone is equal, regardless of where they come from. This suggests that EoR may be focusing more on performing an ideology rather than a particular musical genre. Indeed, Lars (interview two, 2020) concluded that it is not important if the music being shared is folk music, explaining that it is more “an aesthetic way of feeling it”.

Whilst it appears that connection between audience and performer was stronger in the performances at folk music locations, these take place within a “small-scale bounded audience”, or subculture (Slobin, 1993, p. 17). This may be because of a

necessity for the audience to understand the performance frame within which Ethno operates: an audience who understand what Ethno is about will be more likely to receive the band in a welcoming and hospitable manner. Performances to an audience who are less likely to understand the performance frame of Ethno may be less receptive to the performers. However, EoR is an opportunity to promote the Ethno Sweden gathering and may also be an opportunity to open doors towards deeper understandings of different cultures within some parts of the Swedish community, and there were concerns by EoR 2019 that they were not reaching a broad enough audience (EoR participant A, interview, 2020; EoR participant B, interview 2019).

## **EoR as a means of outreach**

A performance that challenges audiences and performers towards greater reflexivity about their position in society may serve as a means of outreach (Solis, 2004, Campbell and Lum, 2019; Hess, 2019. Bartleet, 2019). As discussed in Section A, community musicians argue that intercultural exchange should be encouraged with the caveat that it encourages critical reflection and discussion.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, “micro-level” engagements can greatly impact exchanges between disparate communities, arguably more than larger scale initiatives (Brinner, 2009; Bartleet, 2019). EoR performances in schools and for marginalised communities may have the potential to enable such “micro-level” engagements.

One member of the Världens Band felt that EoR enables a journey to wider audiences that the much larger Ethno orchestra cannot.<sup>15</sup> As a co-ordinator for EoR he recalled,

**I overhead a conversation with a few students [saying] “if I hear this music on the recording, I think it’s so boring, but when I hear and see what they do and all these instruments – it’s so cool!” He continues, “I think [that] to open up to more people you need to put them in front of it [...] you need to see it to open up a bit and become interested in it. (Världens Band member H, focus group, 2019)**

Another Världens Band member reflected how Ethno can “open children’s eyes” in a fun and interactive way (Världens Band member E, focus group, 2019), focusing on elements of Ethno that promote both informal learning and the opportunity to see people from different parts of the world having fun together. The emphasis in performance, as noted earlier, is a visual image of people from diverse backgrounds on stage together. There is therefore an acknowledgement that EoR performances can impact audiences, but from the experience of EoR 2019, when it came to school concerts and workshops at universities attendance was either not high, or the connection to the audience did not inspire confidence in the work that the group were doing (EoR participant A, interview, 2020; EoR participant B, interview, 2019).

An EoR participant considered the school concerts, difficult, but also the group that the band needed to reach the most, saying, “the schools of course, are hard, super hard, but I feel that maybe they are the most important ones” (EoR Participant B, interview, 2020). When reflecting on the initial school performances, participant A says:

**At first we didn’t know what to do about playing music for the children because we didn’t know everything, so the first and second school concerts were totally awful because we just played and we [spoke] about our country and then we taught [a] sentence about our country [but] we didn’t have any feedback from them.**

This participant continues by describing how she learned to engage better with the school audiences as the concerts progressed, demonstrating a growing understanding of the performance frame in which she was placed:

**we started to have some conversations with the students [and] we started to ask questions. I asked, “Can anyone speak Mandarin” and “maybe they could say something to me”, so it was much closer to a conversation. (EoR Participant A, interview, 2020)**

Issues of agency were also felt by EoR2019 in some of the school performances. One member explains that when some audiences required the facilitators to speak in Swedish, there was a feel of “disconnect” and “not knowing what to do” or “what was going to happen next”. She also noted that some audience members misunderstood her cultural background and spoke to her in a language that she did not understand (EoR participant A, interview 2020). This once again draws attention to the importance of agency for a performer. Campbell and Lum (2019, p. 161) suggest that “the success of school-community intersections requires even-handed collaboration between key players”. This is vital in multicultural musical groups where cultural dominance needs to be sensitively negotiated (Brinner, 2009; Gibson, 2018; Hess, 2019). Furthermore, not knowing what a presenter is saying about you or your music and a lack of awareness of how ones music is being framed in this situation, can also impact a groups feeling of “empowerment and successful connection” (Gibson, 2019, p. 3). It is clear, however, that as these concerts progressed, the EoR participants became more confident in how to engage with this audience and that the participants saw the value in performing to them, even if they did not always feel a strong connection to their audience.

I discussed how EoR selects their audiences with Lars (interview two, 2020) who explained,

**If you're going to schools, it's mandatory concerts and [students] need to be there, but, it's not that often that we do these school tours...then we have done some occasional concerts in schools, but that has been more teenagers from 15 years and up, and, mostly music students.**

**I don't think we're so careful about choosing an audience. But [...] mostly it's cultural interested people, so, we're not attracted to hire for those who need us most. For instance, it would be very interesting to go to a [Swedish right-wing party] meeting and play some Ethno music for them, see what happens and have a discussion.**

Lars draws attention to the impact a performing group could have on an audience that may not usually encounter people from other parts of the world, relating to Averill's (2004, pg. 100) comments about world music ensembles. He suggests that "for audiences largely unschooled in the genres being performed the student ensemble becomes a principle vehicle for transmission of cultural diversity". This brings with it a certain level of responsibility with regard to the representation of different musical cultures to new audiences (Vetter, 2004). It is, however, also identified by Campbell and Lum (2019, p. 176) as a powerful bridge between cultures and communities and "a way into the heart of people who may at first appear 'strange' or 'different'". This is further reinforced by Hess (2019, p. 5) who suggests that "emergent activist education [...] focuses on bringing people together, expressing experiences, and identifying and challenging oppressions". One of the EoR 2019 participants felt this responsibility strongly, even suggesting that EoR branch out to different countries, saying, "now you're not only living it, but you're sharing Ethno, so the tour is a responsibility" (EoR participant B, interview, 2019).

Världens Band members also reflected on their experiences performing to audiences unfamiliar with positive intercultural engagements. One member recalled how a student in a marginalised area told his teachers that the day Världens Band performed for them was "the best day of their life". This member felt that performing in marginalised areas has the potential to "open people's eyes" and "hopefully change some views" (Världens Band member F focus group, 2019).

The experience of performing in the school concerts with EoR2019 led Lars to consider the demographic of Ethno:

**Is Ethno something for lower class, middle class or upper class? I think with our tour this time we reached areas that are not so often reached. Having these kind of concerts that we did in Blekinge and meeting schools that are segregated. It's such a strong thing to have them looking at us and I think if we can have more of that in Ethno and JMI: having people from all classes participating in these kind of projects, I think that is a very good thing and we should do that. (Lars, interview two, 2020)**

I delved into this more deeply with Lars (Interview two, 2020) as we reflected on establishing a common ground between people from disparate backgrounds through folk music and he said, “maybe they will do better if we [...] find a common ground like learning how to use folk/ world music with computers to create hip hop music”.

Throughout my conversations with the organisers of Ethno Sweden, the nature of the music being specifically “folk”, “world” or “pop” did not appear relevant, suggesting that the music is a vehicle for connection to a person from a different place, supporting Mantie and Risk’s (2020, p. 20) assertion that the use of national identities within Ethno enables ‘a “participatory ethos” [...] serving a larger transnational vision’. Participation and connection appear to be highly significant for EoR performances. The focus appears to be an ideology rather than a promotion of folk music, with the use of folk music seen as a tool for intercultural encounters.

### **New possibilities: connecting with refugees**

There was a memory shared by Lars about an experience of EoR 2015 that had a huge impact on him (Lars, interview one, 2019). This encounter suggests the potential performances of world music can have for welcome and hospitality (Higgins, 2012).

Lars recalled an “EoR moment” in 2015 when Syrian refugees were arriving in the town of Rättvik, which is where EoR begins its tour. Refugees had been accommodated in the local hotel, but Lars described the situation as “like a war had come to the town” and that they were not prepared for the newly arrived immigrants. An artistic leader suggested that they invite the refugees to their first EoR concert, for which they provided free tickets.

30–50 refugees attended and sat at the back of the hall. Lars recalls how nobody in EoR could speak Arabic and he could see that the refugees did not really understand what was happening on the stage, until they reached the last song, *Wen ala Ramalah*. All of a

sudden, the audience began to dance. Lars describes this sudden change in the audience's reaction as quite moving for EoR participants due to the contrast of them "not understanding" previous songs and then "jump dancing" to a song that they were familiar with and was in a language that they understood. He explains that EoR felt that it meant a lot to the audience to have their music played.

Three years later, Lars ran into a Syrian man in the streets of Rättvik and started to chat with him about his arrival to Sweden. The man spoke very good Swedish and it turned out that he had arrived in Rättvik the same week as the EoR concert. Lars asked him if he attended their concert. He said yes and that he still had a film on his mobile phone from that concert. He had saved it as a dear memory.

These memories shared by Lars first reflects an initial lack of connection between the audience and performer, suggesting a lack of shared understanding in the performance frame of the event. When the audience responded to the final song by dancing, the performance shifted into a participatory musical frame as described in the opening ethnographic description of this section and the performers felt an immediate and powerful connection to their audience.

Hess (2019, p. 10) argues that music can "foster connections with Others, tell stories and share experiences, and engage politically with the world". Activist-musicians in her research study suggest that connection "may occur through shared emotion; that can occur through a song that evokes a similar emotion between people" (2019, p. 43). In the ethnographic description, this appears to be what is happening between the performers and the audience. Furthermore, their performance of music of the "other" represented a form of "welcome". Higgins (2020) and Birch (2020) note elements of welcome and hospitality in the Ethno gatherings, but this is an example of an EoR performance acting as a moment of hospitality for their audience. This draws Higgins (2012) theories of hospitality, which focus on community music facilitation practice within ensembles beyond that towards the audience. What is relevant to this example is the recognition that the relationship between the host and guest is of central importance, and that "an open invitation, given with the full knowledge of the tensions and challenges inherent within such a gesture, can result in an experience of connectivity that can produce lasting impressions on both community musicians and participants" (Gibson and Higgins, forthcoming). Schippers (2010, p. 59) concludes, "in the end, a powerful piece of music presented 'inauthentically' out of context may engage learners more than an academically approved, representative traditional piece, especially if the connection with the learners is well conceived and carefully presented". The music performed in this ethnographic example was not authentic, however it created a powerful connection and because of this needs to be recognised as an example of social activism at a micro-level (Brinner, 2009, Bartleet, 2019).

## Conclusion

Through an analysis of two performance settings experienced by EoR 2019 I have reflected on the research question: what is the significance of an EoR performance as a means of outreach to the wider community? This research question falls within a broader research question within Ethno Research: in what ways and to what extent has Ethno-World impacted the European and worldwide folk / traditional musical ecosystem?

Using Bauman's (1977) theory of performance frames as a framework, I have demonstrated the difference between performing to an audience that shares an understanding of the underlying ideal of a musical group and the accompanying success criteria for the performance, with performing to an audience who do not share these criteria. I argue that this is the difference between performing to an audience within a subculture and performing as a form of outreach. In spite of the difficulties of performing to the latter, the importance of performing to audiences outside of the Ethno network was recognised by both participants A and B, the artistic leader, and Världens Band, with a recognition that if Ethno wants to have a wider impact on society, particularly with regard to social justice causes, they need to reach out further.

Performing a particular ideology was referenced frequently by Världens Band members and the artistic leader, suggesting that EoR may be more focused on performing an ideology than promoting a hybrid folk music style or genre. This may be why Ethno-World is not broadly recognised within the wider European and worldwide folk/ traditional musical ecosystem. However, should EoR continue to perform beyond their local music culture and continue to engage in smaller micro-level intercultural experiences, this may impact successful intercultural exchange (Brinner, 2009; Bartleet, 2019).

Finally, it was recognised by both the artistic leader and the participants that even more could be done with regard to reaching out to marginalised communities within Sweden (Lars, interview two, 2019, Participant A interview 2020, Participant B interview, 2019). Where the band has experienced performing to part of the refugee committee in Sweden, it was described as an event that evoked powerful emotions for both the band and the audience. This leads me to conclude that EoR has the capacity to act as a means of welcome and hospitality through the songs that they perform and their multicultural image on stage. This is further supported by the comments of members of the Världens Band and evidenced by this band's continuation of performing to audiences with limited experiences of multicultural engagement.

## SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section I consider the research question: in what ways and to what extent did the Ethno experience influence life choices? I focus on the personal and professional impact that EoR and Ethno has had on the lives of Världens Band and EoR 2019. Personal and professional development of participants is noted in the Ethno Research case reports and the Ethno Research Framework (Birch, 2020, Coric, 2020; Ellström, 2020, Gayraud, 2020, Gibson, 2020, Higgins, 2020, Mantie and Risk, 2020). EoR 2019 and Världens Band provide further insight into the progression of these transformations after camps. Findings suggest that personal and professional development takes an extended amount of time, suggesting that Ethno could be seen as a catalyst towards a particular musical pathway (Finnegan, 2007).

A musical pathway relates ones musical experiences to a trajectory, as individuals move from one ensemble to another, but usually all within a particular genre. Finnegan (2007) was basing this on observations of musicians in Milton Keynes, and how, when people moved to the town, they joined musical groups that they already had some experience with by having participated in them in another town. They could, therefore, fit in with the musical practice, as they had an understanding of the musical and social repertoire of the group, based on previous experience (Wenger, 1998). Reily and Brucher (2018, p. 5–6) describe the pathway in this manner:

**as people move along a pathway, they leave a legacy of practices for those embarking on it after them. As people join the pathway, they bring to it their experiences from other pathways, adding new practices while reformulating and discarding others. Thus, pathways are being continuously reproduced and shaped by collective negotiations taking place among those moving along them.**

Both EoR 2019 and Världens Band describe their Ethno experience as part of a ‘path’ suggesting they perceive their Ethno experience as a fluid progression (Världens Band focus group, 2019; EoR participant B interview, 2019).

### Professional development

Lars (interview two, 2020) explains his method of teaching folk music as process. He starts by finding a style of music familiar to the students and then introduces “Swedish *polskas* with uneven beats and more difficult tonality”. After three to five years of learning these Swedish tunes, he feels musicians are then ready “to meet real tradition keepers and learn from them”.

What is notable is Lars's emphasis on the length of time it takes for a person to engage with a culture bearer. Green (2008, p. 181–182) also highlights the length of time it takes to develop theoretical understandings of music in informal learning contexts, saying,

**Informal music learning practices as they occur in the world outside school, are likely to involve a long period – in many cases a period of years – during which learners engage with music primarily as music-makers and music listeners. Later on, and in most cases only later on, many such musicians go on to develop theoretical knowledge, to a greater or lesser degree depending on individual circumstances.**

When it comes to the impact of informal learning within EoR, the process is similar to Green's description, and is dependent on personal circumstances. As Lars argues, "when [the music is] performed on an Ethno stage [...] it's a milestone. You pass it and then you have to go further on, and the paths are different for us all" (Lars, interview two, 2020).

EoR 2019 musicians are taking a deeper interest in new musical styles. Lars has been learning Iranian music. Another EoR 2019 participant is returning to Rättvik with fellow students from his music conservatory to learn more about Swedish folk music (Lars, interview two, 2020). One EoR 2019 participant has applied to study at a Swedish folk music course in Sweden. This participant also developed an interest in Arabic after Ethno Sweden and started learning the language. She mentioned how she was able to speak Arabic to some of the students in one of the schools they visited whilst on tour, demonstrating not only how her curiosity was sparked at Ethno Sweden to learn more about certain cultures, but enabled her to engage with some audience members during her EoR experience.

The Världens Band have taken a different approach, now writing music together, suggesting a shift from being a band that incorporates folk music to one that is now engaged in creative endeavours that stem from their shared experiences (Världens Band participant F, focus group, 2019). Balosso-Bardin (2018) attributes some of this to the length of time the group has been working together. In contrast, some members of EoR 2019 were experiencing performing in a band for the first time, a position one of the Världens Band members recalls herself in 2010 (Världens Band participant A, focus group, 2019; EoR participant A interview 2020), reflecting the career progression that EoR can have should a participant choose this particular pathway, or fall within a subculture that they are comfortable with, as the Världens Band were.

Professional development appears part of a broader process of learning, with Ethno acting as a catalyst within that pathway. EoR 2019 musicians are either already on the pathway of becoming musicians, or starting to pursue their studies at higher institutions, whilst most of the Världens Band work in various sectors of the music industry, as community musicians, professional musicians, or in formal educational institutions.

## Personal development

When it comes to the impact of Ethno on the personal development of participants, one member of the Världens Band balanced his experiences at Ethno with other aspects of his life concluding, “it’s very hard to separate what comes from Ethno and what comes from me”. He continues, “we were all the same age and we got into world music and doing this kind of stuff and were just totally in love with the whole Ethno thing” (Världens Band focus group, participant H, 2019). He also notes an overlap with friendships he had prior to Ethno who then also attended the gathering, and that he still maintains.

Another Världens Band member (Participant J, focus group, 2019) reflects,

**I think it’s also difficult because Ethno is ten days. And a lot of us have done a lot of Ethnos, so it’s difficult to identify a before and after, except for how you feel inside. It’s also difficult to identify the ramifications because it’s become part of our life and the people who we think of when we want to play music are people who we know and a lot of them come from that social group.**

The previous two quotes reflect Slobin’s (1993) description of a subculture, highlighting that participants were the same age, some were already friends prior to the camps, and that there is a social group with which there is a feeling of affinity.<sup>16</sup> Participants are also describing an embodiment of experience, where “music has essentially become part of who they are” (Harnish, 2004, p. 136) linking to comments by Born and Hesmondalgh (2000, p. 32) that “it is precisely music’s extraordinary powers of imaginary evocation of identity and of cross-cultural and intersubjective empathy that render it as a means of both marking and transforming individual and collective identities”.

Both on a personal and professional level during the interviews and focus group, the path is described in terms of years. One Världens member highlighted this:

**It [...] takes a few years because you go back to your own country and you think, ‘but I was like this when I was in Ethno, or Världens Band, but I am a different version of me when I get back [home]. Why is that? Am I trying to integrate or am I trying to be someone else back home?’ Because [in Ethno or Världens Band] you have all the freedom – there’s no judgement. I’ve been as open as I can, I’ve experimented with everything that I wanted to, in terms of music or life. When I get home, I get back and I think okay is this me [...] It’s taken 7 or 8 years to realise that I’m the same person in both the spaces. (Världens Band focus group, participant C, 2019)**

Världens Band member C describes the interchange between her experiences at home, and when engaged with Ethno related initiatives, demonstrating Finnegan's (2007) notion of musicians being engaged in multiple spaces that ultimately forge a particular pathway. In the case of participant C, a Traditional musician in her country, one notes a reconciliation between her identity in both spaces, also connecting with Bithell's (2014, pg. 203) comments about performers entering "into a dialogue with external others, but also with different aspects of the self".

Only one member of EoR 2019 related her Ethno experience to an embodied sense of self. She felt that whilst at Ethno she was "living it", however, she also explained that this was not her first experience of intercultural exchange and that she has attended previous camps that have a similar intercultural aim as Ethno. She expressed that she was following a "personal process" and this may be why she saw that Ethno was about so much more than the music because she was already "putting herself" into spaces that encourage intercultural exchange (EoR participant B, interview, 2019).<sup>17</sup>

Again, we observe a description of a path, or a process, that, for this musician had already began prior to her first Ethno experience. This participant also highlighted how becoming aware of the differences between the way she thought compared to other members in the band led to a greater understanding of herself. She realised that her cultural background affected her way of "seeing, feeling and understanding" and realised that people from different cultural backgrounds may have a different perspective. She felt that her intercultural experiences were enabling her to "see the same picture from different sides" (EoR Participant B interview, 2019).

Members of the Världens Band found it harder to explain the thought-processes associated with their Ethno experiences, for example,

**I think it's so hard to think about how it has affected you. I can feel it, but I can't give [concrete examples] because it's a change of perspective in my view of the world. I can't put them all together, but I know it has affected me a lot in the way I go into situations with people, the way I view the world and the world has opened up in such a great way. (Participant H, Världens Band focus group)**

Another member noted how the experience deepened his tolerance for people from different backgrounds. He also expressed how he wished there was more opportunity to discuss these issues:

**With things like feminism and homosexuality, of course it's good that you get to see a lot of different political views and mindsets. I think I got a big acceptance and tolerance for religious people, for example, or for people from different cultures that are really conservative and traditional in their ways. I wish that we could talk about these things more.<sup>18</sup> (Participant I, Världens Band focus group, 2019)**

It is noted in the literature how intercultural experiences can lead to greater self-awareness (Kisluik and Gross, 2004; Bithell, 2014; Bartleet, et al 2020). Kisluik and Gross (2004, p. 250) write:

**first-hand 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” [...] direct involvement in a process of musical creation engender a kind of self-awareness that leads to activity instead of abstraction.**

Whilst it is difficult for Världens Band members to articulate how Ethno impacted their lives, it is clear that they do feel that it has influenced them. The embodied nature of musical performance as described by Kisluik and Gross may account for the difficulties they have in providing more concrete examples of its impact.

## Conclusion

The conversations, interviews and focus group meeting with EoR 2019 and Världens Band suggest that EoR can be a catalyst towards a musical pathway in folk music. This pathway appears to connect like-minded people who may come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, thus related to a subculture. This suggests that Ethno participants who pursue an Ethno-related musical pathway perform and work within a bounded group (Slobin, 1993). EoR 2019 musicians demonstrate an interest in continuing their learning about folk music after their experiences at EoR, suggesting that they are responding to the informal approach, and continuing to develop their understandings of some of the musical practices that they encountered.

With regard to personal development, participants describe a deeper awareness of their personal identity in relation to other people. There appears to be a pathway or subculture, with participants not always able to distinguish what they learned at Ethno and what they may have adopted from elsewhere, suggesting that Ethno Gatherings may be drawing people into the network who already have an interest in intercultural engagement.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been an analysis of EoR, a touring band comprising five participants who are selected at the end of Ethno Sweden each year, and Världens Band, a transcultural fusion band that has its roots in the Ethno Sweden Gathering and EoR touring band of 2010. Findings are based on ethnographic fieldwork, a focus group with the Världens Band and follow up interviews with an artistic leader for EoR and participants of EoR 2019. Academic discourse has drawn from the fields of ethnomusicology and community music with a focus on intercultural engagement and globalisation in Section A (Appadurai, 1990; Born and Hesmondalgh, 2000; Averill, 2004; Bithell, 2014; Hess, 2019, Campbell and Lum, 2019); performance frameworks, hospitality and outreach in Section B (Baumann, 1977; Turino, 2008; Brinner, 2009; Higgins, 2012; Bartleet, 2019); and informal learning, musical pathways and subcultures in Section C (Slobin, 1993; Finnegan, 2007; Green, 2008). The three sections provide the findings for five research questions:

### Section A: Embodying Ethno Ideals within the Band

*In what ways and to what extent do participants continue to embody the ideals of intercultural harmony espoused by Ethno-World even after “aging out” of the camps?*

EoR and Världens Band appear to embody three ideals drawn from Ethno-World gatherings:

- 1) **Respectful musical exchange** (Higgins, 2020) continues to manifest in both EoR and the Världens Band, demonstrated by a respect of the culture bearer of the song when songs are being shared or performed.
- 2) The development of a **unique musical identity** continues to enable EoR and Världens Band to collaborate and share music without a need to appropriate tunes they are learning. The use of “recognising difference” (Appadurai, 1990) appears to solidify the group’s unified identity with tensions appearing when members were needing to compromise their unique identity or contributions to the band.
- 3) The **creation of a ‘new’ sound** holds value to both Världens Band and EoR. Världens Band are shifting away from folk music collaborations to creating their own songs collaboratively, suggesting a further progression in their musical pathway. The use of musical hybrids draws attention to concerns surrounding the dominance of Western musical standards in World Music. In EoR the purpose of using hybrid sounds is to enable connection and collaboration between people, however there are risks of Western cultural dominance.

*How does EoR negotiate issues of power, authenticity and agency when they learn and perform folk music from around the world?*

As EoR performs some music where the culture bearer is not present, cultural appropriation comes to the fore. Similar to observations by Solis (2004, p. 17) and Bithell (2014) the manner in which the music of the “other” is taught can often encourage deeper engagement and understanding of these contentious issues. The process of learning within Ethno does provide opportunity for respectful musical exchange, however the smaller collaboration of EoR did highlight some tensions regarding the risk of dominance of Swedish culture and exoticising foreign musical cultures. Based on these research findings, I recommend the need for more **critical reflection** by organisers, EoR facilitators and participants during the tour to enable more agency for non-Swedish speaking participants. Such opportunities have occurred within the Världens Band. Providing space for dialogue and discussion within multicultural bands is vital in bringing awareness to issues of cultural dominance and working as a group to resolve any concerns members from ethnic minorities may have. This complexity for EoR needs to be constantly reflected upon, and in doing so, will lead to representations of the “other” that are meaningful, respectful, and promote social change (Solis, 2004; White 2012b; Bartleet, 2019; Gibson, 2019; Hess, 2019).

## **Section B: Performance and Outreach**

*What musical collaborations have grown out of Ethno experiences and how present are they on world and folk / traditional music stages?*

This report focused on the Swedish stage, rather than world music stages, as this was where fieldwork took place. EoR present a complex position regarding the world music scene. Mantie and Risk (2020, p. 24) note that Ethno gatherings are not currently producing music for the world music industry, however, the “Ethno sound” is a hybrid of Western popular and folk music. It therefore has strong parallels with a “world music sound” (White, 2012a; Taylor, 2014). Research findings for this report suggests EoR focuses on a pedagogical aim, by providing an opportunity for professional development for young musicians, rather than one of commodification. No products were on sale at performances and participants were not paid for this opportunity.

Using Bauman’s (1977) concept of performance frames, it is evident how EoR perform to a folk music audience that understand the context and performance expectations of the band. Furthermore, there is a strong suggestion that a particular ideal is being performed within this frame: that of people from many cultures having fun together on stage. The performance of this ideal appears to be a stronger focus compared to the promotion of folk or world music. Världens Band does, however, fall within the world music scene, causing some concerns for its members, particularly with regard to how the group are represented by advertisers and promoters of gigs where they perform (Världens Band focus group, 2019; Balosso-Bardin, 2018).

*What is the significance of an EoR performance as a means of outreach to the wider community?*

Both EoR and Världens Bands reflections reveal a growing awareness of a need to interact with communities that do not experience positive intercultural engagement. EoR 2019 felt much more could be done in this area, whilst Världens Band seemed to feel reaching out and performing in marginalised communities could be enough. Reflections of previous experiences with EoR and the refugee community by Lars demonstrate that there is clear potential for impactful performances that have an underlying social justice cause, suggesting that EoR performances can act as a gesture of welcome and hospitality for displaced communities. This approach shifts Higgins (2012) focus from hospitality within a musical ensemble outward towards the audience, leading to a contemplation of how performers can support audiences in feeling welcome in a new space.

### **Section C: Professional and Personal Development**

*In what ways and to what extent did the Ethno experience influence life choices?*

Personal and professional development are intertwined within a musical pathway or subculture (Finnegan, 2007; Slobin, 1993). EoR and Världens Band continue to pursue careers in folk music, with some members of Världens Band still working within the Ethno network. It is evident that Ethno is seen as a catalyst for professional development, being seen as part of a process towards becoming a folk musician that can take a number of years and is dependent on the individual's personal experiences. This process is similar to Green's (2008) observations of informal learning.

Participation in Ethno appears to become an embodied experience, particularly for those who have attended multiple gatherings. Most participants recognise that the manner in which they interact with other people changes, with a deepening awareness of there being multiple perspectives to a situation or event, depending on an individual's cultural background. Once again, there was reference to this being a process that happens over a number of years as participant's consolidate their own positionality in the multiple contexts within which they engage. There is some suggestion that participants are already interested in issues of intercultural exchange prior to attending Ethno gatherings and may already be part of a shared affinity group, or subculture. With the exception of participants who chose to move to Sweden as a result of attending Ethno Sweden, the influence of the Ethno Experience appears to link more with a shift in attitudes and perceptions, rather than specific life choices.

## Final comment

The EoR project as an extension of Ethno Sweden provides effective professional development for its participants. It is an opportunity for young musicians to experience performing in a touring band and to learn how to collaborate within a small, multicultural setting. In some instances, as in the case of participants who continue to perform together in the Världens Band, EoR has been a catalyst towards a longstanding personal and professional network of friends and colleagues. EoR does fall within the tensions of globalisation and the power dynamics that come with it, and this should not be overlooked. By providing space for critical reflection of the intricacies of power and agency when rehearsing and presenting the music of the “other”, EoR has the potential to have a powerful impact on a variety of audiences within Sweden as well as their participants.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the participants and organisers of EoR for their support and patience in completing this report.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For a deeper analysis of cultural globalisation in relation to Ethno-World, see Mantie and Risk (2020, p. 6–29).
- <sup>2</sup> For more information about Ethno Sweden 2019, see Gibson 2020.
- <sup>3</sup> The name of the music facilitator has been anonymized.
- <sup>4</sup> Artistic leader is the term used to describe music facilitators at an Ethno gathering.
- <sup>5</sup> Balosso-Bardin (2018) has written a thorough investigation into the inner workings of the group. Her research focuses on the intricacies of collaboration and performing 'world musics' within a multicultural band.
- <sup>6</sup> Further information on the relational aspect of ethnographic fieldwork has been discussed by Hellier-Tinnoko (2003) and Russell (2006). Gibson and Higgins (2020) also recently released a video about the importance of relationships in both community music and ethnographic research.
- <sup>7</sup> A saz is a long necked, fretted lute.
- <sup>8</sup> EoR Participant A decided to learn Arabic because of the friendships she had made with Arabic speaking musicians at Ethno Sweden.
- <sup>9</sup> Mantie and Risk (2020, p. 12–13) draw attention to the complexity of participants aligning folk music with a national identity at Ethno gatherings, as not all people relate well to a national music or identity. There is a recognition of this issue within some Ethno camps and some organisers suggest asking people to bring a piece of music that they personally identify with instead (Ethno NZ field notes, 2020). Mantie and Risk suggest bringing one's own musical tradition is to highlight sameness and difference relating to Appadurai's (1990) analysis of globalisation. Findings in this report and supported by research at Ethno Sweden and Ethno New Zealand also suggest that it assists in the construction of a musical identity, which can build confidence for the young musician when being asked to contribute towards a musical arrangement. Världens Band have also moved beyond national identification, for example, by referring to pieces by their titles, rather than a country of origin (Balosso-Bardin, 2018, p. 95).
- <sup>10</sup> See also, Mantie and Risk, 2020, p. 24–25.
- <sup>11</sup> Bauman borrows the term 'frames' from Goffman (1974).
- <sup>12</sup> Tsioulakis and Hytonen-Ng (2016) demonstrate the importance of audience and performer relationships within a number of different contexts in their edited volume *Musicians and their Audiences: Performance, Speech and Mediation*.
- <sup>13</sup> Participatory frames focus on enabling all people in the space to engage in musical activity, whilst performance frames aim toward one group presenting a piece of music to a listening audience, focusing on creating music that is of a particular standard (Turino, 2008).
- <sup>14</sup> For deeper reflections on intercultural exchange and Ethno, see Mantie and Risk (2020).
- <sup>15</sup> Ethno Sweden comprises about 90 participants, limiting their options for travelling to perform at multiple venues.
- <sup>16</sup> Shelemay (2011, p. 373) suggests that some musical collectives are formed through 'affinity', where a musical formation develops due to shared aesthetics or personal preferences.
- <sup>17</sup> She references another camp she had attended, with a similar ethos to Ethno: One Beat. <https://1beat.org>
- <sup>18</sup> See Mantie and Risk (2020, p. 49) for more detail about some of the concerns regarding the informal nature of intercultural exchange within the gathering.

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