

“Mi Alma Cantará”: Tracing Issues in Music Education
within the Colonial and Contemporary Latin American Church

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Abstract

Music education and institutionalized Christianity have been criticized by historians and ethnomusicologists for their role in the domination and transformation of indigenous Latin American cultures since the late 15th century. However, indigenous peoples, including Amerindians as well as more recent mestizo and Ladino people groups, have also taken an active role in transforming European musics to reflect an emic understanding of their own cultural identity. Music education within the Latin American church has provided an interface for these complex interactions between foreign and native cultural influences. This paper will explore the connections between colonial and contemporary-era music education movements in the Latin American church by tracing the themes of agency, leadership, composition, and community, in order to demonstrate the crucial role that indigenous people groups have played at the intersection of faith and education in the continuous creation of their own music culture.

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It is a rainy January evening in the Q’eqchi Mayan community of Sesaquepec, located in the mountainous jungle near the Belize-Guatemala border. The villagers, about 50 in all, are gathering in their one-room wooden church for an evening service. The majority of them are professing Catholics, whose day-to-day life is saturated with a blend of Christian beliefs and folk wisdom that harkens back to a time before European missionaries, soldiers, and settlers ever set foot in these jungles. The church is both their place of worship and the site of community gatherings, built by their own hands; it lies both spatially and spiritually at the heart of the village. As rain rattles on the tin roof of the church, men, women, and children crowd together on the narrow wooden benches inside. The lay church leader, a middle-aged man named Jacinto, moves to the front of the room, briefly addresses the gathering in Q’eqchi, and prays. Next, he picks up a small, heavily worn paperback book from the altar. It is time for music.

The whole village sings together, following Jacinto’s lead as he chooses songs from the book in his hands. He does not glance at the pages often, and the rest of the congregation needs no books at all; the texts and tunes are very familiar to everyone. Although the songs are all in Q’eqchi, and the style of the performance is distinctively Mayan – in unison, the women singing an octave above the men, all with a characteristically piercing and nasal timbre – the diatonic melodies and straightforward rhythms of the songs are also reminiscent of Western hymnody. The singing lasts about twenty minutes at the beginning of the service, as Jacinto leads the congregation in several songs. It is just one instance of the performance of this indigenous folk hymnody,

as children learn many such songs in the village school, and individuals and groups sing to one another as they go about their daily life in the village.

It is a summer morning in the Guatemalan town of Llano Verde, and although the sun has only been up for a couple hours, the day is already hot and humid. Locals gather in the town's evangelical church – two stories tall, painted bright yellow, and built just up the street from the local Catholic church. The locals arrive gradually, the men and boys dressed in jeans and collared shirts, the women and girls in dresses or blouses and skirts, and spend time talking with one another; the emphasis is clearly on community, rather than on adhering to a schedule. The men and women of the congregation who form the band take their places on the platform at the front of the church, picking up their microphones or electric guitars or sitting down behind a drum kit or congas. Cristián, the church's middle-aged pastor and worship leader, speaks and prays in Spanish into his microphone to open the service, and then the band begins to play.

The worship music goes on continuously for at least thirty minutes, as one song blends into the next. Again, the style is distinctively Ladino and Guatemalan – Cristián and the lead guitarist sing in parallel harmonies a third apart over triadic chord progressions, while the drummer and conga player add syncopated rhythms – and, thanks to the church's sound system, the music is loud enough to be heard at least a quarter mile away. Congregants take part by standing, clapping, singing along, praying aloud individually and collectively, and sometimes dancing. Joyful moments provoke shouts and laughter, while reflective or repentant ones bring cries and tears. Interestingly, the songs themselves are largely drawn from worship literature written by contemporary Christian artists such as Hillsong, Chris Tomlin, and Marcos Witt, all seemingly worlds

away from the rural town of Llano Verde. When asked, members of the band explain that they usually learn new songs by watching popular worship music videos on Youtube.

These observations, made by the author over several trips to Guatemala between mid-2012 and early 2015, are just a few examples of the complex issues at play within the music of the Latin American church. Why are Q'eqchi Mayans singing from a hymnbook, and why are Ladino Guatemalans studying evangelical worship songs through online video? How do these and other indigenous communities exercise agency as they learn, teach, and transmit the musics they perform in church? Who is leading and guiding this process on the local level? And how is ethnic identity expressed through indigenous musicians' creativity and composition within non-native musical idioms? The interrelated themes of agency, community, leadership, and composition appear in the history of music education within the Latin American church in both the colonial and contemporary periods. Connecting and comparing these themes across different eras will provide valuable insights into the state of music in the indigenous Latin American church today, as well as possibilities for how to proceed into the future.

Colonization and Christendom: Teaching Music in the New World

Latin America has had, since the first days of European colonization, a complex and often conflicted relationship with the Christian church. The first heralds of Christianity arrived in the New World with infectious ideas, complex motives, and the will, power, and good fortune to bring their desires into reality – desires which blended evangelistic zeal, financial gain, and the will to empire into destructive and constructive forces that continue to mark Latin America today (Padilla, 1999; Stark & Smith, 2012). Through the colonial era and in the centuries since, Latin American music culture has

been shaped by the effects of this in profound ways. Generalizations on the nature of Latin American music and the Latin American church, past or present, must be treated with care, as their qualities vary as widely from place to place as any other aspect of Latin American life. However, considering the incredibly significant role of music education in the origins of Latin American Christianity does shed light on how its historical foundations continue to inform its present trends and characteristics.

The Role of Music Education in Iberian Imperialism

Institutionalized Christianity arrived in Latin America with the Spanish and Portuguese *conquistadores*. With the final expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian peninsula and the fall of Granada in 1492, these Iberian nations turned their energies of conquest and conversion outward to focus on unclaimed lands. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI divided the New World between Spain and Portugal, giving these nations' future colonies in Latin America a double political and spiritual blessing (Hanson, 1987). The Catholicism that their colonizing forces carried with them was a potent blend of faith and political motives described as “missionary monks and Spanish swords”, “religious-civic fusion,” and even a “Crusade” mentality (Levine, 2009, p. 123; Padilla, 1999, p. 106; Stark & Smith, 2012, p. 35). Various sources refer to this unity of political and spiritual authority as “imperial Christianity” or “Christendom” (Hunt, 2010, p. 10; Padilla, 1999, p. 106), and Padilla (1999), quoting Eric O. Hanson, affirms that “‘the medieval synthesis of the two swords’ – one belonging to the emperor and the other to the pope... is the essence” of this method of empire (p. 106). Stark and Smith are quite blunt about the politicization of institutionalized Catholicism, writing that “during the centuries of Spanish rule, the Catholic Church in Latin America was, for all practical purposes, a

branch of government” (2012, p. 37). However, this does not mean that the Catholic church was subsumed under the Spanish state; instead, it is helpful to think of religion, culture, and politics as different facets of a single worldview. In general, conquistadors, clerics, and colonizers did not have to compartmentalize their duties. Where Latin America was concerned, the wills of kings and popes were one and the same.

Music was essential to this colonial mission of spiritual-cultural-political empire. Specifically, music education was a central aspect of civilizing native populations, as it effectively attracted the Amerindians to interact with the colonizers and was a powerful tool for their acculturation. As Burkholder (2009) puts it, “the strong interest in music among the Aztec and Inca people... [was] a way to get them into the churches and listening to the new doctrine” (p. 406). De Couve, Dal Pino, and Frega (1997) agree, affirming that “the clergymen... encourage[d] all musical activities as a way to get close to their students and thereby succeed with their teachings and preaching” (p. 16). Elsewhere, De Couve and Dal Pino (1999) assert again that Catholic clergy and music teachers understood “the relevance of the arts as a means of transmitting cultural values,” and tactfully refer to these musical missionaries’ objective as “the transculturization or adaptation of the Indian society to the new colonial cultural and social patterns” (p. 33). Considering the long-term goals of political and spiritual leaders in this “top-down” perspective, missionary music education in colonial Latin America overtly carried the spiritual and political objectives of Christianizing and Europeanizing native populations.

In many cases the ethnocentric assumptions underlying how music was taught and transmitted during this period are very clear. Hence, scholarly statements like the following:

Most missionaries assumed that the indigenous people were a *tabula rasa* possessing neither culture nor religion worth respecting. Hence, Christian mission was an extension, forcible, of both true religion and real civilization. [Some missionaries] valued indigenous peoples and culture... Yet ultimately these voices were overwhelmed by the dominant confidence in the superiority of Spanish Christian culture and its right to engage non-Christians with the gospel by replacing their cultures. Mission attentive to engaging a culture was largely overwhelmed by a new type of imperial mission that sought to destroy and replace such cultures. (Hunt, 2010, p. 17)

Echoing this, Den Tandt and Young (2004) explain, “Soon after [the Spanish and Portuguese] established the first of their colonial outposts, they began to use music and musical instruction in a wider programme of domination and control, especially in the context of religious conversion” (p. 238). The shockingly destructive, even genocidal, effects of ethnocentrism in the colonization of Latin America have been well documented in these sources and elsewhere, and they will not be minimized in this investigation. However, within the realm of music education, the relationship between Europeans and Amerindians in the colonial period was more complex than has been commonly portrayed.

“Obligado a Enseñar:” Catholic Clergy as Music Educators

Hunt (2010) does touch on the depth of the issues at hand in mentioning Bartholomé de las Casas and other missionaries who esteemed the Amerindian cultures and peoples they encountered. The iconic figure of the armor-clad conquistador hacking through jungles, pillaging native treasure stores, and toppling ancient empires is far from

representative of the Iberian colonization movement in its entirety. In fact, beginning in the late 16th century after the initial conquest of the major Central and Southern American empires was complete, the front lines of Spanish and Portuguese colonization were made up of “hundreds of missionaries and clerics who in a relatively short span (c. 250 years) won millions of Indians and mestizos to Christianity” (Reff, 2005, p. 122). It was in many cases these traveling monks and priests who made first contact with indigenous people groups. They represented many different monastic orders and organizations within the Catholic Church, including the Mercedarians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Capuchins, Augustinians, and Jesuits, with varying views on how to interact with and evangelize native populations (De Couve & Dal Pino, 1999; Reff, 2005). And, as more and more of these itinerant clergy “who played one or more instruments and knew musical theory” arrived in the New World during the 17th century (De Couve et al., 1997, p. 14), the role of missionary music educator became a central element of the colonization and evangelization movement.

Although records of musical Catholic missionaries in the New World are scattered and not many first-hand reports from the field have survived the centuries, both primary sources and secondary scholarship testify to the presence of these men and their influence in colonial Latin America. De Couve et al. (1997) offer a list, collected from colonial records, of no less than 19 musical clergy active as educators between 1536 and 1813, and Roldán (1987) adds another seven names not present in De Couve et al.’s catalogue. These men served in the Jesuit province of Paracuaria, which comprised territory in the modern-day nations of Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, and Bolivia (O’Mara, 1999). A few specific names from this list – Antonio Sepp, José Cardiel,

Domenico Zipoli, and Florián Paucke – serve as a representative sample of the group. These Jesuit priests were all active on the South American mission field during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Sepp and Cardiel lived among the Guaraní people, while Paucke lived among the Mocabíes and Zipoli settled in the colonial town of Córdoba (Roldán, 1987).

The musical and cultural experiences of these men prior to their arrival in the New World were quite varied. Sepp was a native of Austria; before being sent as a missionary to Río de la Plata in 1691, he had been trained as a multi-instrumentalist and choral singer in the imperial court choir of Vienna and the orchestra of the bishop of Augsburg (De Couve et al., 1997; Roldán, 1987), and he had a reputation for musical talent. A fellow Jesuit priest wrote, “our Antonio became a genuine celebrity” (Roldán, 1987, p. 7). The Spaniard Cardiel’s European musical pedigree is less well documented, but he did place a great deal of emphasis on vocal and instrumental teaching among the Guaraní people so they could participate in church worship, perhaps suggesting some prior experience observing ensemble performance in service of the Catholic mass (Roldán, 1987). Zipoli, an Italian, was quite famous in Rome as a composer and organist before his move to the New World (De Couve et al., 1997; Roldán, 1987), and Paucke, a German, spent some time teaching and organizing choirs as part of his training at the Jesuit college in Córdoba before being sent to the Mocabíe people (O’Mara, 1999; Roldán, 1987).

A few general observations emerge from this brief overview of missionary Catholic music educators in the New World. First, it was the exception rather than the rule that these clergy received musical training as part of their preparation for missionary

work. Instead, much of their musical knowledge came from their background in performance and/or composition in Europe prior to joining a missionary order. They had in common the goal of teaching religious music performance as guided by European musical values, but because their prior musical experiences were widely varied and they rarely went through any standardized training, the specifics of what and how they taught could differ dramatically from place to place. Also, although in a retrospective view the roles of music educator and missionary seem to have gone hand-in-hand, these clergy entered the unknown territories of the New World first and foremost as evangelists and culture bearers, not as musicians. As it became clear that music was a particularly powerful means of connecting with indigenous peoples, more and more missionaries found that whatever formal or informal musical training they had could be utilized on the mission field. But, for these men, music was valuable as a spiritual and acculturative exercise, not the other way around. Hence, the term “musical missionaries,” rather than “missionary musicians,” seems to be most appropriate.

Music Education and Community Life in the *Reducciones*

The beachheads of their spiritual-cultural campaign, beginning in the late 16th century and continuing through roughly the next 200 years, were the missionary “Indian towns” known as *reducciones* (De Couve & Dal Pino, 1999, p. 35). Various missionary orders took part in this enterprise, establishing settlements from northern Mexico as far south as Argentina and Chile (De Couve & Dal Pino, 1999). However, the Jesuit order was by far the most successful in maintaining these outposts, with at least 60 of them in operation by 1660 in northern Mexico alone (Reff, 2005). The name for these communities comes from the Spanish “to reduce,” referring to Catholic missionaries’

usual request that the Amerindians “reduce” or resettle themselves in towns and villages that had previously been emptied by European-borne epidemics (Reff, 2005, p. 160). The *reducciones*, in keeping with the mingled political-economic-religious-social motives of Iberian imperialism, served a variety of purposes in the colonial enterprise; as O’Mara (1999) explains, by drawing the Amerindians out of their semi-nomadic lifestyles into settled patterns of living, these communities facilitated the economic development of new territories as their indigenous residents took up agriculture and other materially productive activities. They also served the purposes of “convert[ing] the Indians and pacify[ing] them” (O’Mara, 1999, p. 325), as well as of protecting them from exploitation by and diseases contracted from interactions with other European settlers, which had proved disastrous in the past (Reff, 2005; Klaiber, 2004). And, in addition to all this, the *reducciones* were the setting for many of the first European Christian efforts at systematic music education to native Latin Americans.

Catholic musical missionaries in the *reducciones*, as the vanguard of the Iberian colonial enterprise, have left a complex and conflicted legacy. The instruments, music theory, and compositional styles these clerics taught, as well as the ensembles they formed and trained and the musical values they sought to instill in their students, were all very European in nature. Missionary music educators taught such European music theory concepts as mensural notation, solfege, and sight-reading, albeit in somewhat haphazard fashion based on their wide variety of training and experience. De Couve et al. (1997) point to the presence of contrasting methodologies, including a more antiquated Spanish-Portuguese style, a “modern style” of Italian-German teaching, and instruction based simply on repetition (p. 18). In keeping with European musical values, a high premium

was placed on musical literacy; clergy frequently ordered copies of European music literature as teaching material for their Amerindian students (De Couve et al., 1997), and indigenous students were expected to learn and perform from written music (Gasta, 2007).

Students were trained in European music theory and performance with the goal of being able to perform European musics to European standards. Compositional genres introduced in the New World included “masses, vespers... psalms, responses, [and] motets” as well as “toccatas” and opera (De Couve, 1997, p. 21), and European-style ensembles including four-voice choirs and orchestral groups were trained to perform them (Roldán, 1987). Clergy serving as music educators even built their own instruments, or ordered them from Europe, in order to ensure that their students would have adequate resources for proper training and performance (De Couve et al., 1997; Roldán, 1987). Burkholder (2009) summarizes the mindset at the root of all this, explaining that Amerindian music cultures were “regarded as representing music in an early state of evolution” (p. 401). The ethnocentric assumptions underlying much of these teaching efforts are clear. The Catholic music educators of the colonial period steadfastly immersed indigenous peoples in a great amount and variety of Western music, in keeping with their civilizing, colonizing, and evangelizing mission, to replace “primitive” musics with ones deemed more spiritually edifying and culturally appropriate.

Their efforts were met with unprecedented outcomes. Catholic instructors were frequently surprised and pleased to find their Amerindian students had great natural aptitude and willingness to learn (Gasta, 2007). Writing in 1615 during a visit to the

settlement of Cajamarca in Peru, a Carmelite priest named Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa noted:

Artisans of every kind abound in this locality, including scribes, singers, and a choirmaster to train them. These choir members are like prebendaries who attend church daily to pray to Our Lady and assist in the celebration of the Mass. At these holy services they play flageolets and other musical instruments, a widespread practice in the Indies. Ordinarily, those who take part are the sons of native chieftains and overlords, who greatly prize this participation, regarding it as a high honor. (as cited in Leonard, 1972, p. 122)

Bartolomé de las Casas, a 16th-century Dominican friar most well-known for promoting social and political reforms in the Spanish Empire to protect Amerindian life in the New World, made similar observations:

The Indians are highly skilled also in the arts we educate ourselves to... And they charm the ear with every kind of music, remarkable beauty... I have seen all this with my own eyes, touched it with my own hands, heard it with my own ears, over the long time I passed among these peoples. (as cited in Hunt, 2010, p. 71)

And Antonio Sepp, a Jesuit missionary previously mentioned who lived and worked with the Guaraní Indians during the late 17th century, wrote:

I consider myself obligated to teach my American musicians, some of them already white-haired, the “ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la” in order to instruct them fully. I do this with pleasure, as it is part of the Divine Service... All of this gives incredible satisfaction not only to the rest of the missionaries here... The Indians themselves are even more pleased. They love me and honor me in such a way that

I do not dare write it down for embarrassment; in spite of this, I give all honor to my God and Lord. (as cited in Roldán, 1987, p. 7)

These sources are just a couple of the many perspectives that testify to the tremendous impact music education made on evangelism and colonization in Latin America. Training native musicians gave the Amerindians a participatory role in the Mass and other religious observances, which in turn increased church attendance and helped to spread the faith (De Couve et al., 1997). Over the centuries, as border villages grew into more prosperous towns and cities, European music education via both clergy and secular teachers became institutionalized through church classes, primary and secondary educational institutions, and private instruction (De Couve & Dal Pino, 1999). Given all this, it would not be difficult to conclude that the tsunami of European music culture brought by Catholic musical missionaries to the New World simply overwhelmed, destroyed, and remade Latin American music culture in its own image. However, this is far from the whole story.

Cultural Exchange and Amerindian Agency

Another important factor in Latin American colonial music education – one that, strangely, often seems to go overlooked – is the agency of the native populations themselves. The Amerindians were hardly “blank slates”, as the Spanish and Portuguese realized upon arriving in the New World and discovering undreamed-of empires with the political, social, cultural, and linguistic sophistication to rival that of any European nation – even if the pre-colonial cultural achievements of native peoples rarely met with official acknowledgement or appreciation. This included various religions and systems of music education, which were often intertwined. In pre-Columbian Amerindian cultures, music

served a crucial role in the transmission of spiritual knowledge and in interactions with the world of spirits and deities. Specific institutions, such as the Aztec *cuicacalli*, *calmécac*, and *mecatlán*, were dedicated to the teaching and training of young musicians for religious and civic duties, primarily by means of apprenticeship to priests and teachers (De Couve et al., 1997). Although the content and methods of colonial music education were very different from what indigenous peoples had experienced before, music education itself was hardly a European innovation in Latin America.

As previously mentioned, Europeans arriving in the New World commented repeatedly and with amazement on the Amerindians' interest and talent in music. For example, Antonio Sepp commented on the "extraordinary ability" and "amazing talent" of an Amerindian who had learned to play multiple European instruments "in little time" (De Couve et al., 1997, p. 24), and Florian Paucke trained a choir in his village which eventually toured as far away as Buenos Aires, to great acclaim (O'Mara, 1999). To many colonists listening to Amerindian ensembles playing and singing European works, "the professional level reached by these groups compared to the best in Europe" (De Couve et al., 1997, p. 25). Although the colonials' appreciation of indigenous musical talent was couched in a European system of musical values, it was clear that something remarkable was taking place.

Europeans exposed to these indigenous renditions of music in the Western concert tradition offered various explanations for the phenomenon. Perhaps the natives' talents were innate and God-given, or they were naturally proficient at imitation, or their European missionary educators were exceptionally skilled (O'Mara, 1999). However, it was no coincidence that the native peoples of Latin America were interested in pursuing

musical learning, and that music proved to be a highly effective means of drawing them into religious activity, when in their cultures music had already been in use in these capacities for centuries. Seeger (1998b) writes:

In Amerindian communities where missionaries have been active and there is a long history of contact with the colonizers, musical traditions developed that in many places combine aspects of native and colonizer religions evens and similarly combine their musical forms and performances. The merging of styles and events through a colonial encounter is much more common than isolation... Saint's day celebrations in the Andes and the highlands of Mexico and Guatemala often combine public inebriation, shouts and cries rarely heard in European performances, and traditional Amerindian instruments with Roman Catholic holidays. (p. 46)

The roots of this reach back to the colonial era, where something much more complex than simple musical-spiritual-cultural deletion and insertion was taking place on the Latin American mission field. At the intersection of music and spiritual belief, missionary music educators interacting with native peoples had stumbled upon common ground with their students. On these terms, the Amerindians found opportunities to both give and receive information and to influence the direction and content of their own musical production. This was far from the overt intention of the Catholic clergy serving in the *reducciones*, and of course there are many examples of campaigns of cultural and physical extermination against indigenous peoples which offered little opportunity for cultural interchange to take place at all. However, Amerindian influences nonetheless were expressed to a much greater extent than is often recognized.

Music education in the colonial period was inextricably linked to the process of Christianization, and in this area the agency of the indigenous peoples of Latin America made itself felt in many ways. Stark and Smith (2012) write that “indigenous faiths persisted” only in the “vacuum” of the absence of Catholic missionaries and European culture (p. 35), but the Christian influence was far from dominant even in the many areas where Catholic missionaries and music educators were serving. The conversion of indigenous populations was often much less radical and interventionist than representatives of the church wished to express, as the Amerindians blended elements of their own belief systems into the new faith that they were being taught. Even when the missionaries’ overt goal was a total break with all forms of “idol worship” (Reff, 2005, p. 196), at times going so far as to openly search out and destroy places and objects of native worship (De Couve & Dal Pino, 1999), the results were not always so cut-and-dried. Matters were more complex than simply reaching into the Amerindian psyche by means of teaching and enculturation, surgically removing one spiritual identity, and substituting another, as missionaries quickly discovered.

Indigenous Latin American spirituality would prove to be a complex battleground for European evangelists. Writing about Jesuit missions in northern Mexico in the late 16th century, Reff (2005) explains that the Spanish missionary clerics in the area passively accommodated and even purposely took advantage of the syncretism of Catholicism and indigenous spiritual beliefs. For example, the Catholic veneration of the Virgin Mary as a mother figure and an intercessor easily fit in with native beliefs in various female deities, generating a wide range of semi-indigenous, semi-Catholic ritual practices in Northern Mexican tribes. Reff (2005) goes on to speculate on the Jesuits’

motives for allowing and even promoting this kind of theological syncretism, with possible causes ranging from fear of Amerindian retaliation, to acceptance of “harmless” elements of Amerindian culture, to “going native” and adopting elements of Amerindian beliefs themselves (p. 202). Whatever the causes may have been, the effects suggest that indigenous people groups had a part to play in adapting the cultural values they received, and even going beyond this to influence the musical and cultural values of European colonists. In their music, as in their spirituality, the Amerindians of the colonial period were far from having their native culture erased and rewritten to suit European norms. Various European styles of instrumental and vocal, secular and sacred music imported to Amerindian students by Catholic missionary music educators have already been mentioned. These did not, however, remain static upon their arrival to the New World. Instead, what did happen to these compositional styles as indigenous peoples interacted with them merits closer examination.

For one, composition in indigenous languages became an important means for musical clerics to interact with the Amerindians. In 18th-century Argentina, Jesuit priests Antonio Sepp and Florián Paucke, both previously mentioned, composed religious works in the Guaraní and Mocabíe languages respectively. They were only two of many Catholic clerics to set European-style musics to texts in indigenous languages in order to communicate Christian doctrine to the Amerindians (De Couve et al., 1997; O’Mara, 1999). Such works frequently took the form of “espectáculos” or “óperas [operas]” (Roldán, 1987, p. 26), which featured storytelling through solo and group singing set to varying types of instrumental accompaniment. Musical dance-drama was already a fixture of many indigenous religious celebrations in the pre-Columbian period (Turino,

2011), and although the musical sensibilities of the European composers of these dramas were quite different from what had come before, the use of singing, dancing, and richly decorated costumes continued (Roldán, 1987). The genre emerged in the New World as early as the beginning of the 17th century (Roldán, 1987), while the best-documented examples date from the 18th century. For example, around 1720, Italian organist-turned Jesuit priest Domenico Zipoli wrote *San Ignacio de Loyola*, a musical drama extolling the founders of the Jesuit order, in the language of the Chiquitos people. The work became extremely popular in the *reducciones* of Bolivia and Paraguay, and, having entered the local oral tradition, remained in performance in villages there through the early 20th century (Gasta, 2007).

Many other such folk operas in the Amerindian vernacular were being written and performed in the *reducciones* during the same period, but their authorship and other information about them is much less clear (Roldán, 1987). What is clear is that, in general, the Catholic missionaries were reluctant to ascribe compositional agency to indigenous musicians. The commonly quoted belief was, as José Cardiel, Jesuit missionary to the Guaraní people, wrote about his Amerindian students:

No master [musician] knows how to compose. Their musical ability is insufficient. It is only adequate for singing and playing the papers [sheet music] one gives them – of which there is very good music, from the very best Spanish and Italian musicians, brought by the priests... (as cited in Roldán, 1987, p. 31)

Gembero-Ustárrroz (2012) records the account of Lázaro de Ribera, Spanish governor in Bolivia after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, who “affirmed that ‘the Indians have no talent for invention, but imitate perfectly everything they see’” (p. 246). Gasta (2007)

likewise references the idea held among “many textual and eye-witness accounts” that indigenous musicians were not able to creatively interact with European-style music. This was the case among the Bolivian Amerindians discovered during the 1950s still passing down Jesuit-taught music via oral tradition and using sheet music “for show only” (p. 87). The same argument, however, is much less convincing when applied to the indigenous musicians of the colonial period. Although Catholic clergy composing in the Amerindian vernacular showed a certain willingness to attempt musical contextualization, if only by slight degrees, they certainly did not want to lose their claim to control over the compositional process. As they trained generations of indigenous musicians to a high degree of fluency in European musical styles, however, such control may have never truly been theirs to keep.

There is evidence that the European-Amerindian musical exchange went both ways on the level of teaching and composition as well as that of performance. As has been mentioned, this evidence is difficult to find in primary sources from the period, as Catholic observers were reluctant to document evidence that broke from the European teacher-Amerindian student paradigm they affirmed. However, sources do show that some Amerindians schooled in European musics became music teachers in Spanish settlements and Amerindian communities. Jesuit priest Martín Schmidt, who lived and worked among the Chiquitos people of Paraguay during the mid-18th century, trained his music students not only to build their own European-style instruments but also to teach the music they had learned to others (Roldán, 1987). As Roldán (1987) explains, “when [the students] had learned enough to take [Schmidt’s] place as teachers, they were sent out to teach, with the goal that the music would spread in the best manner possible” (p.

18). A similar pattern took place in Mexico, where young men educated in Jesuit boarding schools in “reading and writing, music, singing, and other ‘good habits’” were sent back to their native villages as a sort of advance guard for the coming missionaries. However, because the supply of Jesuit priests was short, these natives exposed to European culture assumed authority of their own as they spread the teachings they had learned to other indigenous people groups (Reff, 2005). The result of this sort of enculturation was frequently the syncretism of Amerindian and Christian beliefs, which the Jesuits accepted in varying degrees (Reff, 2005), as has been discussed earlier.

Not only did Amerindians become music educators themselves, there were also some who composed their own works in the European styles they had learned (De Couve et al., 1997). Not many records of such compositions have been preserved, but Roldán (as cited in De Couve et al., 1997) describes them as “a sample of cultural and religious syncretism” (p. 27). A series of examples of this come from colonial Bolivia, less than three decades after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America by order of Spain’s Carlos III (O’Mara, 1999). In the absence of these pioneering musical missionaries, indigenous musicians would continue to interact with European compositional idioms in surprising ways. In 1790, the new governor of the region, Lázaro de Ribera, sent copies of a total of nine musical compositions written by indigenous musicians to the king and queen of Spain as part of royal celebrations. Five of these were composed by Canichana Indians, and four by musicians from the Moxo tribe; all were written in European staff notation, and set to texts in the writer’s native language (Gembero-Ustárroz, 2012). Scholars today continue to debate how ‘original’ these compositions are. While some are critical of what they consider “imitation and nothing else,” others, including Gembero-

Ustárróz, contend that “the inadequate comparison of the Moxos 1790 pieces with European counterparts resonates with other colonialist historiographical constructions since the 18th century” (2012, p. 246). Gembero-Ustárróz (2012) concludes:

It is difficult to maintain that Indian musicians from Moxos were not capable of composing creative music, given knowledge of their constant musical activity, their social relevance and their presence in numerous administrative documents. Twenty years after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Moxos, the presence of European music they had introduced and indigenous musical practices were both very strong. (p. 247)

By composing new works based on, but not strictly conforming to, European musical idioms, this group of indigenous musicians from colonial Bolivia demonstrated an advanced level of synthesis of the various musical and cultural influences to which they had been exposed. Additionally, the transmission of these works via colonial authorities all the way to the monarchs of Spain suggests that these European observers ascribed some degree of value to these native creations and wished them to be heard by a wider audience. Whether their motivations in doing so were political, artistic, paternalistic, all of the above, or otherwise does not lessen the significance of this event, as these compositions testify to the potential for complex and even, to an extent, reciprocal musical interactions between colonizers and indigenous peoples near the end of the colonial era in Latin America.

Agency, Leadership, Community, and Composition in the Colonial Period

The themes of agency, leadership, community, and composition have presented themselves in profound and interconnected ways throughout the narrative of music

education in the colonial Latin American church. Where agency is concerned, it seems impossible to accept the explanation that the indigenous peoples of Latin America were simply passive receptors and imitators of European culture. Even within the hierarchical, European-centric leadership of Iberian colonization efforts, indigenous musicians found opportunities to achieve positions of influence and to interact with others through music. So, some more difficult questions need to be asked. By performing, teaching, and composing within European genres, were Amerindian musicians merely accepting the cultural values imposed on them, and in turn perpetuating them upon others? Or were they finding creative opportunities to interact with and re-imagine previously foreign musics by blending them with elements of indigenous belief and culture? As the eyewitness accounts from this period were written almost exclusively by European, rather than indigenous, observers, it may be difficult ever to gain a clear view. The answer, however, most likely lies somewhere between these seemingly opposing alternatives.

New models of community and new forms of composition by Amerindian musicians give evidence for Amerindian agency in the face of European colonization. The *reducciones* played a crucial role in providing spaces for complex cross-cultural interactions. While the Catholic Church's programs of evangelization and cultural transformation did intentionally create these communities, the important role music education would come to occupy within them was unforeseen, and the missionary clerics who served as music educators received no consistent forms of musical or educational preparation to match their spiritual training. As Catholic missionaries in the *reducciones* attempted in various ways to train Amerindian performers in European musics and to compose European-style musical works in indigenous languages, their students in turn

began to synthesize the native and foreign musical influences surrounding them and to become teachers and composers themselves. Music education in the colonial period of Latin American church history set a precedent for the development of indigenous musics through appropriation and transformation in a community context.

Such trends have been observed in Latin America and elsewhere. Writing on the Maninka Christians of Guinea in West Africa, whose continuing preference for “Western” hymns over indigenously composed worship songs has puzzled visitors, Morehouse (2014, n.p.) suggests that these originally European musics – themselves rooted in specific people groups and places in history – can enter the indigenous music culture of another region and become representative of native identity. The author has observed similar phenomena in rural and urban Guatemalan communities, as in the examples cited in the introduction of Q’eqchi Mayan congregations in the jungle singing hymns from memory or from a hymnbook, and urban Protestant Ladino churches borrowing their music literature from evangelical worship trends in the United States. Musical behaviors like this may appear to be holdovers from the colonial era, but their continuing practice in indigenous communities suggests that something more than direct, destructive cultural imperialism has taken place over the centuries. Den Tandt and Young (2004) explain that “there are no places in the Americas where European musical traditions have not reached and where they do not flourish in some form” (p. 240) – but these musics thrive precisely because they are not simply European anymore. From the colonial period onwards, indigenous communities have made previously foreign musics their own.

Contemporary Christianity: Pluralism, Renewal, and Grassroots Creativity

The world of Latin American culture in general, and Latin American music and Christianity in particular, has changed profoundly since the era of Iberian colonization. Through conquest and revolution, individual nations delineated themselves from European empires and from one another, while also reacting harshly at times to the institutionalized, politicized Christianity that characterized the colonial period. While Latin America today continues to be inundated with musical-cultural influences from beyond its borders, the propagation of foreign musics is not as overtly or systematically imperialistic as it was in the 16th through the 18th centuries, and Latin American musicians have reached out through these same trans-national connections to influence sounds around the world. The faces of music education and the Christian church in Latin America have shown themselves in the past 75 years to be very different than they were centuries ago; however, the same themes of agency, leadership, community, and composition present themselves, in ways that reach back to the colonial period while also suggesting how much has changed, and how much change has yet to come.

Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Latin America

The landscape of Latin American Christianity has changed almost beyond recognition within the past 50 years. Much of this, save where it touches on the field of music education, is beyond the scope of this paper. However, when Stark and Smith (2012) explain that “the recent eruption of Protestantism... [has] upset the Catholic hierarchy” (p. 35), Padilla (1999), claims that “Latin America has become a kind of shopping mall of religious options” (p. 106), and Levine (2009) writes that “the public face of religion and the ways in which religion is present in the public sphere have been

utterly transformed” (p. 123), none of them are overstating the matter. For centuries, Catholicism carried the weight of both its legal status as the official religion of colonial territories and newly-born independent nations (Stark & Smith, 2012), as well as a remarkable societal position bound up in generations of “political and economic power and social hierarchy” (Levine, 2009, p. 123). Many observers predicted that as the pace of cultural and societal change in Latin America accelerated with the dawn of the technological age, secularization would spread as a backlash against this kind of institutionalized religion (Levine, 2009; Padilla, 1999), as it has in other societies throughout the Western world.

The result, however, has been anything but the diminishment of faith in the public sphere. Instead, in contrast to the “monarchical” authority model of historical Latin American Catholicism (Hanson, 1987, p. 99), a multitude of populist Christian movements have grown and gathered momentum over the past several decades. Beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, doors in Latin America gradually began to open to Protestant missions from North America, as relations between institutionalized Catholicism and newly formed revolutionary governments grew more distant (Stark & Smith, 2012). Little more than a hundred years later, however, Latin American Protestantism has developed a character all its own and continues “develop[ing] local leaders and resources, cut[ting] ties of control with foreign missionaries, and in some cases establish[ing] wholly new home grown churches” (Levine, 2009, p. 131). Observers have identified “explosive growth” in non-Catholic church membership and social activity (Levine, 2009, p. 129), particularly in those identifying with various forms of Pentecostalism (Levine, 2009; Padilla, 1999). Nida

(1961), writing nearer to the beginning of this charismatic transformation, identified a list of “significant features” of indigenous charismatic Christianity:

(1) Emphasis on divine healing... (2) the belief in speaking in tongues... (3) the filling of the Spirit (as evidenced by healing or the gift of tongues), (4) deep emotional fervor, often exhibited in dancing, shouting, and crying, (5) general adherence to a kind of “holiness doctrine” characteristic of certain forms of Wesleyanism, (6) importance of prayer and the receiving of answers to prayer (prayer is generally engaged in by all the congregation, orally and simultaneously), and (7) a type of literal biblicism which takes the Bible seriously but uncritically. (p. 99)

Particular expressions of charismatic Christian belief may differ from those listed here, particularly as, since Nida’s writing, evangelical Pentecostalism is becoming increasingly institutionalized in megachurch form in certain regions of Latin America (Levine, 2009). Still, these criteria provide a good general overview of what sets Latin American charismatic Christianity apart from movements that have come before. It is crucial to observe that Latin America is not simply transforming itself from a continent of Catholic monopoly to a Protestant-dominated region. Rather, for the first time, religious pluralism on a large scale has made many different forms of Christianity available to the millions of Latin Americans for whom faith is, if not a personal conviction, at least a deeply entrenched social institution.

With all these shifts in Latin America’s religious landscape, it remains clear that although the continent’s richly historic and profoundly rooted Catholic tradition is growing and transforming itself, it will certainly not disappear. Studies of the rapidly

shifting religious demographics of Latin America have seen astonishing change – Padilla (1996) cites Stoll’s 1990 prediction that “if the growth of the last few decades continues, Latin Americans claiming to be *evangélicos* could still become a quarter to a third of the population early in the twenty-first century” (p. 106), and Stark and Smith (2012), writing nearly a quarter century later, affirm in their study of survey responses that “Protestants make up 20 percent or more of the population in 8 of these 18 [Latin American] nations and more than a third in 4 of them” (p. 40) – but Catholicism has itself hardly been dormant during the same time frame. In fact, in the same 2012 study, Stark and Smith present further statistical findings suggesting that:

...the Catholic churches in Latin America are now filled on Sundays with devoted members, many of them also active in charismatic groups that meet during the week. The motivation for this remarkable change has been the rapid growth of intense Protestant faiths, thus creating a highly competitive pluralist environment... the Catholic Church has reached these heights of member commitment by adopting the major elements of its Protestant Pentecostal competitors, with the result that the illusory Catholic continent is truly becoming a Charismatic Christian continent. (p. 48)

This trend is very new, and many of its details remain unclear. It would seem that the global Catholic Church’s gradual moves, at conferences in Medellín in 1968, Puebla in 1979, and Aparecida in 2007, toward greater involvement in issues of cultural relevance and social justice paved the way for the drastic changes to follow (Levine, 2009; Padilla, 1999). Further information on the incredible growth of charismatic practice in both Protestant and Catholic churches lies outside the scope of this investigation, save where

specific examples of this touch on issues of music education and indigenous agency. It will, however, be seen later in this paper that this contemporary trend in Latin American church culture has opened fascinating new avenues for indigenous expression through music.

With all these changes in Latin American Christianity within the past 50 years, the church's role in music education throughout the continent has evolved fascinatingly as well. Where in previous eras the monopoly of institutionalized Christianity was tied to "top-down" authority structures and used as a means of importing foreign cultural norms to indigenous peoples, modern Latin American Christianity is increasingly populist, or "bottom-up," in nature, and reflective in its beliefs and culture of the generations of adaptation, syncretism, and indigenous agency that have come before. Sánchez (2007) describes this as a movement from a pyramidal authority structure in the Church to a circular and participatory experience. This is not simply synonymous with growth in Protestant denominations. Levine (2009) and others point out that new Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal megachurches spreading across the continent exhibit their own "notoriously tight and hierarchical" behaviors (p. 129). Rather, individual congregations and local and regional associations across the spectrum of Latin American Christian denominations are increasingly exploring the possibilities of integrating their spiritual and cultural identities through the music they sing, play, and teach. This means that, in many cases, the music of the contemporary, local Latin American church is more representative of an emic sense of place and identity than is the music taught in primary and secondary school systems – that is, if music education is consistently offered in these contexts at all.

Again, such trends are relatively new, but fieldwork has already been done to corroborate these ideas. In a series of case studies and ethnographic research on school systems in 13 Latin American nations, researchers concluded in numerous cases that formal music education, especially at the primary level, is distanced from local music cultures and not consistently made available to students. For example, Uruguayan primary school students interviewed for field research pointed out that although they wanted to study music, the school system and their family could not afford to pay a teacher (Mancebo, 2008), and one Costa Rican girl complained that “my music teacher likes to sing very strange songs with a very strange voice... We sing, too, copy the lyrics of the songs, and learn a little bit about musical notes” (Segreda, 2008, p. 138). Seeger (1998a), taking a large-scale perspective on similar fieldwork, comments:

The availability of elementary and secondary schools does not mean that children learn much music there. Music is not usually a high-priority pedagogical subject. The music usually taught in most schools bears little resemblance to the music of the child’s community... Musical curricula have usually been designed by educators and musicians of a different social class, ethnic group, part of the country, or (in colonial periods) by specialists completely removed from the local culture... forms of popular music continue to be ignored in schools in favor of exclusively Europeanized forms. (p. 69)

“Music education” is a loaded term, and its application to the creation and transmission of music within Latin American Christian communities requires that it be separated from many of its Western European and North American connotations. In order to see how indigenous peoples are teaching and learning musics that represent local identity, it is

necessary to look beyond the formal educational systems where music education within Western models has traditionally taken place. Taking all this into account, the remainder of this section will focus on specific applications of music education within the Latin American church during the past half century, drawing out examples of indigenous agency in the transformation and creation of old and new musics. The examples of this that follow are meant to serve as complementary case studies, rather than a comprehensive historical approach; however, as they are taken together, general trends in the present and possibilities for the future will become more clear.

The Sound of Liberation: Music in the CEB Movement

In the increasingly pluralistic reality of modern Latin American Christianity, tensions have arisen between Catholics and Protestants, as well as among the many subgroups within these large-scale denominations. As Levine (2009) explains, “interchurch competition remains intense and highly visible,” although particularly in urban areas these doctrinal and practical rifts are narrowing through the forced proximity of different religious groups (p. 140). The author’s own observations from several months of living in rural Guatemala support this. Particularly in the most impoverished and isolated communities, tensions between Protestants and Catholics can run extremely high. Many scholars, however, point out that the recent shifts in both Catholicism and Protestantism in Latin America have left these denominations with much more in common than they usually acknowledge. As has been mentioned previously, the beginning of the 20th century saw a surge in Protestant missions from North America and Europe to Latin America, with Pentecostalism most quickly taking root in this “New World” (Alfaro, 2014, p. 336; Stark & Smith, 2012, p. 38). Beginning in the mid-1960s,

new movements in Catholic doctrine and practice responded by seeking to transform the Catholic church from the inside out, with the teaching and transmission of new musics central to this mission.

Foundational to the populist movements in the Latin American Catholicism of the mid-20th century and onward have been *la Renovación Carismática Católica*, or the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (subsequently referred to as the RCC), and liberation theology. The RCC moved quickly from North to Central and South America and gained legitimacy and official sanction in the course of a series of Catholic conferences during the 1960s, culminating with its formal recognition by Pope Paul VI in 1966 (Levine, 2009; Olguín, 2009b). Olguín (2009b) defines the basic characteristics of the RCC in Latin America as: belief in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the reality of divine healing through faith and prayer, emphasis on the service of laity rather than priests, and diverse expressions of worship including corporate prayer, silent adoration, and “himnos [hymns]” (p. 262). As Levine explains, “the net result has been to bring common Pentecostal practices like speaking in tongues or glossolalia, exorcisms and belief in divine healing into a prominent place in Catholic experience” (2009, p. 130). The Pentecostal emphases on diverse expressions of individual, intimate holy experiences and on Christian service by laypeople are strongly supportive of grassroots music initiatives rising up within local churches.

Concurrently with the RCC, nations throughout Latin America were experiencing political instability and government corruption, economic inequality, rampant violence and crime, and social unrest in many forms, and Catholic leaders began to seriously examine how the church should respond. Growing out of these concerns, as well as the

influences of Latin American Marxist thought, came *la teología de liberación*, or liberation theology. This worldview rejects cultural imperialism, consumerism, repression, and social and economic inequality, and affirms that Jesus came to free the poor and establish justice and equality (Sánchez, 2007). It gained official recognition at the Medellín Conference in 1968, where the international Catholic Church corporately identified itself as “la Iglesia de los Pobres [the Church of the Poor]” and declared its support for a new type of Christian community life (Hewitt, Olguín, 2009a, p. 158; Self, 1992, p. 64). Importantly, church governance did not create these communities, but instead recognized the popular movement that was already taking place. This movement was an outworking of both the RCC and liberation theology that would express the people’s voice through new musics.

These communities, which experienced their greatest reach and influence during the 1970s and 1980s but continue to exist today, are known as *comunidades evangélicas de base* (variously translated as “base evangelical communities,” “basic Christian communities,” or “grassroots evangelical communities”; they will be referred to here as CEBs). Because the CEB model of community Christian living has spread throughout Latin America and has evolved with time (Olguín, 2009a; Self, 1992), it is difficult to make generalizations about it that hold true. In fact, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the CEB is that it is sourced in and responsive to local people and culture, which necessarily means that there will be great variety from one community to another. However, certain principles have guided the formation of the CEBs, and these include, according to Levine (2009), “a common pattern of reading the Bible, reflecting on its meaning, and organising some form of community action out of the solidarities and

shared understandings derived from those readings” (p. 128). To this, Self (1992) adds, “Base communities are approved as ‘authentic’ if they are eucharistic, have approved leadership, embody democratic and fraternal solidarity, challenge egoistic and consumeristic attitudes, and demonstrate ‘preferential love’ for the poor” (p. 67). CEBs, at the most fundamental level, are charismatically influenced, relationally driven, and focused on applying spiritual lessons to everyday problems of social, political, and economic injustice (Olguín, 2009a; Sánchez, 2007). With such a counter-historical structure and genesis, it has been only natural that the musics of the CEB movement should also grow from the grassroots upward.

To the present day, the political, social, and economic origins and effects of the CEBs have been researched much more exhaustively than has their music. However, ethnographic studies of specific CEBs do exist, and the comments made about the role of music in these communities and how it has been taught and transmitted are fascinating. Olguín (2009b) offers fieldwork on a CEB called “*Dios con Nosotros* [God with Us]” in Barrancas, Chile, from 1973 to 1983. *Dios con Nosotros* began in a small wooden chapel in the community of Barrancas, from which an Irish priest named Miguel O’Boyle began preaching upon arriving in the town in 1974. O’Boyle involved himself in meeting the physical needs of the poor and marginalized in Barrancas, and applied charismatic doctrine and practice to the weekly activities in the chapel. For perhaps the first time in this area, laity were involved in individual and congregational prayer and emotional, demonstrative, active worship through music. For the residents of Barrancas, the music associated with O’Boyle’s ministry was at once radical and deeply moving, connecting

with heart desires for self-expression and community. Olguín (2009b) records the commentary of one resident, Otilia Vera, who explained:

...the Masses were more open... they were sung. You would clap along with the songs, they weren't like the Masses that you were used to attending... The faithful got very involved, you didn't just stay seated like a statue... You participated actively [in the church services]. That's how the Charismatics were... happy, to this day the people [here] cherish the memories of that time. (p. 266)

Olguín (2009b) comments that O'Boyle's charismatic ministry in the *Dios con Nosotros* CEB brought harmony among individuals and groups in the village, as they found expression for their diversity and satisfaction for the needs and desires of the community. Sánchez (2007), an ardent supporter of the mission and ministry of the CEBs, writes that in general the CEBs have been a very organic expression of indigenous music cultures; "they are the ones that, like a spider, weave the fine thread of the Church into the fabric of daily life" (p. 61). Christian communities heard the sounds of local identity reflected in the worship of the CEBs.

Nagle (2000) has conducted similar fieldwork in the CEBs of the *Morro da Conceição*, a lower-class urban community on the outskirts of the Brazilian city of Recife (p. 125). A Catholic priest, Padre Reginaldo, who was "steeped in the teachings of liberation theology," lived in the community between 1978 and 1991 and worked hard to inspire its residents to charismatic Christian practice and political and social activism. There would eventually be six different CEBs within the *Morro*, totaling about 1,000 members, at the movement's height (p. 128). Music and worship in these CEBs took

strikingly different forms than had previously been included in the Catholic mass. Nagle (2000) reports:

The young woman stepped into the circle of people with a book held high above her head as a drummer sounded a complicated tattoo. She closed her eyes against the humid darkness, and her full body met the drum's urgent syncopation with a serpentine rhythm... Some in the audience swayed in response; some stared; those not holding candles clapped in time...

Just when she seemed ready to stumble from exhaustion, she opened her eyes and arrived at her destination. Both she and the drummer stopped at the same moment, and she delivered the book to the waiting priest... "A reading from the Gospel of Matthew." The audience, still mesmerized but well used to the response required by the phrase, said immediately, "Thanks be to God..."

In offering the gospel through the dancer during the mass, the group wanted to express to the fullest possible extent and with all the gifts available to them their worship of, and thanks to, God. (p. 126)

The musical event Nagle (2000) observed integrated Afro-Brazilian dance, "more familiar in African-based religious celebrations than in a Catholic mass," into the familiar liturgical element of moving the Bible down from the altar in preparation for a reading from one of the four Gospels (p. 133). Other local and regional sounds brought into the music of the CEBs included frevo, forro, and samba, all dance styles, as well as popular instruments to replace "scratchy recordings of orchestral music" (p. 134). Reginaldo "was a prolific composer," and wrote music integrating these diverse sounds into church worship, which he presented and taught to local congregations (p. 134). Younger

congregants and those previously left disaffected by what they saw as staid and irrelevant rituals found the changes “exhilarating” (p. 133), and many new members were drawn into these communities of faith during Reginaldo’s tenure.

However, observers have also pointed out potential issues with the CEB movement. For example, Olgúin’s study (2009b) documented misunderstandings and mutual distrust not only between the CEBs and more conservative parties within the Catholic church, but also between *Dios con Nosotros* and other CEBs in the area. María Bravo, another resident of *Dios con Nosotros*, explained:

...[People from other CEBs] called us “the crazy people from Manuel Rodríguez” [the name of the community chapel], because we prayed, danced, and sang praises to the Lord. We had more in common with the evangelicals in that sense, but that never bothered us, because we were happy in the Lord and with our way of living out the faith. (p. 272)

Nagle (2000) observed similar divisions within the congregations of the CEBs in the *Morro da Conceição*. While some locals enjoyed and were drawn in by the sounds of indigenous musics in the Mass, others, however, felt isolated and alienated by the sudden changes to the expressions of faith their community had practiced for generations. Some congregants reacted to the Afro-Brazilian liturgical dance described above by exclaiming, “Our Lady [the Virgin Mary] would never do that” (p. 133), and later expressed longing for the comfort of a traditional Catholic mass. Spiritual and political tensions within the Morro eventually worsened to the point that a group of women who attended a Mass officiated by a controversial priest were shouted down afterwards in the street by hundreds of their neighbors (Nagle, 2000). If the CEBs have been the organic, grassroots,

populist movement that some sources have claimed, it is concerning that CEBs even in the same geographical area and drawing from the same people groups are still prone to fracture along musical-cultural lines. Why would this be the case?

There are some possible explanations for these issues in the CEB movement. Self (1992) suggests that the liberation theology on which the CEB movement was founded is essentially “*for* the poor” rather than “*of* the poor” – implying that its impetus still lies outside of the indigenous, local community it intends to serve (p. 63). Olguín (2009b)’s study again corroborates this, as numerous testimonies from even the *Dios con Nosotros* residents most heartily involved in the CEB project point to the Irish priest Miguel O’Boyle as its founder, leader, and guide. After O’Boyle moved away in 1977 and left the oversight of *Dios con Nosotros* to the townspeople and other local Catholic priests, feelings of directionlessness and a loss of spiritual vitality discouraged members of the community. Olguín (2009b) quotes Rosa Herrera, a catechist in the local church, who explained that “the people felt like they weren’t being included in decisions, that [the new leaders] were a privileged group. Father Miguel always listened to everyone, and afterwards it wasn’t the same. That’s what bored the people” (p. 271). A similar situation played out in the CEBs of the *Morro da Conceição*. The local priest, Padre Reginaldo, was embroiled in a series of ideological conflicts with his immediate superiors which led to his suspension in 1989. The remaining CEB members’ loyalty to Reginaldo became such a political issue that community members who wished to return to more traditional forms of church worship “suffered not just derision and humiliation but permanent ostracism” (Nagle, 2000, p. 135). With Reginaldo’s departure, these conflicts did great damage to the unity of the CEB movement in the area.

The core issue that emerges from these and other studies is that of leadership. In many cases, the leaders of CEB movements were, at least to some extent, cultural outsiders. In the fieldwork cited above, for example, Father O'Boyle of *the Dios con Nosotros* community in Barrancas, Chile was originally from Ireland, while Padre Reginaldo served in a low-income section of Recife, Brazil, but was from "a moderately elite family in the interior" (Olguín, 2009b; Nagle, 2000, p. 136). Nagle (2000) noted the commentary of some observers in the *Morro da Conceição* who pointed out that "a class relationship too well known... of outside superiors bestowing wisdom and help on backward poor folk still held" (p. 136). Also, as has been discussed above, the continuing presence of these spiritual and political advisors provided local CEBs with a crucial source of direction and momentum, without which the movement was likely to falter. Hewitt (1988) reached similar conclusions in a study of 22 CEBs in the archdiocese of São Paulo, Brazil, explaining that "the sample data reveal a definite association between the continued presence of pastoral agents and various aspects of group life" (p. 149). Musical expressions created in this context were often polarizing, rather than unifying, and as communities struggled to find equilibrium after the departure of outside spiritual leadership these new sounds did not endure.

The clearest conclusion to be drawn from this evidence is that defining what indigenous identity sounds like in music is a much more complicated issue than it might seem. To a cultural outsider, bringing "native" sounds into the music created and taught in church worship in order to replace musics rooted in colonialist traditions is, by default, a truer expression of local identity. The underlying question is again that of agency. Are the musical echoes of European colonization purely destructive and repressive in the

present day, or are indigenous communities capable of adapting and interacting with these traditions to make them their own? In fieldwork with the Maninka people of Guinea, West Africa, Morehouse (2014) found that even after a series of songwriting seminars focused on expressing indigenous music styles within the church, local congregations quickly returned to using the same Western-sourced hymnody as they had before. The CEB movement seems to have experienced some similar results. Creating and teaching church music that local people groups will identify as their own requires a complex view of indigenous musical identity, one which allows for interaction with and transformation of both contemporary and historical musical traditions within and outside the Christian community.

Grassroots Music Movements in Indigenous Communities

So, in the modern age of Christian diversification in Latin America, have there been any authentically indigenous music movements? This is a difficult question to answer, and one which circles back to the issue of leadership raised in the previous section. As mentioned before, one of the central struggles of the CEB movement has been that its leadership on the local level has often come from church leaders who are not native members of the community in which they serve (Hewitt, 1988; Nagle, 2000; Olguín, 2009b). Nida (1961), writing from a viewpoint much closer to the beginnings of the surge in Latin American Christian pluralism, offers a system of categorizing local churches based on their type of leadership:

- (1) Mission-directed churches, which make no pretense to being indigenous or under local leadership,
- (2) “national-front” churches, which are really mission-directed, but which make use of local persons for figurehead leadership,
- (3)

“indigenized churches,” in which missions have previously had control, but which are now being managed by national leaders in various countries... and (4) fully indigenous churches, in the sense that they have grown exclusively with Latin leadership and funds. (p. 97)

The dynamics between these different general types of church in Latin America have certainly grown more complex since the early 1960s, but Nida’s perspective gives a useful starting point. Churches and inter-church groups in the latter categories seem more likely to be able to create and sustain efforts to write and teach indigenous musics.

In general, it is not necessarily an observer’s place to judge whether a movement of local people writing music and teaching one another new songs is “authentically indigenous” or not. A cultural outsider is hardly in a position to be able to take such an emic view without a great deal of prior cultural immersion, which he or she may not possess. The examples which follow are cited as evidence of grassroots music movements sourced from church communities which fit into categories 3 and 4 of Nida’s rubric – which is to say, they exhibit substantial indigenous leadership and direction, and their musics have shown a capacity to unite people groups and possess at least some degree of longevity. However, deciding whether or not these sounds are a genuine expression of local musical identity rests with emic participants, not etic observers. And such a “decision” is much more likely to be made through actions rather than words. That is, people groups will simply choose to continue creating, playing, and teaching to others the musics that they feel best represent who they are.

Alfaro (2014) offers fieldwork on songwriting movements among Pentecostal Christians from the Quechua people of Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Prior to the mid-

1970s, he comments, “the musical and liturgical practices [among these churches] often mainly reflected the religious and cultural life of North American and European missionaries” (p. 341). However, as local churches grew and interacted with these traditions, they began to experiment with ways of contextualizing the music played and taught in church to reflect local methods of expression. In July 1978, a group of 30 representatives from evangelical Quechua churches in Peru gathered to form the Evangelical Quechua Committee of Peru (CEQP, according to its initials in Spanish). 24 of these leaders were native Quechua, and the elected leader of the committee coordinating the new movement was “proud of being a descendant of the Incas” (p. 342). Music was one of the issues discussed at the meeting, and the delegates agreed that “the Quechua culture provided an important channel to express Christianity in this diverse world of God” (p. 342). Results of this movement over the next two years included annual festivals of evangelical Quechua music in Peru and growing ties with similar movements among the Quechua-Quichua peoples of Ecuador and Bolivia. As Alfaro concludes, “a holistic Indian Evangelical-Pentecostal movement that promoted transforming discipleship, which was indigenous, holistic and contextual, was born” (p. 344). This grassroots music movement among indigenous peoples of the Andes forged new ties among churches, and encouraged local musicians to create and teach new songs in their communities.

Interestingly, the music written, sung, and taught through the efforts of the CEQP and other organizations in the Quechua-Quichua music movement was a blend of indigenous and historically European styles. Indigenous musicians did not wish to dispense with their familiar hymns and liturgies entirely; rather “part of the changes...

include the development and emergence of a new hymnology and liturgy” (Alfaro, 2014, p. 341). During the early 1980s, as civil violence and terrorism tore Peruvian communities apart, this newly renewed hymn literature took on a remarkable role in the beleaguered local churches:

In the midst of this suffering, the Quechua communities found some consolation and strength in their new hymnology and renewed fellowship. The hymns and songs in their own language and with familiar tunes were a great source of perseverance and joy in the midst of such harsh violence... the Quechuas in the Ayacucho definitely found comfort and encouragement and hope in their new hymnology, which had recently been renewed and contextualized. (Alfaro, 2014, p. 345)

It is certainly significant that Alfaro chooses to describe this grassroots music movement as a “renewal” and a “contextualization,” rather than as a radical departure from the musical traditions of the past. As they worked together to create and teach a musical tradition in their churches that authentically represented their emic sense of identity, the Quechua did not dispense entirely with the framework of Christian music that was already familiar to them. This suggests that although hymnody dates back to European and North American colonization and mission in Latin America, the Quechua’s relationship to this style of music is creative and transformative. Hymnody did not remain essentially foreign. Instead, the Quechua interacted with it to create genuine expressions of their own cultural and musical identity.

Barrios (2009) provides a viewpoint on a distinct but related grassroots music movement in Chile beginning in the mid-20th century – one which, like the work of the

CEQP and the Quechua people, places significant emphasis on original compositions created within local communities by community members themselves. The Chilean Pentecostal church is marked by its use of devotional songs called *coritos*, or “little songs,” in congregational worship and other church activities.¹ The *coritos* combine elements of North American-European hymnody and local folk music traditions with simple texts expressing themes of devotion to Christ, desire to experience the Holy Spirit and the presence of God, and various experiences within the Christian life. Barrios (2009) identifies a few specific features of authorship and content which make the *coritos* unique within Chilean Pentecostal culture:

The *coritos* are the property of the community... Their musical and textual origins are part of an anonymous process of creation which captures the author’s religious aspirations as a member of a Pentecostal community and the greater society. The textual content of the songs is drawn from the real experiences of helplessness which the common people have been forced to live through during the 20th century. (p. 150)

Although the *coritos* lack specific authorship, Pentecostal congregations feel very strongly that these songs are “theirs”. Barrios (2009) contrasts this with hymnody in the European and North American tradition, which was “transplanted by missionaries at the end of the 19th century” (p. 150). Although the *coritos* that exist in the present day can be traced back in part to the influence of this foreign hymnody, Chilean Pentecostals have

¹ The diminutive suffix “ito” in Spanish carries a range of connotations that are difficult to translate into English. While it literally denotes something that is smaller than its usual size, it also carries a strong sense of closeness and affection (for example, the same suffix is frequently used by Spanish speakers to generate nicknames for family members or friends). Alvaro notes the importance of the suffix’s presence in the word *coritos*, writing that “the term reveals the congregation’s level of appropriation of the object, as it [the congregation] employs a diminutive with the goal of giving the subject a more deeply felt treatment” (2009, p. 150).

taken ownership of the genre through the process of local, communal, anonymous composition. Sampling the lyrics of selected *coritos* gives an idea of the fruit of this collective method of authorship. For example: “Hubo uno que quiso por mi padecer / Y morir por mi alma salvar, / El camino más cruel a la cruz recorrer / Para así mis pecados lavar” (Barrios, 2009, p. 157).² Another states, “Ya no me importa que el mundo / Me desprecie por doquier / Yo ya no soy de este mundo / Soy del reino celestial” (p. 155).³ And, finally, a third declares, “Dios es mi amparo y fortaleza en el combate / Venga Satán en horas crueles con destreza / Miro al Calvario y veo allí la cruz sangrienta / Cristo venció y yo peleo con firmeza” (p. 153).⁴ However, because these songs are authored anonymously and communally, they remain open to adaptation, and thus can always be changed in order to best express the struggles, desires, and hopes of the group singing them (Barrios, 2009). This flexibility has kept the *coritos* closely bound to emic identity in the communities where they are performed.

These *coritos* also have significance outside the context of congregational worship. Similarly to the experience of the Quechua people in the early 1980s, who coped with the violence and destruction of civil war by turning to indigenously composed worship music, Chilean Pentecostals have also found strength and comfort in the songs they sing. Barrios (2009) writes:

Here is clearly seen the meaningful character of these songs in the liturgy – songs which are suggested, created, and sung by the religious community with the

² In literal translation: “There was one who wanted to suffer for me / And to die to save my soul / To go down the cruelest road to the cross / In order to wash away my sins.”

³ “I don’t care anymore that the world / Despises me everywhere [I go] / I’m no longer of this world / I belong to the heavenly kingdom.”

⁴ “God is my refuge and strength in battle / Satan may come craftily in cruel hours / I look to Calvary and see the bloody cross there / Christ overcame, and I fight with resolve.”

emotionalism that the music of their lives deserves. The community reexperiences a message of pain and suffering, which is alleviated by the redeeming work of God. (p. 150)

These songs are a central element of the Pentecostals' musical experience within the church building itself, but they are also carried outside, whether as part of an open-air evangelistic crusade or as an expression of comfort and hope in the midst of trials (Barrios, 2009). Because they are expressive of local identity, the *coritos* have found enduring relevance both in the Chilean Pentecostals' relationships with each other and their interactions with the world at large.

Agency, Leadership, Community, and Composition in the Contemporary Period

Although there is much that can be contrasted between music education in the Latin American church during colonial and contemporary times, the same themes identified previously have continued to interact with one another in complex ways. For example, with the advent of religious pluralism in Latin America during the 20th century, followed by liberation theology and the rise of concerns for social and political justice, issues of leadership continue to appear. On the one hand, where religious authorities previously exercised their authority in monolithic fashion through the combined offices of church and state, the splintering of political and religious factions has allowed many opportunities for leadership to be presented to people groups disenfranchised in the past. On the other hand, it has still remained the norm in many cases for leadership to come from sources outside the local communities and indigenous people groups where it is exercised. Examples of this range from missionary models of church planting and administration dominated by North American leadership and cultural values, to the

reinforcement of European musical norms in institutionalized music education, to the much more subtle and nuanced dynamics of pastoral and musical leadership in the CEBs and in grassroots music movements within the local church. Considering who is writing and teaching music within the local church, and what their motivations are, provides valuable insight into how the community may respond.

Clearly, the theme of leadership leads directly into issues of community and composition. The trend in this area has been that authentic, enduring music movements within specific indigenous people groups are characterized by their ties to a specific place and time, by the collective composition of new songs, and by the adaptive use of these songs to help community members express deep emotions and remain hopeful through hardships. New songs have the power to either unite or deeply divide a community, as fieldwork in music movements of varying kinds has shown, and the damage done by changing the music taught and performed in local churches to emphasize a particular element of community identity while marginalizing others is profound. Also, although indigenous musicians writing and teaching new songs in local churches are likely to include the instruments and styles of the popular musics around them, historical styles of Christian worship rooted in colonial traditions are not rooted out in the compositional process. The sounds produced by communal composition are themselves anything but static; the common denominator is instead the synthesis and transformation of old and new musics to create an ever-changing, yet ever-faithful, musical representation of the community's identity.

And, finally, these ideas lead directly into issues of indigenous agency. How are local communities negotiating the constantly changing landscapes of "foreign" musics

and authentically indigenous sounds? In the colonial period, as indigenous people groups were systemically repressed by colonial influences seeking to impose European cultural values, indigenous musicians found creative ways to shape the development of their own music culture. Certainly in the present day their level of agency can only be greater, and it is being expressed in multifaceted ways that have yet to be fully explored. Many past attempts to replace music styles of European origin within the local church with more authentically Latin American sounds have involved value judgments separating one genre from another. These decisions have often been made by observers from outside the community itself. Such judgments do not do justice to the level of agency indigenous communities exercise in their relationships to such categories of music – which may not even be considered from an emic viewpoint as distinct categories at all. A Q'eqchi Mayan congregation singing hymns in a church service, or Chilean Pentecostal believers performing *coritos* in an open-air evangelistic campaign, or a group of women in a Brazilian neighborhood longing for a traditional Catholic mass are all perpetuating musical traditions they feel to be authentically “theirs,” representative of their own time, place, and sense of self. Respecting the agency of these indigenous music-makers means acknowledging that an emic perspective is crucial for deciding what sounds do and do not truly represent the community.

Conclusion: Learning to Listen

The goal of this study has not been to provide a comprehensive historical perspective on music education in the Latin American church, or to take an in-depth view of a specific region, culture, or people group within the continent. Instead, by combining elements of a historical approach with findings from ethnomusicological fieldwork, the

resulting emphasis is thematic, drawing out trends that connect different forms of music education in the Latin American church across time periods and national boundaries.

Latin American church musicians seeking to create new music and teach it to others have been negotiating issues of agency, leadership, community, and composition for centuries. Identifying these themes and linking their various expressions brings valuable insight into why music culture is the way it is within the Latin American church today, and how it may continue to develop into the future.

There are many possible avenues for continued research along these lines.

Compared to the relative abundance of historical and critical sources on music education in the colonial Latin American church, and of fieldwork from contemporary Christian communities and music movements, there is relatively little material on indigenous musical traditions during Latin America's period of independence and early nationalism. There are undoubtedly many factors at work in this, including the shifting boundaries of national and ethnic categories and the institutional emphasis on developing Latin American classical music to equal European output, but it would be very interesting to discover how the themes of agency, leadership, community, and composition played out during this time period. There are also many opportunities to follow up with Latin American communities that experienced the CEB movement during its heyday in the later 20th century and see how the musical innovations of this period have continued to influence the sounds of local worship. Finally, in any local context, there is great value in interview-based, participant-observer fieldwork that can allow cultural outsiders to gain more of an emic perspective on how indigenous musicians negotiate their expressions of community identity as they write and teach music within the church.

Whether music education in the Latin American church and the themes connecting its manifestations in different periods of history are approached from the perspective of historical scholarship, educational theory, ethnographic research, or Christian faith – or all of these at once – there are a few valuable lessons any student can take away. Humility is crucial in approaching these issues, and simply committing to listen to the voices of the music-makers in these diverse cultures is invaluable. Latin American music culture has already undergone centuries of attempts from cultural outsiders to remake it in their own image, and the vastly diverse and creative responses of local communities to this deserve to be heard on their own terms. The continuing need for study in this area is great. New songs are being created, taught, and performed in Latin American churches every day! It only remains for the curious observer to follow the sound of voices and instruments – on a rainy night in the Mayan jungle, a sunny morning in a rural Guatemalan town, or anywhere else – and to step inside the sanctuary, take a seat, and listen.

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