

This article was co-authored by Henri Tournier and Ninja Kors. Ninja Kors provides a general outline about world music (teaching) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Henri Tournier goes deeper into the issues involved in teaching Indian music in an institutional setting in Europe, notably the Rotterdam Conservatoire at Codarts.

Ninja Kors

WORLD MUSIC IN ROTTERDAM

Rotterdam is a city of world music. It has a highly multicultural population with over 160 nationalities but that in itself is not very different from other cities in western Europe. A lively cultural life that includes many musical (sub)cultures is part of that package as well. Music-wise, however, it has a few unique features. For many years now, the Rotterdam Conservatoire has been the only conservatoire to offer degree programmes (notable Bachelor degrees) at tertiary level. As of last year, a Master's programme was added that accommodates a large research element. The world music focus and expertise of Codarts was the foundation for the development of the *World Music & Dance Centre*, a joint effort between the conservatoire and local music school that has culminated in an independent centre for performance, education and research into the areas of world music and dance. The *World Music & Dance Centre* (WMDC) functions as a kind of research and development facility as well as a world music stage. The WMDC works both with high-level professional musicians and upcoming talents in the local community. This article casts some light on how world music is positioned in Rotterdam, with conservatoire teaching of Hindustani music in an institutional framework at conservatoire level providing an example of how cultures come together in practice.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS WORLD MUSIC

World music as a term was coined by an ethnomusicologist, notably Robert E. Brown, in the 1960s but really came into its own in the 1980s as a

marketing term. As such, there really is no such thing as world music; it would include every kind of music, depending on where you are standing. David Byrne expressed his distaste for the grouping of all kinds of music under one heading in an article appropriately named *I Hate World Music* (1999). Oscar van der Pluijm argued for an annihilation of the term in policy and funding in his article *World Music does not Exist* (2003). Van der Pluijm then went on to become the first director of the *World Music & Dance Centre*. This is no coincidence; the *World Music & Dance Centre* was founded on the notion that the country of origin of the music is far less relevant than its intrinsic qualities and potential, and its relevance to its local context.

In the case of the WMDC this context is particularly many-faceted. The stage programme shows professional groups from around the world but also from the rich world music scene of Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands, high-quality musicians who quite often get just as much if not even more recognition across the borders. But the programme also includes productions that work in close collaboration with local community groups where community celebration is just as important as artistic quality. Many productions at the WMDC are on the very edges of changing music (and dance) practice. These are productions that often cross-over between cultures and traditions and experiment with musical idiom and instrumentation. They are often the result of facilitating and stimulating something that was already in the air somehow, be it young dance talents that successfully cross over between urban dance and other styles such as modern dance, or students from the Indian and Brazilian departments who organise concerts where virtually every musical style within the WMDC comes together on stage. The only requirement for all content in WMDC is that it deals with music and dance that is very much alive and relevant, as well as strongly embedded in its urban surroundings.

Many of the activities in the WMDC take place in close collaboration with partner organisations. The WMDC was originally founded by Codarts, the mother organisation of the Rotterdam Conservatoire, and SKVR, the municipal music school. Both institutions have housed their world music departments in the WMDC building. Other organisations have joined them, such as the producer of the World Children Festival (*Planet Jr. Productions*), a municipal organisation to stimulate music participation in Rotterdam (*Music Matters*) and a talent development organisation for young musicians, dancers and media talents (*Roots & Routes*). The proximity of partners within the same building offers numerous opportunities for collaboration. The most visible may be the high-scale master classes on the WMDC stage: musical giants such as James Carter, Trilok Gurtu and Arturo Sandoval have shared their expertise with young upcoming talents

in the intimate setting of the WMDC, while resident masters such as Paco Peña, Gustavo Beytelmann and Hariprasad Chaurasia of *Codarts* consider the WMDC their home stage in Europe.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

On an international scale, Rotterdam has become something of a forerunner when it comes to world music education. The history goes back 25 years to when flamenco and Indian music were first included in the curriculum of the conservatoire. The first music school in the Netherlands to include world music in its programmes was in Amsterdam (see further) but founder Joep Bor also stood at the cradle of the world music department of the conservatoire. The height of the world music 'movement' in music education in the Netherlands was reached in the 1990s when cultural diversity was high on the political agenda – and consequently in the list of funding criteria. As Kors commented in the article *Networks and Islands* (2007), this meant that many initiatives in the 1990s were conducted with good intent but too often in a non-critical way as regards to (artistic) quality. Social motives were perhaps too easily confused with cultural or artistic aims.

Some of the current activities in Rotterdam, and in other places too, show that these aims can go hand in hand. Music is used as a means to express and, in some cases, reinforce cultural identity. Projects with *kaseko* and *kawina* music show the great interest of younger generations of people from Surinam for the music of their elders, but also the controversy it brings when the younger generation makes this music its own by adapting it to their own (life)styles. These movements happen without the interference of schools or teachers, but sometimes these institutions can be helpful in lifting musical practice to another plane. The Brass School in Rotterdam, a joint of WMDC project with Music Matters and the conservatoire, draws many young immigrants from the Antilles and Surinam to lessons and coaching sessions and the level of brass bands in Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands is slowly but surely rising. The principle behind the Brass School and its success is simple, as is often the case with good concepts: Brass bands improve their skills and repertoire under the guidance of teachers from the conservatoire, while the conservatoire gains an insight into the musical idiom and particularly into methodological practices in this social context. The question for improvement originally came from the brass bands. Meanwhile, brass band leaders are coached to improve their pedagogical skills. While it was never the object of the project, some brass players from the Brass School have entered the conservatoire now to professionalise their career in music making, teaching and leading.

WORLD MUSIC ACADEMY: INDIAN MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Supporting and nourishing talented musicians and other artists is an important aspect of musical life in Rotterdam. The outlook is decidedly international: Not only because of the many immigrant cultures surrounding the institutions but also because many students from all over the world come to Rotterdam to study. Currently the World Music Academy of *Codarts* Conservatoire of Rotterdam has five programmes: Turkish music, Argentine tango, flamenco, Latin music (Brazil and Cuba) and Indian music. Still a unique initiative in Europe, this academy has created a special place for the encounter of different cultures, both in their musical practices as well as their specific teaching methods. This will be demonstrated in this paper by means of an illustration of the development of the Indian music department of the World Music Academy. This example raises many of the issues concerned with intercultural music education. The author, Henri Tournier, is a teacher of *bansuri* flute and improvisation and the assistant of the renowned Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, artistic director of the department.