

The construction of national musical identities by Greek Cypriot primary school children – implications for the Cyprus music education system

Avra Pieridou-Skoutella

Arte Music Academy, Leonidou 34-36, 1097, Nicosia, Cyprus

avraps@spidernet.com.cy

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with Greek Cypriot elementary school children in urban and rural areas of the Republic of Cyprus, the author describes and analyses the ways in which national musical identity is constructed in and out of school in connection with Cypriot traditional music. Findings reveal the development of fluid and often insecure, ambiguous and contradictory national musical identities as a result of the ideological messages children receive from their musical enculturation contexts. In addition public music education not only fails to assist pupils to become familiar with the tradition's inherent meanings and processes of creation and performance, but enhances children's contradictory ideological understanding and construction of an ambiguous national musical identity.

Introduction

Kipros (9, urban): Are you talking about Cypriot songs? I listen to them on the radio on Sunday morning. There's a programme about rural life in Cyprus. You know these are *chorkátika* [village] songs. I don't like them. You find them only in villages, not in Nicosia. Besides we are Greek but we live in Cyprus. Sometimes I sing them when I'm alone in my room.

Andreas (11, rural): I don't understand why people in the city make fun of Cypriot music. I think these songs are serious songs. They are our songs. All radios play modern songs and the Cypriot song has disappeared. Everybody now wants to be European and modern, and they forget their culture. Only in school do we sing a couple of Cypriot songs. We should keep our music. It's our identity.

These words reveal some of the particularities of Greek Cypriot children's construction of musical identity. Observing them and talking to them helped me to understand a little better how they constructed their musical identity in childhood.

This article explores the ways in which Greek Cypriot children construct their national musical identities in relation to ethnic identities, global processes and local empowerment. Globalisation¹ and Westernisation² are frequently used terms in studying local cultures, musical practices and identities. Such processes appear even more complex when studying cultures and musical identities on the periphery of Europe, particularly on the Mediterranean rim, since the Western and non-Western dichotomy is prevalent there

in relation to people's ethnic and cultural identities (Cassia, 2000) and their efforts to modernise (Nettl, 1985; King, 1995).

These binary oppositions between West–East and modern–traditional are grounded within the Greek Cypriot society of the Republic of Cyprus. Argyrou (1996) and Pieridou (2006) argue that Greek Cypriots construct a European, 'westernised' cultural identity, not only for showing off to foreigners but also to distinguish between themselves in terms of rural and urban contexts and low versus high social class. The children's words quoted above already introduce the reader to this issue. Papageorgiou (1997) argues that this West–East antithesis reflects a deeper social division between the educated and more affluent elite and the poorer working classes: an antithesis that is related to the elite's Western tastes and the traditional culture of the masses.

The literature in ethnomusicology and the sociology of music (Bohman, 1993; Frith, 1996; Green, 1988; Bennett, 2000; Dawe, 2000, 2003) has always considered music as a key to identity construction and folk music has always been associated with national identities (Baily, 1994; Stokes, 1994). In this article the concept of 'musical national identity' refers to a general process by which children, individually and in groups, include Cypriot traditional music in their musical preferences, and associate their musical practices with it (Pieridou, 2006). 'Cypriot traditional music' refers to the distinctive vocal and instrumental music, and the folk dance tradition (Christodoulou & Ioannides, 1987; Anoyianakis, 1988) that has been developed aurally on the island through the centuries. A distinctive feature of this culture's 'Cypriot-ness' is the use of the Cypriot dialect in the lyrics.

The article refers to a particular historical moment as Cyprus finally 'arrives' at its destination in European modernity and presents an original contribution to the construction and articulation of contemporary Cypriot national musical identity in relation to the symbolic manipulation of urban and rural contexts in Cyprus. It hopes to contribute to the emerging field of international research into musical identity and childhood. Musical identity construction in childhood has enormous potential in illuminating our understanding of the construction of social and personal musical identities during the early stages of the lifecycle which formal music education aims to influence and develop. In addition the construction of a patriotic/national education has been a prime concern for the Cypriot public education system because of the country's political problem. Thus this paper considers the musical identities children bring to the formal space of the classroom which impact upon the music lesson. The findings might be valuable for Cypriot policy makers, curriculum designers and music educators in evaluating their present practices, redefining the national musical identity of the Cypriot music education system and eventually designing and implementing a more relevant and appropriate music education for Greek-Cypriot children.

In this paper, reference will be made to CD examples which will appear in a later issue of the journal.

First it is necessary to situate the study in the Cypriot context.

Cyprus context

Cyprus is situated at the periphery of Europe at the South Eastern fault line of the Mediterranean Sea. The country has a strong sense of national and historical culture as a

result of its colonial past. Its history, particularly from the end of the period of the Ottoman conquest of the island (1571–1878) and the beginnings of British colonisation (1878–1960) is especially pertinent to current debates concerning cultural and musical identity construction. Cyprus, although marginalised as a colony, has shared with mainland Greece an ideology of racial supremacy due to its mutually assumed common ancestry and ancient past (Argyrou, 1996). Greek Cypriots have always thought of themselves as descendants of the ancient Greeks, and the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, along with the educated elite, has fervently supported Greek nationalism on the island. The recent history of the island has added more complexity to questions of identity³: constitutional problems and inter-communal conflict; a coup; and a Turkish invasion (1974) and occupation of 37% of the country's territory. Since then the two major ethnic communities living in Cyprus – the Greek Cypriot majority (80%) and the Turkish Cypriot minority (18%) – have lived apart. Finally, but equally important, the expansion of tourism and the rapid economic progress of the country, and its recent accession to the European Community have all facilitated global processes.

The Republic of Cyprus, although it is a very old country, is a very new state (Independence date 1960). Music is seen as a field of symbolic activity, which is highly important to newly established nation states (Stokes, 1994) and a '*potent* symbol of identity' (Baily, 1994: 48) for the construction and maintenance of cultural and national identities. One of the country's prime concerns has been to construct a Westernised and European cultural and musical identity. Thus Western classical music has been considered to be the foremost high-cultural element (Gellner, 1994), which is used by the state and the elite of Cyprus to articulate their identities; and it is foundational for the public music education system.

Greek Cypriot tradition is usually brought to the foreground for purposes of national resistance and the construction of local cultural identity. Traditions enhance the 'quality of life' of particular places, and make them attractive locations for investment (Morley & Robins, 1996), so they have been important factors for the development of tourism as a prime industry in Cyprus (Kirshenblatt-Ginbelt, 1995). The importance that Europe attributes to tradition enhances its significance for Cypriots, because the West, and Europe in particular, have been the source of legitimacy for Cypriot modernity (Argyrou, 1996), as opposed to the unwanted oriental 'other'. Whilst this symbolic importance is not uncommon in societies situated at the periphery of Europe (Herzfeld, 1982/1986; Robins, 1996; Cassia, 2000), Cyprus expresses these Eurocentric ideologies in a much stronger manner than elsewhere due to its political problem with Turkey.

Method

This study adopts the paradigm that points to the study of childhood as a culturally situated phenomenon in which children as competent social actors actively participate in the construction of their cultural worlds (James & Prout, 1990/1997; Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998). This paradigm emphasises children's musical identities from their own point of view, their words and their musical behaviours (Glover, 1990; Young, 1995). It situates children's localised lives within the larger social and cultural structures and meanings in which they are embedded, and attempts to detail the ways children try to interpret the contradictory

and complex musical messages they receive while transforming new ones. This paper, whilst accepting a geographically defined locality (Malm & Wallis, 1992), adopts the idea of local as 'a multiply articulated place' (Bennett, 2000: 64), which presents people with a range of different identities that they can choose from. This in turn emphasises people's musical behaviours (Stokes, 1994) and music's personally and socially meaningful nature (Cohen, 1994, 1998).

An ethnographic framework has been selected, deriving from ethnomusicological research and theorisation (Blacking, 1967, 1973; Kisliuk, 1997; Rice, 1997; Titon, 1997), which employs description and interpretation as means for capturing the construction of musical identities. This article argues for more ethnographic work in the context of Cypriot music education which will consider the local particularities. This will enable local 'voices' (Bakhtin, 1981) to rise and curriculum designers and music educators to develop and apply more contextually relevant and locally appropriate music and music education practices. The prime methodological tools for this study were: (a) unobtrusive non-participant observation in settings where children's national musical identities acquire significance, and where they determine and control their own participation in the musical process, such as the school classroom and yard, afternoon children's club, neighbourhood parks; and (b) tape-recorded in-depth interviews and discussions (Van Manen, 1990) with semi-structured and unstructured questions, which 'aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live' (Geertz, 1973). The fieldwork was carried out in two sites: an urban one in the city of Nicosia, and a rural one in the area of 'Red Villages' on the east coast of the island, during 2003 and the first half of 2004. The sample consisted of 9–12-year-old children, with 26 children from the urban area, and 29 from the rural area.

One final qualification is necessary at this point. Though I mention where relevant the relation of musical identity with variables such as gender, age and class, limitations of space prevent me from a full investigation of such issues in this article.

Findings

Contexts

Familial and societal events, media transmission and schooling represent a variety of influences on children's musical experience and understanding (Bakhtin, 1981). In general, rural enculturation processes and contexts facilitate Greek Cypriot children's understanding of some elements of Cypriot traditional music. Thus these children cherish the tradition in intimate social contexts and tourist events, and often try to reproduce it with a close adult or friend.

Dhafni (11, rural): We have the tapes of Pelagia [female traditional singer]. We bought them from *panairka* [local religious feasts] for my mother, but I also listen to this kind of music. My parents like listening to it. Sometimes we listen to it together and we sing.

Certain rural children reported familial music making during family gatherings for Sunday lunch, and on religious celebrations.

Anastasis (11, rural): On the night of *Sikoses*, (the night before Green Monday) we all went to my aunt's house. There we ate and then we the children went upstairs to play. The adults began singing and dancing. They had the tape player. We went downstairs to watch them. My uncle *tsiattízei* (makes local vocal improvisations) and he said one for everyone and my father tried to answer back. I remember some and when I'm alone or with my best friend I try to make my own and we send them on our mobiles.

Performances of Greek-Cypriot traditional music take place primarily in rural areas, in agricultural shows of folklore and tradition. Rural children attend such events where they often present staged performances. 'I like it when we learn the folk dances and then we go on stage and dance them in front of the tourists and our families and we show them our culture' (Maria, 11, rural). In addition, participation in rural weddings and religious celebrations provides experiences of the Cypriot musical tradition. However, as Pieridou (2006) found, due to global processes, imported Greek *laiko* musical culture (Dawe, 2003) has replaced most Cypriot traditional music in such social celebrations, thus Cypriot tradition is only used in certain parts of the wedding to accentuate its 'Cypriot-ness'.

Most urban children could not adequately talk about experiencing the Cypriot tradition in rural weddings and tourist festivities. For example, Tasos (11, urban) said that: 'sometimes we go to village weddings. My father lets me go outside to play with my friends. We eat and we come back to Nicosia'.

We knew the groom so we went to his house. There was a *laoutáris* (lute player) and a *vkioláris* (violin player) and an old woman who was singing. My father later told me that these were *tsiattistá*. They were playing while they shaved the groom, changed his clothes. At the end his best men danced in front of him holding a pillow with some of his clothes. My father also told me that before this the players went to the bride's house and they played there for her preparation. Then we went to the church (Michalis, 11, urban).

Children refer to this as an exotic cultural element that lies outside their culture, and discuss it as a rediscovered local tradition rather than as an element of their everyday life (also see Cassia, 2000).

As the introductory quote shows, Cypriot traditional music is absent from children's listening, particularly in the urban site. This is due to Cyprus' dependence on imported popular music, and the absence of an indigenous music industry. Rural children discussed more experiences of Cypriot music on local radio stations, because these stations respond to the tastes of the Cypriot agricultural population, the promotion of Cypriot traditions for tourists, and local reactions to the threatening effects of tourism.

Dimitra (11, rural): Yes I know Cypriot songs, those by Pelayia. She sings *tsiattista* on Radio Greco every Saturday and Sunday. Every Sunday at noon, when we sit for lunch, we turn on the radio to listen to her.

Children tried to interpret this absence of Cypriot music on the media. Michalis (11, urban):

M: I don't think that there's such music as Cypriot music. On the radio we always hear Greek and foreign songs. You never hear songs of Cyprus.

A[Avra, interviewer]: Have you heard Cypriot songs?

M: I have heard a couple from our choir here at school, but these are the same all the time. I mean you listen to the radio in the car, at home and there isn't Cypriot music.

A: What is your opinion about this situation?

M: I think that radio stations should play Cyprus songs. I mean we are in Cyprus! (He opened his hands with surprise)

A: Would you listen to them?

M: Yes

A: Do you like them?

M: It depends on the song.

A: Do you consider the Greek songs on the radio as Cypriot?

M: No, because Cypriot songs are in Cypriot dialect. Cypriot dialect is different... it is a different thing to hear the Cyprus dialect and another thing to hear the Greek language. We are Cypriots. Shouldn't we hear Cypriot songs?

This child is very clear that Cyprus is constructed only by a Cypriot sound and dialect, and acknowledges a placeless national musical identity. Yiorghos (9, rural) discussed the effects of globalisation on local music in Cyprus:

Cypriot songs were mostly used by our ancestors. Now there aren't any singers in Cyprus, because each singer goes to Greece to make his CD and sing. Greece has more singers. So Greece brings her songs here to Cyprus, and gradually the Cypriot song is gone, and we don't hear it anymore because there's no one to develop it. Cypriots now don't have the desire to create and sing Cypriot songs. For example Anna Vissi [Cypriot pop star] is Cypriot. Why doesn't she sing Cypriot words in her songs? She went to Greece and she uses Greek music and words.

For the urban children school music experiences have provided the only, though inadequate, experiences of the Cypriot musical tradition. Sometimes at school they participated in musical performances.

Soula (10, urban): I don't know any Cypriot songs or instruments. I haven't seen any in school. We don't learn Cypriot songs in the music lessons; only in the choir for celebrations.

Thomas (9, urban): When we danced at the cultural event of the school we wore *vrákiēs* [traditional breeches] and traditional costumes. I saw them in the museum and our teacher showed us pictures of musical instruments. There is one like the plastic recorder we learn at school but it has a different name. I don't remember.

George (11, urban), a member of the school choir:

Often we use the lesson for choir preparations and we sing Cypriot songs; but we only sing the same songs over and over again. We sing them every time we have a public event.

The implementation of Cypriot public music education appears to be disconnected from local musical contexts, and children's school musical experiences appear superficial based on a few standardised songs and dances. Thus children consider this tradition only appropriate for showing off during national celebrations. Children did not mention school musical experiences with live performances of folk artists, nor were they able to discuss the context and meanings of the Cypriot songs that they heard in school.

On the contrary rural children discuss school musical experiences in more intimate ways. Pieridou (2006) reported instances when children were asked to make *tsiattista* to share with the rest of the class. Although this process was traditionally classified as a male task, presently several girls and women also appear involved due to family influences. During the music lessons they showed much enthusiasm for learning and performing Cypriot songs.

The alienation and rejection of Cypriot musical tradition

For urban children this tradition appears to be an element found outside of their everyday lives. Most urban children's exposure to traditional Cypriot music is limited so their understanding is not adequately informed.

Katerina (10, rural): There are songs that are 50 or 100 years old and our grandparents sing the same old songs. Why should we do the same today? There are so many songs! Everyday there's a new one!

Most of the children in both sites consider this music as old fashioned, and so unsuitable for the construction of their modern young musical identities. Children do not like the limited variety of Cypriot songs nor the incompatibility of the lyrics to their contemporary life.

Tasos (11, urban): Sometimes we could like the melody but the lyrics don't represent us. It is stupid for us to sing these lyrics.

Chrystalla (10, rural): When old people wore *vrákies* [breeches] they created a song about them. But if we sing this song about it today it is inappropriate because it doesn't have anything to do with our lives today . . . I like the song '*lpa sou*' ('I told you') because I can find meaning in my life today because it talks how a woman becomes beautiful and makes her hair. Sometimes I get upset when my brother sings to me this song as I comb my hair, because he means that it takes me too long to comb my hair.

Yiorgos (11, urban): The world today follows current fashion, which is popular music. The melody, rhythms and words of this music are very different from what we hear and sing today.

Children appeared unfamiliar with the musical components of this tradition while its sounds are perceived incompatible with their modern contemporary taste.

The paradoxical low status musical 'Other' in the construction of Cypriot identity

As the quotation at the beginning of the paper suggested, urban children construct a modern Western musical identity by distinguishing themselves from Cypriot culture and their compatriots in the rural parts of the country (Pieridou, 2006), who they referred to as '*khorkátes*', a common word which refers to villagers but actually denotes 'peasants' in both rural and urban areas (Loizou, 1975 in Argyrou, 1996). More specifically urban children consider Cypriot musical tradition as the music of uneducated and backward villagers.

Elina (9, urban): Cypriot songs are for peasant people who live in the villages and we want to be Europeans and modern . . . So we can't listen to this music.

Urban children experience this music during those instances when they cross the line to the 'other' side. Such circumstances facilitate their construction of boundaries against the 'inferior' musical 'Other'. However, the relation between rural and urban spaces is highly fluid since children from both sides regularly visit the other context, and most urban children's origins are from rural areas. Sometimes children admitted that they like certain musical pieces from these cultures but avoid showing it in front of their peers, keeping it for their private or familial musical practices.

Stéfani (11, urban): I like few Cypriot songs. But I sing them or listen to them when I'm in my room, or with my grandmother. With my friends, we don't listen to such music.

The same child during the group interview called these songs 'funny and *chorkatika* [peasant]' and rejected them. Urban children seem to be embarrassed about any involvement with the Cypriot musical tradition. They would often laugh with embarrassment, trying to hide their faces when during our conversation they had to admit that they knew a Cypriot song or dance. Very often such acknowledgements took place once they felt comfortable with me.

Litsa (11, urban): I hate it when teachers ask us to dance Cypriot dances. I feel so embarrassed. I liked when last Christmas we danced the Greek modern song 'Christmas'.

Most of the time urban children, particularly those of higher social class who articulate modern identities retain a distant, more 'civilised' and superior attitude, making fun of this culture. For example they would start singing a song or demonstrate a Cypriot traditional dance, and then burst into laughter. Others mocked the tradition by exaggerating the accent of Cypriot dialect, and then again they would all laugh. They would also make fun of their classmates when they participated in traditional school events. For example during one national anniversary urban 6th grade girls had to dance Cypriot dances. All of them confessed to me that their teacher 'insisted that we dance. And now all our friends will make fun of us'. Performing this tradition was obviously not a pleasant experience for them.

Regarding the use of Cypriot dialect in Cypriot songs, urban children argue that Greek is a better language than Cypriot, relating it to their national identity.

Stelios (10, urban): Greek is a much better language, it is more civilised. So, Greek songs are better than Cypriot songs. Greek is our language. We are Greeks.

Georgia (11, urban): We are Cypriots but our language is not good. It is better to use Greek . . . I guess we should say that we are Greek Cypriots. We come from the Greeks but we live in Cyprus.

Marios (10, urban), although admitting to be a Cypriot expresses the need to present a different 'better' self when conversing with outsiders:

In front of visitors and people from Greece we should use Greek language because we should show our good self. It is OK to sing and talk in Cypriot dialect among us.

Greek Cypriot children seem ethnically and linguistically insecure, and as a result their musical practices are significantly affected.

The contested Cypriot musical identity

How do rural children negotiate this cultural dichotomy that places their musical self in an inferior position? On the one hand, they have to negotiate this symbolic division of geographical space, which considers theirs to be a sign of lower cultural identity, deeply grounded within their local society's sense of a class divide (Pieridou, 2006). On the other hand, local traditions' persistence and the influence of tourism in the area reproduce their localised identities. Pieridou (2006) found that children's responses and behaviours point to three groupings: (a) in the first group children differentiate themselves from other co-villagers by thinking of themselves as members of the local modern high social class, and by favouring modern popular music, thereby acting in a similar manner to urban children; (b) the second group, which is the biggest, project a Westernised self in front of foreigners and often among themselves, and, despite their expression of local cultural embarrassment, celebrate local cultures in intimate social contexts; and (c) a small group that presents a stable local Cypriot cultural identity.

Children initially expressed concern about using Cypriot dialect, because they were deeply aware that this distinguished them from all other Greeks and from city people. This can be seen in a group interview in a school setting with María, Marighóula and Antri (11 years old):

Maria: Cypriot language is very different from Greek language. For example if we talk to you in our language you might not understand us because you come from Nicosia. For example if I use the word *prótsa* you might not know that it means *piroúni* (fork).

Marighoula: Yes and we cannot use this language in school or if a visitor comes to the Frenaros or to the school. We only use it when we talk with our families, our friends.

Antri: They call this language village language and the Cypriot songs village songs; maybe because in Nicosia or in Limassol they don't sing these songs – only in villages. Urban people make fun of the song '*I Vráka*' ('The breeches').

....

Marighoula: When I go to my grandmother and I listen to her songs and then I return home I keep singing them. And I say to myself why do I keep singing them when I don't

want to! I don't want to sing them. Nobody likes them! I hate it when Cypriot songs get stuck in my head and I keep singing them without being able to get rid of them.

This group of children feels very embarrassed in front of foreigners and in front of the 'modern' members of their community. Two modern and fashionable girls, Élena and Liza (11 years old) pointed out that:

... if you want to be modern then you listen with your friends to other musics. We don't want to be called villagers, so we can't hang out with girls who like Cypriot stuff.

These children usually come from families of the higher social class with university educated parents and they reproduce their family's ideological positions. However, several rural children tried to distance themselves from these cultural inequalities.

Yiórgos (9, rural): There's nothing called *chorkatika*. They belong to Cyprus, it's the Cypriot dialect and the Cypriot music. I mean what else could we call Cypriot? Greeks speaks their dialect we speak ours ... When I am in my room and I find a radio station with a Cypriot song and I like it then I listen to it. I don't change it'.

Anastasia (10, rural): Many people say that they aren't good songs but in my opinion they are good. I like them because they talk of the people and they have a meaning in them. And these songs are Cypriot songs, the songs of Cyprus, you understand them, they are not like English songs. And you connect more with them.

These children claimed that Cypriot culture is quite distinct from that of mainland Greece. They also express their understanding about 'being modern' in negotiation to their local self.

Dimitra (11, rural): It's good to be modern and develop and try new things but to the extent that yourself allows you to do such things. You shouldn't do things that are inappropriate for you and make you change, to be someone else. Then you will be fake. Others deny that they like these songs and they even refuse to listen to them because they might like them at the end. They like these *ksenóferta prámata* (foreign brought things) and *pézounto montérnoi* (pretending they are modern).

Marina (11, rural): We also try to be modern. I mean everybody is so we have to follow the trends, but I also like Cypriot songs and particularly 'I told you'. This song is fantastic; it is truly something else. I can't describe how I feel when I listen to it. It makes my heart feel differently. So I don't say that this is traditional and I don't want it.

Finally there are a few children such as Andreas (11, rural), who belongs to the other end of the continuum, and constructs a stable local Cypriot musical identity, resisting inferior labeling. These children usually belong to the lower social class. Their families articulate a more Cypriot identity, use Cypriot dialect extensively and are considered by the local community as 'amorphotoi' (uneducated).

Andreas: It isn't bad to come from a village. It is just that they want to act in European ways, and *appónountai* (become vainglorious). It isn't right to change our habits and traditions because we are in Europe. Because we are a small country this doesn't mean that we will change ourselves to follow the others. This isn't right.

...

Andreas: We should keep singing Cypriot songs. They are nice songs and more serious songs ... In the other songs singers act like crazy, wear funny clothes, they have nothing

to do with us, our culture and their lyrics are not serious like songs that refer to our lives.

A[Avra, interviewer]: Do you think that they have a place in our lives today?

Andreas: As far as I'm concerned yes they do. The rest of the class calls me and my friends *chorkates* [villagers] but I don't care.

Andreas danced the traditional male virtuosic *tatsiá* dance in the final school celebration, and appeared to be very proud of it. Andreas and Anastasis present the voice of Cypriot villagers who view modern global processes as inducing alienation and loss of identity.

Anastasis (11 years old): *Touútes oi mousikés* (these musics) are not bad things but some children like only them and nothing else like the people in the cities and they think that they become important people and make fun of our music... Actually they become nobody because they don't have their own music.

Certain urban children also construct contextual Cypriot musical identities. Thomas, for instance, is the protagonist in the Cypriot traditional play at school, and enjoys Greek and Cypriot *zeibékiko* dance which sets a strong prestigious affirmation of his masculinity. Stavroula and Christiana spent much time with their grandparents in the village and are also familiar with elements of this tradition.

I think they are good dances, they used to dance them in the old times. We shouldn't compare them with modern dances, they are different. It's our music.

Cypriot traditional music as a symbol of Cypriot culture

Due to nationalistic ideologies and the empowerment of local forces, all children during interviews in school settings, even those who considered this culture to have negative delineations either in the same interview or elsewhere, considered Cypriot music to be the music of Cyprus, and therefore part of the country's cultural heritage and tradition.

Soula (10, urban): I think that it is important to know these songs because they are the songs of our country and we must show our patriotism.

Kostantia (10, rural): It is important to know Cypriot songs and dances because in this way we honour our ancestors and all those singers who might now be dead.

These children have a romantic notion of tradition, a vague impression of the past.

George, Michalis, Kostantinos (11, urban):

George: Culture is our origins, our customs our language, our religion like the Greeks. Our ancestors created this music in the past and we must know it so that we don't forget our culture.

Michalis: By singing only foreign songs the Cypriot songs will be forgotten and this should not happen because then we might forget who we are.

Kostantinos: The Cypriot songs because they are old reveal our origins.

George: These songs are old fashioned but if we have to know them then we have to do it. If we forget them we forget our culture. We are obliged to know them.

Children are imbued with the notion that culture is situated in the past, that it has been handed down to them by their ancestors as their heritage. They felt a need to preserve the tradition from its possible disappearance due to the effect of global processes and the national threat.

Rural children express in a greater degree than urban children, the need to preserve the tradition and to show it to off to local and foreign tourists.

Andrea (10, rural): We must know these dances because when visitors come or other foreigners come to our village, to our country we must be able to show them our culture, otherwise they might think that we have no culture.

As a result, children's words very often present contradictory attitudes such as the case of Marighoula who later in the interview said:

It is good to have them because we can use them for events in our community, the church and everybody likes this. Some girls and boys wear traditional outfits and they dance and it's nice. I think they should exist because they are in Cypriot language and we are Cypriots and so we are the ones to sing these songs. Because if someone comes from abroad and we will not be able to sing these songs then he will think we don't like our culture and this is wrong.

Discussion and implications for music education

In the light of children's words, behaviours and attitudes, the present research can offer important insights into designing more effective music education practices.

The findings reveal the complex enculturation processes in which musical meanings are constantly shifting in different social contexts. Children do not accept these messages passively but actively negotiate with them in order to understand them. However, the contradiction of the messages, that children receive both in and out of school lead to the development of often insecure, ambiguous and contradictory national musical identities.

On the one hand, Greek Cypriot children express attitudes of Cypriot cultural inferiority and antipathy towards the inferior local Cypriot 'other'. Cassia's article (2000) on traditional music and modernity in Malta and other Mediterranean societies explains that traditional music in Cyprus has come to represent 'the savage within, a symbol of aboriginality that threatens official presentations of national culture and identity' (Cassia, 2000: 288). On the other hand, children's words point to the ways in which local musical culture is reproduced as heritage through processes of reservation and exhibition (Kirshenblatt-Ginblett, 1995). Blacking (1987) argues against the value of folkloric events, noting that 'staged 'folklore' has little in common with what it purports to represent ...' (1987: 133–4), and Connell and Gibson (2003) agree that such displays 'present simplified versions of nationhood and ethnicity' (p. 126). However, Stokes (1994: 15) explains that different kinds of musics, such as Arabian, African, Mediterranean and European, are defined and constructed in competitions, festivals, conferences and tourist promotions. Greek Cypriot children have learnt to value and reproduce aspects of tradition and Cypriot identity through such events.

The findings also suggest that Greek Cypriot children appear socially, linguistically and ethnically insecure (Karoulla-Vrikkis, 1991; Spyrou 2001). Spyrou (2001) writes about ethnicity's fluidity and situational character, and suggests that Greek-Cypriot ethnic/national

identities are multiple, highly fluid and situational. Consequently children can be more or less Cypriot or Greek in terms of their musical preferences and attitudes. Pieridou (2006) found that Greek Cypriot children's musical identities are closely interrelated with their national identities, and that their musical preferences are very often indicative and constitutive of their fluid national identity. In the case of Cyprus, ethnic identity and national territorial identity have been historically united and thus national identity and subjective cultural identity cannot be distinguished (De Vos, 1995: 20). Consequently children appear ambivalent about their musical selections in and out of school.

Such circumstances have serious implications for including this musical tradition which usually serves the purpose of national resistance in musical teaching. However, although children in both sites construct this European and western musical front to show to foreigners and to distinguish themselves among themselves, rural children are more familiar with the tradition's inherent meanings. Thus they are more positive towards it (Green, 1988, 1999), and their school musical experiences are self-affirmatory. Most urban children, however, have access only to ideological voices, and consequently hold negative delineations of traditional music, and are therefore aggravated by its inherent meanings. Thus their musical experiences are alienated and embarrassed, which in turn mitigates against them becoming sufficiently familiar with the inherent meanings of traditional music. Such circumstances override the best intentions of their teachers. As a result teaching this tradition fails to provide the students with celebratory musical experiences and thus cultivate their musical understanding.

Public music education adds ambiguity and contradiction to this picture. For example, the Cyprus official curriculum requires that the students should:

Become familiar with our national musical tradition [folk song, Byzantine chant], cultivate the respect and love towards it, recognise its role and presence in contemporary times as well as learn to preserve and disseminate (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1996: 195)

This aim implicitly considers that the Greek tradition is common to Greece and Cyprus. Its vague wording does not specify which tradition is 'our tradition', or which folk songs should be included in the curriculum.

In addition, the textbooks, which are expected to represent the aims of Cyprus' official curriculum, do not provide the content or the processes by which the above aim can be accomplished. Instead they provide isolated instances of decontextualised, simplified versions of Cypriot folk songs with no connections to their social, cultural contexts and musical meanings. During their pre-primary and first year primary school music education, children do not experience any Cypriot traditional children's songs, chants or lullabies. Although the textbooks provide several examples of Greek folk songs, these are also standardised decontextual versions offered to the students primarily through singing or recorder playing. By repeating and standardising both traditions, Cypriot formal music education avoids cultural diversity and differentiation, implicitly sending the message that Hellenism is a unified cultural and national entity.⁴ As a result the provided teaching material and methodology for both traditions fail to provide the students with a deep understanding of the diversity of music making and performing within these traditions. Consequently Cypriot public music education does not help pupils to become familiar with

the Cypriot tradition's inherent meanings and processes of creation and development, but instead fuels children's contradictory ideological understanding. Thus it does not enhance a stable national musical identity.

Conclusion

This article has explored children's expressions, behaviours and attitudes towards Cypriot traditional music, and has problematised the Cypriot public music education system with respect to contemporary Cypriot musical identity. There is an urgent need for the public music education system to redefine Cypriot national identity in the light of contemporary national, political, cultural and social realities. More research is needed regarding children's musical development in relation to the Cypriot musical tradition, and specifically ethnomusicological research into the tradition and development of appropriate teaching material to support teaching Cypriot and Greek musical traditions. Both policy makers and teachers need to reconsider and evaluate their current practices, redefine and reconstruct national musical identities, and develop efficient practices that are more locally connected and more likely to lead to musical understanding and celebratory musical experiences of the Cypriot musical tradition in the school context.

Notes

- 1 Literature concerning globalisation (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Giddens, 1990; Hall, 1992; Negus, 1996; Robins, 1996; Tomlinson, 1996) discusses complex interconnections between global and local forces, and argues that globalising forces are in tension with 'local' assertions of cultural identity.
- 2 Westernisation refers to the export of Western commodities, values, priorities and ways of life (Morley & Robins, 1995) from the West to the non-West.
- 3 In English the term 'ethnic group' refers to an entity that might be part of a nation, so several ethnic groups may comprise a nation. In Greek the word 'ethnic' means 'national', whilst the word 'ethnos' implies both ethnic group and nation. Thus 'ethnikí taftótita' (ethnic identity) refers to national identity. Ethnic identity in Cyprus is a highly contested space between two ideological sides, the nationalist Helleno-centric side and the Cyprio-centric one, leading to multiple constructions of national identities which are also influenced by social class and political affiliation (Spyrou 2001). Official state ideology, although acknowledging the political independence of Cyprus, insists on the Greek-ness of Greek Cypriots as members of the Greek nation.
- 4 At the end of all national celebrations the children, together with their teachers, sing the Greek national anthem. This is a time when all children are asked to stand in attention and honour the homeland and the people who died for it. Greece and Cyprus share the same national anthem.

References

- ANOYIANAKIS, F. (1988) *Music in Cyprus – Popular Music*. Nafplion, Greece: Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, Ministry of Culture and Science.
- ARGYROU, V. (1996) *Tradition and Modernity in the Mediterranean. The Wedding as a Symbolic Struggle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- BAILY, J. (1994) 'The role of music in the creation of an Afghan national identity, 1923–1973', in M. Stokes (Ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music. The Musical Construction of a Place* (pp. 45–60). Oxford: Berg.
- BAKHTIN, M. (1981) 'Discourse in the novel', in M. Holquist (Ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (pp. 259–422). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- BENNETT, A. (2000) *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place*. New York: Palgrave.
- BLACKING, J. (1967) *Venda Children's Songs*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- BLACKING, J. (1973) *How Musical is Man?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- BLACKING, J. (1987) *A Commonsense View of All Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BOHLMAN, P. V. (1993) 'Of Yekkes and Chamber Music in Israel: Ethnomusicological meaning in Western Music History', in S. Blum, P. V. Bohlman & D. M. Neuman (Eds.), *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History* (pp. 254–67). Champagne: University of Illinois Press.
- CASSIA, P. S. (2000) 'Eroticising discoveries and extraordinary experience: "traditional" music, modernity, and nostalgia in Malta and other Mediterranean societies', *Ethnomusicology*, **44** (2), 281–301.
- CHRISTODOULOU, M. & IOANNIDES, C. (1987) *Cypriot Folk Songs*. Nicosia: Zavallis Press.
- COHEN, S. (1994) 'Identity, Place and the "Liverpool Sound"', in M. Stokes (Ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music. The Musical Construction of a Place* (pp. 117–34). Oxford: Berg.
- COHEN, S. (1998) 'Sounding out the city: music and the sensuous production of place', in A. Leyshon, D. Matless & G. Revill (Eds.), *The place of music* (pp. 269–90). New York: Guildford Press.
- CONNELL, J. & GIBSON, C. (2003) *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place*. London: Routledge.
- DAWE, K. (2000) 'Roots music in the global village: Cretan ways of dealing with the world at large', *The World of Music*, **42** (3), 47–66.
- DAWE, K. (2003) 'Between East and West: Contemporary grooves in Greek popular music (c. 1990–2000)', in G. Plastino (Ed.), *Mediterranean Mosaics. Popular Music and Global Sounds* (pp. 221–40). New York: Routledge.
- DE VOS, G. (1995) 'Concepts of ethnic identity', in G. De Vos & L. Romanucci-Ross (Eds.), *Ethnic Identity*. London: Sage, AltaMira Press.
- FRITH, S. (1996) 'Music and Identity', in S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (pp. 108–27). London: Sage Publications.
- GEERTZ, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (pp. 3–30). New York: Basic Books.
- GELLNER, E. (1994) *Encounters with Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- GIDDENS, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- GLOVER, J. (1990) 'Understanding children's musical understanding', *British Journal of Music Education*, **7** (3), 257–62.
- GREEN, L. (1988) *Music on Deaf Ears*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- GREEN, L. (1999) 'Research in the sociology of music education: some introductory concepts', *Music Education Research*, **1** (2), 159–69.
- HALL, S. (1992) 'The question of cultural identity', in S. Hall, D. Held & T. McGrew (Eds.), *Modernity and its Futures* (pp. 273–326). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- HARGREAVES, D. J., MIELL, D. & MACDONALD, R. A. R. (2001) 'What are musical identities, and why are they important?', in D. J. Hargreaves, D. Miell & R. A. R. MacDonald (Eds.), *Musical Identities* (pp. 1–20). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- HERZFELD, M. (1982, 1986) *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece*. New York: Pella.
- HUTCHBY, I. & MORAN-ELLIS, J. (1998) 'Situating children's Social Competence', in I. Hutchby & J. Moran-Ellis (Eds.), *Children and Social Competence* (pp. 7–26). London: Falmer Press.
- JAMES, A. & PROUT, A. (1990/1997) 'A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems', in A. James & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* (pp. 7–33). London: Falmer Press.

- KAROULLA-VRIKKIS, D. (1991) 'The language of the Greek Cypriots today: a revelation of an identity crisis?', *The Cyprus Review*, **3** (1), 42–58.
- KING, A. (1995) 'The times and spaces of modernity (or who needs postmodernism?)' in M. Featherstone, S. Lash & R. Robertson (Eds.), *Global Modernities* (pp. 108–123). London: Sage Publications.
- KIRSHENBLATT-GINBELT, B. (1995) 'Theorizing heritage', *Ethnomusicology*, **39** (3), 367–80.
- KISLIUK, M. (1997) '(Un)doing fieldwork: sharing songs, sharing lives', in G. F. Barz & T. J. Cooley (Eds.), *Shadows in the Field. New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (pp. 23–44). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MALM, K. & WALLIS, R. (1992) *Media Policy and Music Activity*. London: Routledge.
- Ministry of Education and Culture (1996) *Curriculum Framework for Primary Education*. Nicosia: Department of Primary Education.
- MORLEY, D. & ROBINS, K. (1995) *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*. London and New York: Routledge.
- NEGUS, K. (1996) 'Globalisation and the music of the public spheres', in S. Braman & A. Sreberny-Mohammadi (Eds.), *Globalisation, Communication and Transnational Civil Society* (pp. 179–95). Cresskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc.
- NETTL, B. (1985) *The Western Impact on World Music*. New York: Schirmer Books.
- PAPAGEORGIU, F. T. (1997) 'Popular music and the music industry in Greece', in A. J. Ewbank & F. T. Papageorgiou (Eds.), *Whose Master's Voice? The Development of Popular Music in Thirteen Cultures* (pp. 67–87). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- PIERIDOU, A. (2006) *The construction of musical identities by Greek Cypriot school children*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Institute of Education, University of London.
- RICE, T. (1997) 'Toward a mediation of field methods and field experience in ethnomusicology', in G. F. Barz & T. J. Cooley (Eds.), *Shadows in the Field. New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (pp. 101–20). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ROBINS, K. (1996) 'Interrupting identities', in S. Hall & P. Du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (pp. 61–86). London: Sage.
- SPYROU, S. (2001) 'Being one and more than one: Greek Cypriot children and ethnic identity in the flow of everyday life', *Disclosure*, **10** (2), 73–94.
- STOKES, M. (1994) 'Introduction: ethnicity, identity and music', in M. Stokes (Ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music. The musical construction of a place* (pp. 1–27). Oxford: Berg.
- TITON, J. T. (1997) 'Knowing fieldwork', in G. F. Barz & T. J. Cooley (Eds.), *Shadows in the field. New perspectives for fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (pp. 87–100). New York: Oxford University Press.
- TOMLINSON, J. (1996) 'Cultural globalisation: placing and displacing the West', *The European Journal of Development Research*, **8**, 22–35.
- VAN MANEN, J. (1990) *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. Ontario: Althouse.
- YOUNG, S. (1995) 'Listening to the music of early childhood', *British Journal of Music Education*, **12** (2), 51–8.

List of musical examples on CD

- 'Isia Foni Kotsinochorkon' sung by Michalis Hadjimichael (1.25')
'Ishia Foni' sung by Michalis Hadjimichael (1.21')
'Ipa sou' ['I told you'] sung by Kyriakou Pelagia (1.40')
'Christouyenna' ['Christmas'] sung by Dhespina Vandhi (1.54')
'I vraka' ['The breeches'] sung by Christos Sikkis (1.30')