"Come and expose yourself to the fantastic music from around the world"[1]
Experiencing world music festivals

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Introduction

Since the last century and even more for the last decades, the world has increasingly been connected, and people from the most distant places have become neighbors both virtually through the World Wide Web and physically through easier and faster ways of travelling. The worldwide interconnectedness has been termed "globalization", or in a more differentiated form, several "-scapes" have been described. Appadurai distinguishes five of them, including "ethnoscapes", "technoscapes", "financescapes", "mediascapes", and "ideoscapes." (1990: 297-300) Those parameters attempted to more adequately describe today's complex global cultural economies, their fluidity and the plurality of possible perspectives to be taken.

In similar ways, the production and consumption of cultural goods has become distributed over distant localities all over the world. Music production is one part of this and, in unique ways, has been changed by global interactions. Reaching far-off audiences, allowing global flows of musical ideas and styles and providing an opportunity for musicians as well as audiences to "attend" distant places in the world, the distinction between the global and local dimension has been severely blurred. A remarkably interesting phenomenon in this regard is the music festival. Music festivals can be described as places offering "intense and concentrated interaction" (Chalcraft/Magaudda 2005: 173) between people from different places sharing a local

1 This is a quote from Derek, one of my interviewees at WOMAD.

experience. At music festivals, flows of people from different regions, nations and continents come together at a locally situated, limited space. For that, music festivals have to be perceived not only as local but simultaneously as global events, aiming for potential audiences throughout the world.

A particular type of music festival will be discussed here: world music festivals. World music festivals operate on a global as well as a local dimension and have a special connection to this dichotomy. Music festivals, or rather fairs presenting the music of the world, can be dated back to colonial world's fairs such as the famous exhibition in 1889 in Paris, where the composer Claude Debussy for the first time heard Javanese gamelan music. Since the first world exhibition in London in 1851, cultural and artistic aspects have become more and more important, with competitive performances of industry sectors and trade co-operations being the primary reasons behind this growing importance. Transgressing nations and borders, from a certain perspective those exhibitions could be seen as the ancestors of world music festivals. Similarly, one of the first music gatherings explicitly presenting music of different ethnic groups was the North American "folk song and handicraft festivals" (Näumann 2017: 206) in the early 20th century. More direct predecessors of world music festivals can be seen in the folk and rock music festivals of the 1960s and 1970s, especially gaining popularity in the Anglophone space (Ibid: 206-207).

World music festivals as such cannot be found before the term "world music" was coined as a commercial music genre in 1987. Nevertheless, the first world music festival can be identified as WOMAD (The World of Music and Dance) in 1982. However, it generally remains difficult to pin down "world music" festivals as they do not all explicitly have the term in their name or description. Still, it is possible to identify festivals presenting artists mostly found in the world music genre or addressing a similar audience. For instance, the journal *Songlines*, which is all about music from the world music genre, provides a yearly guide to international festivals and might be used as an indicator for world music festivals. From 1982 onwards, world music festivals have grown and spread significantly around the globe in different sizes, with different musical foci, ways of presentation and intended audiences. Bringing together global musicians and local as well as global audiences, they constitute transnational spaces of encounter. Creating a temporal, artificial space where the world seemingly shrinks down to a local

festival site, they offer possibilities for interaction and exchange and furthermore shape the idea of something perceived as "world music".

Despite their significance in shaping and promoting the genre as well as their economic importance within it (Laing 2009), world music festivals have not yet been researched extensively. Furthermore, most of those referring to world music festivals are not based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at the festivals themselves. This central perspective is what I am approaching in this work. The main question of this article is: How is world music experienced at world music festivals? For that, two case studies have been selected and ethnographic fieldwork has been conducted. The first case study is WOMAD at Charlton Park, United Kingdom, and the second, the Africa Festival in Würzburg, Germany.

The structure of the article will be as follows: Firstly, an insight into the term "world music" and literature and ideas about it, including two narratives of world music, will be presented. Following that, the methodology of the ethnographic fieldwork will be outlined, and the two festivals as well as the ideas of world music they communicate will be delineated. Subsequently, five parameters of world music are outlined which represent the main part of this article and have been termed "signifiers of world music". Finally, the results will be interpreted combining theoretical as well as practical outcomes before research outlooks are enumerated.

What is world music?

Different perspectives can be taken on this question. Disjoining the term into "world" and "music", there seems to be few to no extra information to be gleaned by combining them, as the term "music" does not explicitly include or exclude any geographical restriction, which the addition of the term "world" would adjust. In practice, however, the term "music" has largely been used with regards to a particular understanding dependent on either the historical time or the context. Similarly, the term "world music" has a history of different meanings spanning from the early 20th century until today. Since the early academic discipline comparative musicology emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, the music of the world was equated with any music that was non-Western or not from the classical European tradition, and the research about this music was conducted with the idea of affirming

the superiority of the West (Rice 2014: 17). Within the ethnomusicology of the 1960s, the music of the world, though still merely called "world music", has been approached with more careful views, including the idea of music as every "humanly organized sound." (Blacking 1973: 3)

Is world music today simply referring to all the music the world has to offer? Not precisely. And it was for that reason that ethnomusicology had its differences with the term "world music" itself, though it does usefully describe the area of study. Particularly since 1987, there have been strong connotations which are anything but inclusive for all kinds of music. This is closely tied to the formation of the genre market of "world music" initiated by a number of record labels meeting in London in 1987 and creating "world music" as a genre category.[2] From that point on, "world music" or rather "World Music" was disseminated widely as a category for music formerly put in the "roots", "traditional", "ethnic", or "international" (Ibid) bin at record stores and which then gained a huge boost in popularity. For music journalists and today's listeners, it is this kind of music that increasingly dominates the idea of world music. While it still is presented as an inclusive music category without reference to any specific music or region, "in practice, [it is] systematically exclusive." (Frith 2007: 307) It favors particular kinds of music, mostly African (Howard 2009: 8) (and within that also very selective) as well as Latin, and ignores others completely, like "Cantopop and karaoke" (Frith 2007: 307) or anything from far East Asia (Taylor 1997: 17). While its origins can be traced in ethnomusicological field recordings, the world music found today in record stores, charts and in playlists of streaming services has little to do with those historical collections. Although the world music category can still include field recordings, in most cases it shares more commonalities with Western popular music in terms of promotion, distribution and, arguably, sound.

Music scholars have written extensively about this seemingly new genre and have been rather suspicious about it. While it generally can be described as the music of "people in different places creating, hearing and using different sounds" (Fairley 2001: 287), this description is not as neutral as it might appear at first sight insofar as it incorporates a particular understanding. The world music genre can be described as a highly sensitive intersection

2 "Press Release 01—World Music" (https://frootsmag.com/press-release-01-world-music).

between the actors involved, the musicians, the producers, the labels, the festivals, the audiences and so on.

Throughout musicological literature, two prominent views on world music can be distinguished, attempting to both understand the phenomenon and to value it. Steven Feld differentiates between an "optimistic" and a "pessimistic view." (2000: 151-154; 165-171) Jan Fairley uses the terms "celebratory" and "anxious" (2001: 275) to describe them. Slightly simplified, the optimistic view outlines the possibilities of world music to foster intercultural encounter and exchange between musicians and audiences connected to a hope for cultural and financial equity and musical collaboration (Haynes 2005: 381; Krueger 2011: 298). The pessimistic view sees world music as dependent on the creation and maintenance of "difference" between self and other by outlining the authenticity, cultural and geographical localization, ethnicity or characteristics of the music (Taylor 1997: 19-27; White 2012: 190). Furthermore, this perspective criticizes the commodification of the music and, relatedly, the exploitation of the musicians (Feld 2000: 167). While there are arguments against such a dichotomous view and pleas for more careful analysis of world music production and "the entire set of power relations through which acts get signed, tracks recorded, releases playlisted [sic], concerts booked, and so forth" (Fairley 2001: 275), the discourse barely leaves the dichotomous sphere of either speaking in optimistic terms or in pessimistic outlooks. Timothy Taylor concludes that despite this attempt "to do away with binary oppositions as analytical tools, it is still the case that, ethnographically speaking, many people understand the world through such oppositions and organize their practices and epistemologies around them." (2004: 66)

This is where the contribution of my research comes into play. The majority of the ethnomusicological literature on the genre category world music is not based on ethnographic fieldwork; thus, this crucial perspective is still widely missed. My contribution to the discourse deals with the question of how world music is experienced at the attended festivals. The experiences of the visitors are approached through my interviews with them and my experiences are built up from observation and participation. As a research ground, world music festivals have been chosen for the following reasons: they represent a tangible manifestation and an essential representation of the world music genre bringing together global actors to a locality; they are one of the most profitable sectors of the world music market (Laing 2009: 227); and finally, they provide the possibility to gain insights into how world

music is presented at the festival sites, performed by the musicians as well as experienced by the audience. Despite these factors, they still have not been researched sufficiently.

For parts of the interpretation of my data, I am building on thoughts presented by Antoine Hennion (2005) on the performative nature of cultural practices. He suggests thinking about music listeners not only as passive consumers of objects according to their sociological affiliation but rather as having impactful aspects of "activity" involved in the process of their interaction with music (while he explicitly speaks about "tasting" as well as the "amateur" ([Ibid: 132-133], he addresses the music listener). Hennion highlights the music listener's "capacity to transform sensibilities and create new ones, and not only to reproduce an existing order without acknowledging it." (Ibid: 132) His thoughts bring into focus the music listener's, or in my case the music festival visitor's, active involvement in the experience of the genre world music rather than being a simple consumer of a fixed and definite genre as, for instance, the two described narratives purport.

Two case studies and methodology

The case studies for this research include WOMAD at Charlton Park, United Kingdom, and the Africa Festival in Würzburg, Germany. How was the selection made? There are numerous festivals presenting world music throughout Europe and the world. During the selection process, the main criteria were the festivals having a heightened reputation among world music festivals, a promising first impression on social media and websites, being geographically within reach and, last but not least, the dates of the festivals fitting into my timeframe. The first choice was made by picking WOMAD Charlton Park, UK, as a festival for the research. It fulfilled the chosen criteria and had preference over other choices simply due to the fact of being one of if not the first world music festival in the world as well as a very successful one. The second choice was made by picking Africa Festival in Würzburg, for relatively simple reasons. It is the festival I had received the most positive feedback about from my contacts, who highlighted its familial atmosphere and its respectable reputation and size.

My choices do not reflect a representative selection of all world music festivals. There are too many and too different festivals of world music in

many countries all over the world. Nevertheless, the choice does reflect a reasonable sample of particularly interesting festivals: WOMAD as well as the Africa Festival are pioneers of world music festivals and are particularly prestigious ones. Though the Africa Festival is explicitly about African music and not world music, it makes up a large part of what is found in that musical category. Referring to this, systematic analysis still has to be conducted to outline the commonalities as well as the differences of world music festivals and African music festivals, but authors like Keith Howard suggest that "40% or more of world music [would …] always [have] been from Africa or African diaspora." (2009: 5) Furthermore, the festivals do present similar or even the same musicians and utilize similar presentation and marketing approaches. The data for this research was gained through ethnographic fieldwork at the two festivals in 2017, each of which was attended for three full days.

The methods which were mainly utilized were observation, participant observation, participation and interviewing the festival visitors. Observation and participation were mainly used to gain overviews of festival activities and insights into particular places or events. Regularly taken field notes throughout the research allowed subsequent analysis and reflection upon the experiences. This was complemented by interviewing visitors at the festivals using a semi-structured approach. Though many possible questions were prepared, there was no fixed set of questions, and they were adjusted according to the course of the respective interview. Generally, they addressed the interviewee's idea and understanding of and affiliation with world music and festivals. All in all, 21 in-depth interviews were conducted, eleven of them at the Africa Festival and ten at WOMAD.

WOMAD and The Africa Festival

Both case studies analyzed two of the oldest festivals for world music, WOMAD (The World of Music and Dance) being founded in 1982 and the Africa Festival in 1989. WOMAD has received international fame through various offshoots in 26 other countries all over the world. In 2017 (and still), it took place at the spacious park area of the Charlton Park country house in Wiltshire, relatively remote from any larger city. Different from WOMAD, the Africa Festival took place in the heart of the middle-sized German city, Würzburg, and thus was open to spontaneous visitors and day-visitors.

Both festivals offered a large festival area and a camping site allowing many visitors to spend the whole weekend at the festival. Furthermore, they both had large framing programs providing not only music but an immersive experience, which is also typical for the format of festivals. Various spa, relaxation and meditation activities (WOMAD), street parades and a cinema tent (Africa Festival) were accompanied by the obligatory markets, bazaars, food and drink stalls and also party spaces allowing the nights to continue after the concerts had ended. Both festivals had three main musical stages, which were supported by a number of additional stages (WOMAD), musical activities at the camping site (Africa Festival) and the music sounding from the speakers of the market stalls.

A distinguishing feature of WOMAD was the offer of musical workshops for visitors to participate with various musical groups and instrument workshops for Gambian kora, xylophone and gamelan. Furthermore, and especially at WOMAD, music was ubiquitous and flooded the whole festival site, be it from the main stages, the smaller stages, the workshop places or the large number of market, food or coffee trucks. The unique characteristic of the Africa Festival was the camping site being its own little musical world. Groups of visitors informally gathered in communities bringing their instruments, mostly djembe, dunduns, bells, talking drums and koras, and created their own musical experience detached from the festival happenings. Different from most other festivals as well as WOMAD, the visitors had organized their own practical music groups.

Regarding the music and musicians at the main stages, both festivals shared commonalities. A mix of musicians established in the world music genre with newer, younger acts and a few newcomers could be heard. At WOMAD, Orchestra Baobab, Ladysmith Black Mambazo or Afro Celt Sound System have been active for years or even decades and are thus well known to anyone interested in the music genre. They were complemented by newer, younger acts, incorporating more contemporary forms of world music such as Ifriqiyya Electrique, Alsarah & the Nubatones or Trad Attack! Also, newcomers who had not or had barely appeared at festivals or released records could be heard, including the Tanzania Albinism Collective, the Khmer Rouge Survivors or the Zhou Family Band.

Moving on to the Africa Festival, it was a generally similar line-up. However, there was a strong domination of particular regions and countries from Africa. While this year the motto was West Africa, music from Senegal,

South Africa and Mali has also been strongly favored over the years. Since the first festival in 1989, Senegal has been represented by 41 artists, South Africa by 32 artists and Mali by 23 artists, significantly outpacing the other countries of Africa or the African diaspora with the only exception being "Afro-German" artists, with 36 of them having performed at the festival.

It is worth noting that a few particular artists lead the statistics, but some of them are the lonesome representatives of their country. For Senegal, it is Youssou N'Dour with a total of six performances; for Mali, Habib Koité & Bamada have seven, while Salif Keita has six and Fatoumata Diawara has five appearances at the festival. Lokua Kanza was one of the few artists from Congo but has had a record-breaking number of nine performances there, and Manu Dibango from Cameroon has had seven performances at the Africa Festival. These statistics underscore the festival's affiliation with particular regions and/or artists and world music's exclusive praxis compared to the heavily advertised inclusiveness. This year, well-known acts from those particular countries and within the world music scene performed, including Salif Keita, Faada Freddy, Sara Tavares and Fatoumata Diawara.

Similar to WOMAD, there were a number of younger and more hybrid artists such as Tibau Tavares Feat. Pupkulies & Rebecca, Inna Modja and Sista Fa. Also, some lesser known artists within the market could be heard, like Elida Almeida and notably musicians playing West African music on non-amplified drums on the stage for traditional music. They seemed not to hold a position within the world music market but merely gathered for the Africa Festival in that formation and were accompanied by a similarly unknown Senegalese kora player, Saliou Cissoko. All in all, there were minor differences in their approaches, with WOMAD providing a more easily digestible experience and the Africa Festival allowing more open spaces for the visitors themselves. Apart from that, both festivals represented similar musical experiences and attitudes towards something presented as African music and world music.

Five signifiers of world music

Now I want to have a more detailed look at particular observations and musical acts. While trying to make sense of the data collected at the festival site and in the interviews, it became apparent that there were particular aspects

which were pivotal about the genre of world music as it was experienced at the festivals. Inspired by ethnomusicological literature (Taylor 2004: 66; Guilbault 1996), I have made an attempt to interpret my ethnographic data in a certain way. A number of aspects were found to be especially noteworthy within my ethnographic notes as well as the interview statements. Following that, five parameters were found to be significant for the music to be perceived as "world music". I refer to them as the five "signifiers of world music" and they are by no means exhaustive. After a short introduction to these "signifiers", they will be presented in more detail.

The first signifier addresses musical exoticism, while the second describes the similar need for differences and exceptionalism in visual appearance. The third signifier relates to a visible happiness and devotion of the musicians, and the fourth addresses the idea of music as a universal language. The fifth and last of the signifiers calls attention to the political side of the music, which inherently or explicitly is present for most of world music and musicians.

The first signifier

The first signifier is related to what the festivals seemed to be trying to communicate at every musical encounter: the unfamiliarity, exoticism and exceptionality of the musical instruments, sounds and rhythms. This seemed often to be related to a particular country, ethnicity, musical tradition, religion or minority—putting it in a simplified way, anything emphasizing a difference between the self (of the audience) and a perceived authentic "other" (of the musicians). At WOMAD, this was particularly apparent at the performance of the Zhou Family Band, which played on noisy and tinny instruments, cymbals, a plain drum, mouth-blown pipes (sheng) and trumpets. Also, King Ayisoba's performance could be strongly connected to this signifier, being played on rather simple and exotic-looking percussion instruments (udu, djembe, talking drum) and a single-stringed lute (kologo) accompanied by a rough singing voice. Another example from WOMAD was Parvathy Baul and Somjit Dasgupta, who used a plain small drum (duggi) and a stringed percussion instrument (ektara) as well as trance-like vocals, which was accompanied by the explicitly announced "ancient instrument", the sursingar.

At the Africa Festival, this signifier was equally represented at most concerts and especially by the drummers on the traditional stage, performing on traditional, acoustic percussion instruments (djembé, dundun, bells, rattles, balafon) and the camping site musicians playing on similar drums as well as on a pleasant-sounding multi-string instrument (kora). In those examples, the signifier of unfamiliar and exotic music, sounds and rhythms was especially apparent, but the insistence on those parameters was inherently existent throughout most performances. From the interviewees' statements, this signifier represents one if not the major aspect of their interest in world music and their attendance of the festivals, as Susanne explained:

> I really prefer the drummers, the percussionists. They are simply…I can stay there for hours. […] those [with the] real drums, without any electronic devices. For me, that's it.

Another interviewee, Holger, described it like this:

> The rhythms are simply so beautiful. It's not the standard 4/4 time, like we Europeans are used to. But rather things like 12/8 or something like…That is what I really like.

The second signifier

The second signifier that was found to be pivotal refers to the appearance and look of the musicians. In order to be credible as a world musician, it seemed to be crucial to share the ethnicity associated with the music, such as looking African for "African music", looking Asian for "Asian music" or European for "European music". That could refer to the color of the skin or the hair, the stature of the body, the characteristics of the face or any other recognizable ethnic difference. In short, they had to be "coming from the right country" (Schippers 2010: 48) to be perceived as authentic world musicians. Traditional dress, visual accessories and the behavior on stage were also important.

Here again, the performance of King Ayisoba was noteworthy as the musicians appeared wearing furs and colorful dresses and danced wildly, spreading a sense of authenticity and tradition. Other examples were Junun feat. Shye Ben Ztur and the Rajastan Express, Parvathy Baul and

Somjit Dasgupta or Goat (WOMAD) and Fatoumata Diawara and the musicians at the traditional stage (Africa Festival). While Junun wore dresses of plain white linen, Parvathy Baul and Somjit Dasgupta donned somehow sublime attire and the members of Goat wore elaborate, colorful costumes and masks. While it might have been their usual performance clothing for some members of Junun as well as Parvathy Baul, Goat was explicitly playing with this signifier by exaggerating it. Being a band from Sweden, their clothing, masks and appearance would rather suggest that they were from some "exotic" place—or, if not that, they at least met the desire for this kind of appearance. In my interviews, the appearance of the musicians seemed to be a crucial aspect for the interviewees to perceive the music as world music or simply drew attention to a perceived difference in the musicians' looks from what they were used to in other music genres.

The third signifier

The third signifier that seemed to be important throughout the festival experience was the devotion and visible happiness of the musicians. In literature, this phenomenon is frequently described in connection to world music, in extreme form referring to a "romanticization and exoticization [… of the musicians] as happy, premodern children." (Taylor 2015: 217) This signifier was central to the overall atmosphere of the festivals being celebratory and positive throughout, and it almost felt like an obligation to adopt that attitude and visibly express it. Apart from the musical aspects, the overall atmosphere was strongly shaped by a holistic perception of the various foods, drinks and market stalls visually shaping the festival site as well as the different flavors they promised.

Particularly at WOMAD, the atmosphere was reflected in the audience's colorful dresses, glitter makeup or flashy accessories as well as the thunderous rounds of applause after concerts, which, however, made the impression of being almost compulsory and forced. All this was intensified by the musicians' expressions. One striking performance reflecting this was King Gurcharan Mall and the Dhol Blasters (WOMAD). During their performance, which was strongly dominated by celebrative gestures, sounds and screams, they repeatedly attempted to encourage the audience: "All the happy people, put your hands uuup!!" Another example was Fatoumata Diawara's perfor-

mance (Africa Festival), where her own devotion to the music as well as the relationship with the audience was a frequent topic in her announcements in between the songs:

> Are you ok? Are you feeling good? I wanna show you some African step. Are you gonna try the African step? […] Are you feeling the rhythm? Are you feeling [it] like a heartbeat? We get the music inside. […] Now I know that you can feel this music! We gonna try to dance all at the same time, one time… because we are all one.

Furthermore, the performances of the drummers at the traditional stage (Africa Festival) similarly enforced this signifier which people from the audience regularly affirmed to their neighbors. After one performance, a woman next to me told her friend excitedly: "Wild, wild…that was wild!" The drummers were playing very physically on non-amplified drums and were also dancing in front of the audience, whose cheering increased in step with the perceived devotion of the dancers.

In general, various forms of obligatory happiness and devotion could be found in most places and expressions, musical or non-musical, at both festivals. In my interviews, almost all interviewees in one way or another referred to this signifier of the general visible happiness of the musicians or their physical devotion and positivity, which they firmly distinguished from Western pop musicians. For instance, my interviewee Anna was impressed by the drummers at the traditional stage (Africa Festival): "Even though in their countries they are not very well…they show so much energy here. They seem simply so happy also about the smaller things, like the drumming here. There is so much happiness in it, they live it like this."

The fourth signifier

The fourth signifier that seemed to be ubiquitously present was the idea of music as a universal language, building on the belief that no matter what language is sung or how far the music has travelled, if it is an authentic expression, it would be understood and equally enjoyed. It is a widespread assumption, which also used to be supported by ethnomusicologists, and while they mostly have abandoned or at least adjusted it, in commercial music pro-

motion it is still a very popular narrative (Campbell 1997: 32-39). Peter Gabriel (the founder of WOMAD) precisely describes this signifier which echoes many of my interviewees' descriptions:

> Senegalese […] singing […] has an intensely spiritual feeling […] It doesn't matter to me that I don't understand all the words of a song. The voice is such a powerful means of communication, and it's so direct, it can transmit a feeling without having recourse to words (Gabriel cited in Barrett 1996: 242).

While it is difficult to prove or disprove the statement, it seems to be important as a constituting signifier of world music.

This signifier incorporates the paradox that world music is desired as unfamiliar, exotic, unknown music on one hand (the first signifier), but on the other hand, the newly found, exotic music is expected to be comprehensible without too much effort. World music, therefore, should be unfamiliar and new but at the same time not demanding, which again enforces notions of a primitive, predictable "other". Preferably it should be "not too much old style, not too much crossover: what some would call easy listening." (Hutnyk 1998: 403)

From my ethnographic observation, this was underlined by the fact that the musicians were singing in a large variety of languages which most visitors very likely could not understand but seemed to especially enjoy. My interviewee Holger put it like this:

> African music…even though I do not understand it, I like the language very much! When they speak real African, you, or at least I, cannot understand a single word. But it does not bother me, because the music, the rhythms are simply so beautiful.

Regarding the music, it was noteworthy that neither at the Africa Festival nor at WOMAD were there musicians whose music could be called "hard to listen to". Even the most unfamiliar music was made up of relatively pleasant sounds which would quite easily fit into anyone's taste who was socialized in Western countries today.

Only a few musicians were challenging this, for instance Parvathy Baul and Somjit Dasgupta, the Zhou Family Band or the Tanzania Albinism Collective. Notably, those musicians had entertaining aspects in their performances, making it more accessible, with the Zhou Family Band having an

entertaining jester-like show, the Tanzania Albinism Collective telling their stories in between songs or Parvathy Baul dancing in a trance-inducing manner with her knee-long hair waving around her body. Most of the musicians featured at the festivals, however, represented the assumption quite well that music would be universally understandable.

From my interviewees' statements, this signifier was regularly affirmed referring to the border-crossing, transnational abilities of music being understood "anywhere". As often as they described it as unusual and different from pop music, they pointed out how effortless the music was to understand and how groovy, danceable and pleasing it was. Emily put it this way:

> In Molly's bar [one of the stages] they had a really good…group, but they weren't pop music! […] Music has to give you something. It has to either…a nice tranquil piece that [is] relaxing or that you want to move [to]. I can't sit and listen to really good beat music…I can't sit! You gotta move, even if you're sitting. You gotta move. So, that's good music. As long as it has a good beat a good sound and it's melodic…put all that together, that's what you look for!

The fifth signifier

The fifth signifier of world music can be described as the music's involvement with a certain degree of political engagement. This appeared in different ways. Both festivals had political organizations spreading information about world problems or asking for donations such as Amnesty International, Free Tibet initiatives and Médecins Sans Frontières. At both festivals, they were found at fixed places, where several organizations presented themselves. At WOMAD, there was a section at the main festival site for the larger and more professional organizations such as Amnesty International and spots around different places for others like Free Tibet initiatives. At the Africa Festival, those organizations were bundled in a tent ("bamboo hall") with Médecins Sans Frontières represented in front of the tent.

Apart from these formal political associations, there were also other engagements of these kinds. Several musicians held announcements during their performances about problems in their country or general issues, such as Fatoumata Diawara (Africa Festival) about the consequences of war in Africa and in the world or Sista Fa (Africa Festival) about the circumcision

of women in Senegal. Other artists even incorporated that signifier in their identity as musicians, such as the Khmer Rouge Survivors or the Tanzania Albinism Collective (both at WOMAD). Rather than purely musical aspects, it was their background stories that seemed a main reason for them to be able to perform at the world music festival.

For both, it was the successful music producer Ian Brennan who gathered them and formed the bands for the record. In the case of the Khmer Rouge Survivors, it is the history of genocide through the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia that constitutes the narrative of the band's identity. In the case of the Tanzania Albinism Collective, it is the severe persecution of people with albinism in Africa that creates the narrative allowing them to release a record and appear on stage. No matter if it was appropriate in the particular cases, these examples constitute extremes of political affiliation in world music.

While it was an aspect found throughout the festival, it would be a reach to call it a political festival or to refer to world music as politically engaged music. However consistent this signifier was, it was equally superficial and awoke the impression of only seldomly providing significant information or leading to any further engagement. What generally could be seen as desirable for a musical scene, again seemed for world music to be obligatory and represented a constituting genre signifier. From the interview statements, this signifier was seldom directly covered but after further inquiry turned out to be very important for the interviewees' attraction to the world music genre in general and, in particular, the tangible representation of it through the music festival. Derek underlined it in the following way: "Well, we should have campaigns to make people aware of negative things. I think so. There is a refugee tent, I think it is to raise awareness and [it is] very, very important…yeah." Or as Melinda told me: "If people are coming from an oppressive regime, performing…then it's a good thing. People should be made aware of things…rather than just eat the food."

Experiencing world music festivals

So far, the collected data has been used to delineate experiences of world music from the ethnographer's and the visitors' perspectives. Five "signifiers" have been described which seem to constitute the genre of "world music". In

that sense, the exceptionality and exoticism of instruments, rhythms and musical characteristics were found crucial for the music to be perceived as world music. Similarly, the appearance of the musicians, be it their ethnicity, their dress or their costumes, was found important. Going on, the devoted musical performance and explicit expression of happiness was found to be central in many musicians' performances and the latter, too, for the behavior of the audience. The idea of music being a universal language that could be understood across languages and borders constituted the fourth signifier. Finally, as some examples outlined, a certain political affiliation of the musicians or the festival was found to be important.

Taking these findings and relating them to the two narratives described above could easily lead to the interpretation of the festivals as opportunities to sell the "difference" of musicians, instruments, sounds, appearances and behaviors to a desiring audience. However, this would not adequately suit or depict the experiences. While the signifiers can be seen as constitutional for the genre of world music, the interview statements suggested further ways of interpreting them. Most of the interviewees had more complex ideas and more careful understandings of world music and the people involved than the descriptions and short quotes in the signifiers section suggest. Their statements suggested more diverse interpretations of the data. For instance, nearly all the interviewees were very curious and open-minded towards unfamiliar musical instruments, styles, rhythms and unknown, traditional ways of dressing and appearing on stage. Also, they did enjoy the music and the musicians showing devotion and spreading happiness among them, which they might not have in the course of their everyday lives. While not knowing many of the languages being sung and possibly also not knowing the musical styles, they still kept listening and strengthened the idea that music somehow can cross borders of language and culture. And even though their interest in political questions appeared not to be very profound, the topics nonetheless were given a certain visibility, which they otherwise would not have received at all. Throughout most of my conversations with them, the interviewees reflected strong interest in the musicians' lives, their musical heritage, their stories and the struggles they might have.

Taking the festival visitors' holistic attitudes towards world music from my interviews into account, the ways in which world music was experienced go way beyond the two narratives outlined above. Instead of simply perceiving and reproducing the ideas of world music that were presented to them

at the festivals, the visitors seemed to play a crucial role in shaping how they experienced world music. The ways of experiencing seemed to have proceeded in the way of "transform[ing] sensibilities and creat[ing] new ones, and not only to reproduce an existing order." (Hennion 2005: 132) It is the ability of the music listener to actively shape and create meanings of his or her experience of world music. These cannot be simply located at particular places, performances or in phenomena at the festival sites, from representations in media or from academic narratives, but have to be found out in interaction with the visitors themselves—for instance, by interviewing them. Therefore, as a conclusion and appeal for further research, world music festivals seem to present a musical genre that can be condensed into five signifiers which, however, are experienced in many different ways. Finding out the ways in which this happens in detail and describing the precise roles the visitors play in perceiving, transforming and shaping the genre of world music are suggestions for further research.

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