

Charles Seeger, “Music in the American University”, “On the principles of Musicology”, “Music and Musicology”, “Systematic and Historic Orientations of Musicology”

Review by Shuo Zhang

In these early writings of Charles Louis Seeger, two issues are constantly concerned: first is the speculation and definition of the study of music, namely, the discipline of musicology, especially in relation of other sciences systematically established by that time. Second, derived from the first one, is the concern of “language about music”, the distinction of “linguistic knowledge of music” and the musical knowledge of music, and the issues revolving around this “linguo-centric predicament.” Since the four articles are separately written across the years but closely related in terms of content and ideas, I would like to combine them into one review instead of writing an independent review under each title. This way it is also convenient to show the different levels of some ideas in relation to one another in these articles.

The first article “music in the American university” concerns primarily about the establishment of the critical study of musicology in the American universities in the early years. Seeger distinguished from the beginning the dichotomy of a purely theoretically oriented study as opposed to the study of the applied aspects of a discipline. He then argued that in music there has been no such thing as a pure theoretical study in the American universities. This, according to Seeger, has resulted in the unsuccessful education in the field of applied music too, since it is a widely accepted fact that theory propels the application in the sciences. “..we do not feel insulted to have it said that this country has produced no Bachs or Beethovens”, Seeger wrote.

Eventually Seeger proposed some suggestions on the creation of such a “pure learning” discipline in music. This, however, led him into a discussion of talking about music using language, or the “linguo-centric predicament”. As it is known, Seeger concerns constantly through years of his writings this linguo-centric predicament of musicology study. This large body of writing sure included quite rich and complex ideas of music and language, language about music, etc, on various different levels. Judging from these set of four articles, in the chronological order, the first two articles are about “talking about music using language”, on different levels; the third article concentrates itself (only in the first section) mainly on the relationship of music and language as two objects of study, with discussion on their technical resemblance and difference (structurally, as signs, as medium of communications, etc). It is useful to distinguish these different levels, as they are indications of what Seeger meant in a more precise sense when he talked about the linguo-centric predicament and the intertwined relationships of music and language.

Now turning back to the first article, it is important to clarify on what level he is talking about the linguo-centric predicament. This level becomes clear when the second article unfold itself. It seems to me that there are at least two levels of linguo-centric predicament (or two interpretations of it) in Seeger’s writings: the first one being that language is ultimately and inherently insufficient to fully convey what is in music, because of some of the fundamental differences of the two systems; this is discussed in the first article. The second one, more particular to that historical period of his time, is concerned with the “non-musical point of view” versus the “musical point of view”. This becomes clear when Seeger fully elaborated in the second article the situation of philosophers without much music knowledge and musicians without the good technique in logic and language were talking about music in a unsatisfying manner.

Combining the two kinds of skill (i.e. language and music), Seeger proposed in the second article the prospect of a “systematic orientation in musicology”. This orientation was discussed again in the fourth article, which was written fifteen years later, “systematic and historical orientation in musicology”. In this article, Seeger concerned with the dissatisfying situation of historical musicologist and comparative(systematic) musicologist as two distinctive “types of worker”. According to Seeger, the musicology study at that time concerns either with music in remote time period or music in remote places, but without any attention and influence on the current trend of music world. Thus he argues for a “true systematic orientation” that “view our musical present as a process of becoming our musical future”. This can be considered a large direction-shaping article for the discipline of musicology as a whole.

Finally, in the third article, which is an encyclopedia article, Seeger provided a concise yet detailed discussion on the topics of *Music and Language*, *Musicology*, *Criticism and Music*, and *Musical Science*. Here, he spent more time on discussing the issue of musicological study itself without being concerned with other aspects such as language. For instance, he discussed with some length the dichotomy between study of music value and music criticism. In terms of musical science itself, Seeger contended that “the most serious lack in most of the older musical theory was that it regarded musical processes as fixed standards rather than as the continually changing things they are”. This seems to me is a particularly wise comment as this reflects a sense of thought on the dichotomy of prescriptive and descriptive study of a subject matter, as seen in today’s Chomskian linguistics (descriptive) as opposed to the ancient study of linguistics and grammar (largely prescriptive), or philology.

In addition, one thing that I thought interesting is that Seeger constantly quotes musical history from ancient China, Japan or India. It seems in accordance with one thing mentioned in his biography: he probably seldom study a particular musical culture in detail but are really concerned with the world musical cultures in a much broader sense.

Seeger Review Feb.1

Shuo Zhang

This set of articles deals with one common topic: Music in the Americas. But more importantly they also are concerned with several sub-topics that many of them are constantly seen throughout Seeger’s writings: (1) music and society; (2) musicology as a part of large picture of understanding humanity; (3) folk and popular music. The other characteristic demonstrated in these writings are incredible level of organization and clear logic, which is also not uncommon to Seeger’s writings. Therefore, this set of article presents itself as both a comprehensive overview and prospect on music in the Americas and a theoretical discussion on many issues. As the Chief of Music Division in Pan American Union from 1941-1953, as led by these writings, Seeger made a significant impact in conducting research and collection of fieldworks throughout the Americas in that period of time.

Music in America

With questions like “what is the nature of the field of music in America today?” and “what are the main currents behind them”, Seeger seeks to provide an overview and prospect of the music in the America. Three main currents of activity in music are discussed and examined: a folk, an academic of “high art”, and a popular music. After a brief but thorough examination of these three areas both respectively and comparatively, Seeger argues for an important view of them as a complex of idioms besides as a complex of traditions and repertoires. Despite the problem of hostility toward other idioms, Seeger uncovers a balanced development among them, especially folk music, which he commented “without

any formal organization, therefore, the folk music has met the patronized drive of academic music and the commercialized drive of popular music with a drive of its own—a surprisingly well-rounded permeation of the city mind”. In conclusion, Seeger is confident that we can look forward to a musical coming of age for America.

Inter-American Relations in the Field of Music

Published in the *Music Educators Journal*, Seeger argues for a prospect of music which plays the significant role of peace and cultural cooperation among countries of the Americas. Seeger first briefly discussed the position and relationship of music and speech in our world, which I think supported his later conclusion of the important role that music can play in the inter-American relations. Setting up two sets of contrasting but both valid basic assumptions regarding the music in the Americas (the first more European-centered and the second more comparatively-oriented), Seeger contends that it is time for us in the Americas to put emphasis on the latter. By emphasizing what he calls “Nativism” and “technique of Guidance”, Seeger seeks to call for a shift of musical activities and studies of music in the Americas to the folk and popular music, which will in turn make a positive influence on the inter-American relations.

Music in the Americas: Oral and Written Traditions

In this article, which compares oral and written traditions of music and speech in the Americas, Seeger provided an overview of the situation balanced with a theoretically oriented speculation. Confining the scope of this paper to the first half of twentieth century after a general discussion and review of the oral and written tradition, Seeger began to examine the relationship and interaction between oral and written traditions in a more theoretical manner. Three questions are discussed, regarding (1) the direction and time of occurrence of influence between the two traditions, (2) the effect of the interaction upon both receiver and donor of the influence, and (3) whether can oral tradition exist in a totally literate society. Whereas there is no definite answers given for the second and third questions, Seeger discussed extensively on the first question, touching upon several significant issues, such as the four kinds of trend in the interaction of the two traditions, or more specifically, the two types of “folk singers” and the process of “communal process” in the oral transmission, which he also constantly concerned in his later writings. In the end, Seeger argues for a balance of the two, calling for the recognition of the educated people of oral tradition as a cultural entity. While oral tradition may need to be civilized, Seeger wrote, “Often civilization needs to be humanized. Now, at least, one is as necessary as the other”.

Music and Musicology in the New World 1946

In this article, Seeger discussed the conditions of music and musicology in the Americas at that time, both independently and combined with the relation to one another. In concluding the article, Seeger proposed a list of objectives that he expected to achieve in terms of the so-called “internal affairs” (music) and “external affairs” (music in relation to other things in society). It seems to me that the overall form of the article is as follows, divided into three large sections:

- a.**
 - I Introduction; schism between musicians and musicologists—due to two conditions;
 - II The “union” of music & musicology; three fallacies upon the thoughts of their relationship.
- b.**
 - III-IV Music of the Americas (III: aspects to look at, methodology; IV: the actual examination of music of the Americas)

V Musicology of the Americas –to distinguish the essential difference of musicians and musicologists; defining the study of musicology.

c.

VI Conclusion and proposal

Charles Seeger, Feb.9 Review

Shuo Zhang

Music and Society: Some New-World Evidence of Their Relationship

Having in mind what Confucius said about the positive educational function of music upon society, Seeger's article turned out to be a somewhat different picture. In this article, Seeger provided a quite comprehensive and descriptive study focusing on the influence of the society upon music (although he believes in the influence of music and society in both directions). It also seems that Seeger is concerned with some larger pictures, such as the mode of musical communication and mixture with European, African and Native Americans, "pidgins" and "creoles" in a musical sense. Therefore this article carries much more than just the relationship of music and society.

Clarifying that he will only focus on the influence of society on music in this article, Seeger listed eight observations that defines the importance concepts to look at, which is in fact can be treated the key words of this article: music in general and society in general; a particular music in a particular society; tradition; society culture, and the individual; acculturation; origins; integration and diversification; identity. We cannot over stress the significance of this list, since it indeed covers the most critical issues that Seeger constantly discuss in many of his articles. This, as we see later, also constitutes some essential concerns of the study of ethnomusicology as opposed to historico- musicology.

Then Seeger listed Five Evidences of society's influence upon music particularly in America today and in the past, evidently in light of the eight observations above. Among them are big events like conquest and colonization, and some others which cannot be effectively summarized in a word or a phrase. Seeger examined the music of Europeans, Africans and Native Americans which together constitute what American music is like. He traced the history of their mode of mixture, a process of forming a new identity as American. Seeger discussed in greater detail of this process in the respective field of European fine art music, Amerindian music, and African music (neo-). Concluding that the study of "intrinsic" must be correlated to "extrinsic" in music, Seeger returned to musicology and anticipated the study in this direction in the future.

The Cultivation of Various European Traditions of Music in the New World

Closely related to the concepts and observations in the last article, Seeger confined his scope this time and focused primarily on European musical traditions in the New World. According to Seeger, the European knew at least three classes of idiom, and the "hegemony" of this can be studied in two distinctive manners, which Seeger called "music-technical" and "musicological", replacing the former terms of "musicological" and "ethnomusicological". I find the set of

new terms to be wise because they are more clear in their meaning and they promote a unification of musicological studies.

Still on the matter of musicological study, Seeger argued for two “disconcerting factor” in the study of European musical traditions in the Americas comparing to Europe. The first has to do with the scarcity of secondary, music-historical sources of an intrinsic nature (many of them are contextual), and the anonymity as opposed to individuality (known). The second is concerned with the primary data—the actual sound of the current traditions. This second factor is related to systematic studies of music. As a result, these factors call for a shift in direction of study.

Seeger then began his discussion extensively on four contexts, which have “molded the cultivation of European traditions of music in the Americas”. (Cultural dynamics; transplantation; verbalization; acculturation.) They are, in addition to the eight observations in the previous article, key concepts of this article as well. He elaborated on each context and often distinguishes many different levels and situations in question. As he also did in the previous article, Seeger concerned with several processes of cultural and musical communication, such as the three manners of transplantation of European music in the Americas. Two trends are identified in the end: first, as the result of the mass media communication, the formation of a world-wide vernacular musical lingua-franca (or pidgin music) is anticipated. I find this view to be valuable and ahead-of-time, as it is being said even today by people of many fields outside of music, including environmental scientists. Second, the merging of Neo-Europeanism and Euro-Americanism in partnership with Europe in a single, integrated Occidental music.

Folk Music as a Source of Social History

In this short but dense article, published in a book about history rather than music, Seeger seeks to “propose some hypothetical values to historical study which might conceivably render inquiry into folk music as a source of social history particularly worth while”. First he addresses two questions: (1) because of the gap between historians and musicologists and their lack of understanding of each others’ field, the study of music-culture relationships has been neglected. (2) in order to fill this gap, it would seem that alignment of the fields of music and culture must be approached from both sides. Seeger identified four specific aspects of the gap, and emphasized the significance of studying unwritten/nonverbal sources in both fields as a new original power. Then going back to the initial proposal of the values of folk music as a source of social history in historical study, Seeger proposed seven hypothetical values. In the end, Seeger discusses one of his commonly seen concerns—the relationship between the art of language and the art of music, only this time under the context of their relation to the understanding and study of culture and history. I feel that two passages are most valuable, as I put into quote here:

(1) “..I feel,of the two arts are complementary and compensatory, rather than correspondent. In our exploration of folk music as a source of social history, therefore, we should not look for any such fantastic result as ability to express in language the content of music. We may draw conclusions from observed uses of music.”(p322) (2) Indeed, as the development of modern scientific method proves, it is by the recognition of the limitations of purely verbal processes and by the emphasis upon objective observation and experiment that 20th century thought has come to be what it is”. (p.322)

Professionalism and Amateurism in the Study of Folk Music

As suggested in the title, in this article, Seeger discussed two different approaches in the study of folk music. Very foreseen and advanced of his time, this article contains many rich ideas that are still valid and controversial today. Starting out by stating the different standard to define the distinctions between professionals and amateurs in music as well as their relationship to one another, Seeger identifies the serious problem in this respect in the field of folk music study, which has never been properly addressed at that time.

According to Seeger, the amateur study of folk music by folklorists and musicians starts out from the most familiar to the less familiar but their study so far is a meeting of popular but not of scholarly interest of need. In contrast, the professional approach by anthropologists and musicologists has its own deficiency: they start out too far away from the folk music thus hardly get its essence. Seeger further contends that besides the *study of folk music*, he sees the *field of folk music* as a whole not as an amateur idiom.

Here, Seeger reached his core argument: if the professionals (i.e. anthropologists and musicologists) are not competent or at best an amateur in the *field of folk music*, how can they be considered competent in the *study of folk music*? In the subsequent extensive discussion on the relationships and differences between fine art music and folk music, Seeger reached the conclusion that it would be very difficult for the musicologists who have been trained in the fine art music for thirty years to turn upside down to get inside the folk music. On the contrary, Seeger sees the significance of having amateurism approach in the field in the future years to come.

Notes:

“And some Fate and Fury should fill all, professional and amateur alike, who have asserted or try to assert property rights over the genuine folk stuff they have collected, with a decent sense of shame. Assertion of property rights in folk music must be somehow stopped. ...Genuine folk music belongs to the whole people, and no one, not even if he has paid fifty cents or five dollars to an informant for the privilege of recording or notating it, has any right whatsoever to stand between that singer and the people to which he and his music belong.”

I find that Seeger is indeed a great yet lovely man. His sharp mind and observation, his wit, his concern and care for society and people as well as music and study of music, made him a great scholar and leader in the academia. But more importantly, his kind heart that took care of the majority of the people and their music in this world filled with the corruption of commerce, his many poetic metaphors, his hilarious and sarcastic comments, and many other things,

makes him coming out of the page vividly talking to us as a very dear old man. I feel sorry that many people do not get him and his ideas, for there is absolutely countless treasures in his writings, and certainly because his is such a good man that people should get to know. I will consider Seeger as a spiritual mentor of mine and explore and expand his ideas for as long as I shall live. This is a emotional comment out of the intelligent ones that we've been making so far.

Versions and Variants of "Barbara Allen" in the Archive of American Song to 1940

In this article Seeger deals with a specific case in folk music instead of general speculation. Identifying the various versions of a ballad tune in folk music in general, Seeger outlined two approaches in studying and classifying these tunes, namely, the "tune family" approach and the "majority usage" approach. The latter believes more in the more or less reliable relationship between the tune and the text in the transmission than the former, and Seeger considers both of them valid in certain research projects. Since works are extensively done with the first approach, Seeger decides to research into the second one here.

Seeger chose 30 versions of the ballad song "Barbara Allen" out of a vast collection of recordings, and classified them as chiefly two types of version, version I and II. Each version is subdivided into three types, a, b, and c, with also a "x" type that combines the rhythmic configuration of one version and the tonal of the other. Then he started the extensive discussion to explain the reason behind such classification. This is done in light of the theoretical framework of three tonal and three rhythmic functions of singing voice that he established and interpreted. According to Seeger, in terms of rhythmic functions, proportional modality is the primary consideration for classification, with attention also given to what he calls "tempo beat", among others, whereas pitch is the only major consideration with regarding to the tonal functions. In the rhythmic considerations, Seeger identifies most importantly the discrepancies of accent and meter between the text and tune (a counterpoint), in light of the theory of iambic poetic pattern, prosodic feet, and classic Greek rhythmic functions. Also discussed are the insufficiency of Western staff notation (especially barring and accent) and the aid of Melograph in the research. In the tonal considerations, Seeger defined the interplay of four elaborate levels in terms of pitch function, and eleven diagnostic criteria of examination. From these levels and criteria, Seeger examined comprehensively the tonal aspects of the issues in the study and classification of the ballade tunes.

In addition of the main body of discussion upon the thirty "core" samples of "Barbara Allen" in this study and many related issues, Seeger also examined some other examples, many of them sung in the lyrics of other ballade tunes, but musically can be identified as "Barbara Allen". Many additional variations and features are pointed out, among them is the modal instability (of tonal function) of Version I. Along this line he then talked about the chronological mutation of these tunes and the possible influence on them from many sources, including most importantly the commercial

recording and the printed song books. In conclusion, Seeger briefly summarized that it seems there is no such an entity of tune identity of the so called “Barbara Allen”, and discussed the possible transformations among the different versions and variants. Towards the last paragraph, upon completion of such a comprehensive study, Seeger cannot help but was amazed by the systematic beauty of this study: “ still, the question of ‘why these two and only these two?’ cannot fail to pique our curiosity.”

Feb 22 Seeger Review of “Versions and Variants of Barbara Allen”

Shuo Zhang

Upon re-reading this article, the one question that haunted me all the time is about Seeger’s conclusion of the article. First he concluded that no such entity of “*the* ‘Barbara Allen’ tune” can be set up “other than for temporary convenience.” Then he showed the variants and transformations of the tunes based on these two versions, and was amazed by the fact that the one and the same ballad should be sung to two such different kinds of tunes with rare exceptions. My question is: does this conclusion bare any indication of his judgment of the validity of the two approaches listed in the beginning of the article? Namely, the “tune family” approach and the “majority usage” approach. These two approaches have different presumptions of their study, they disagree with each other on the matter of to what extent the melody and the text would change, and how stable can their relationship with one another could be. Thus I assume one conclusion we can possibly reach is, despite Seeger saying that “both are desired in certain studies”, that the results of the study based on these two kinds of approach must be totally different, and one of them supposedly has to be true while the other not. (can we?)

Bearing in mind this assumption, I wonder, Seeger stated that he adopted the “majority usage” approach because the first approach has been carried out in extensive studies. Is it his intention that, in order to judge which approach makes more sense, he then conduct the research on the second approach here, and then when both approaches yielded enough results (one by others and one by Seeger), they are ready to be examined and compared? If so, what is Seeger’s conclusion?

The way I see it, first, Seeger gave examples where other text is sung with the tune of Barbara Allen. This is one evidence that the text is not reliable in determining a tune’s identity. However, more importantly, Seeger’s conclusion based on the “majority usage” approach that he adopted was quite productive in terms of what his studies have revealed: among many many tunes that bear the name of “Barbara Allen”, only two distinctive prototypes are distinguished. This conclusion, at least with in this study, proved the effectiveness of the “majority usage” approach. But did he indicate whether he had a judgment upon the two approaches? I’m not sure about that.

Seeger Review Mar.7

Shuo Zhang

Music as a Factor in Cultural Strategy in America

This article corresponds nicely with one of the articles of our last week's reading, "The folkness of the non-folk and the non-folkness of the folk", in which Seeger proposed an applied study of folklore as opposed to a pure learning. In the present article, then, despite that title, Seeger proposed the applied study of music, namely, applied musicology. He envisions the applied musicology to "study less regard of music as *an end in itself* and more as a *social function*." He further argues that in light of this, "music must be regarded not as an intermediate or preparatory product, but as a true end-product, with both an art and a craft function". Finally, Seeger shifted his discussion to issues of individual and control and proposed how music can function in a cultural strategy.

Music and Government—Field for an Applied Musicology

In this article, Seeger calls for an applied musicology using the relationship of music and government as the point of departure. He contends that the involvement and control of government upon music has caught our attention and need for an applied musicology. Meanwhile, Seeger also justifies this branch of musicology in light of other applied study of natural and social sciences.

Being more specific than other articles, Seeger outlined six steps through which he envisions the applied musicology. These steps involve technical aspect of musical studies and social aspects, but they all serve practical and social purposes, as Seeger sees it. Before summarizing these six phases again, Seeger clarified the possible misunderstanding of his proposition. Finally, Seeger shifted his discussion to the issue of government activities in terms of music, with facilitation as its main task and control as a subsidiary one.

Generally speaking, Seeger has been exceptionally clear in presenting his point in this article, using italic for main points and re-summarize his six steps briefly at the end. This is comprehensible when we consider the occasion in which he presented it. Nonetheless, he managed to keep the discussion interesting and thought provoking.

One can see the vigorous interdisciplinary approach Seeger brought to musicology in an applied study. Of his six steps, I find the idea of "prediction" (3) to be the most creative. Meanwhile, I cannot help but wonder what would it be like when music serves as a tool of "prediction". For one thing, this is certainly exclusively linked to the applied study of

music in connection with society, for in the pure music learning such idea might seem ridiculous. I fancy that the prediction in the realm of music industry, in terms of music market and trend, can be very useful and fruitful. This can in turn be linked to the larger social trend. On the other hand, study of prediction in music can be very scientific, adopting statistics models from social sciences, thus indeed creating a new realm of study in music. Musicologists certainly can play an important and indispensable role in such an endeavor.

Seeger also realized that in applied musicology, “the data are a flow, a current, a continually changing series of functions”. This could also be very challenging to the way musicologists used to study music.

Finally, one inevitable question is that, whether this applied musicology has been implemented in the US based on Seeger’s proposal. I would think that part of it can be thought as covered by ethnomusicology for sure, and also part of it by the study of arts management or arts industry, although musicologists seldom take part in those endeavors. Whether those studies have benefited or had influence on government and policy, I have no knowledge to judge presently.

Music Education and Musicology

In this article Seeger concerns the field of music education and musicology. According to Seeger, these two fields should be closely related but the situation is quite the contrary. Thus he listed four reasons to explain for the independent status of the two. Seeger reported then that positive actions have been taken to promote the collaboration of the two, for which several committees and meetings are held.

In the last part of the article, Seeger quotes a speech by musicologist Curt Sachs. Sachs, in hope of the unite of the two fields, again reaffirmed the close relationship and connections between the two, but pointed out that different from the music educators who teach music technically, musicologist (music historian) is a member of the community of a larger scope humanities who seeks to understand the multifaceted human culture and history. For this reason, he proposed how the musicologists can help in the music education.

Musicology and the Music Industry

According to Seeger, although the study of musicology and the music industry are often thought as two different things, the connections between them should serve good in the applied study of musicology, among others. The separated situation between the two is identified by four points, before Seeger goes on to propose how they can benefit each other with collaboration.

With regarding to Seeger's discussion of how music industry is indifferent to the musicology, I wonder what the actual picture would be like. For one thing, how is the music industry defined? That is, what is included within the realm of music industry? For instance, we can define it by genre/idiom (classical/pop/folk), or by the organizations and social units in question. The classifications according to these two standards do not share the same boundary in relation to music industry. Take classical music for example. There are two sectors involved in the performing arts of classical music: one is not-for-profit, such as Pittsburgh Symphony, the other is for-profit, such as record companies like DG and Decca. According to one type of definition of music industry, in which making profit is its goal, then non-profit performing arts organizations are not within the music industry. On the other hand, the star classical musicians are the most important part of the music industry today. They might switch back and forth between non-profit and for-profit sectors. In any case, the examination of the relationship between musicologists and these detailed situations in the music industry today might yield interesting results. Meanwhile, it might prove true the close connection between the two.

One case in point: Cellist star Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. It claims to have benefited from an extensive ethnomusicological research project along the ancient silk road, from Middle East to Northeast China. Then they put together the hybrid style composition for musical instruments from different musical cultures and perform around the world. Disregard the debate of whether they're considered within the music industry or not for now, another trend has appeared to be quite strong in recent years: the representation of a studied, well-documented often foreign and ancient traditional music as a selling point in the marketing strategy of music industry. This is also related to the issue of representation. Within those realms, musicology and ethnomusicology are certainly useful to the music industry, or vice versa.

The Arts in International Relations

In this article, Seeger shows with comprehensive argument and detailed examples, how arts (or particularly music) can function in the work of government (and intergovernment) relations. It seems to me that this is one of the most interesting and revealing articles among Seeger's writings on arts/music and public relation/international relation/government.

Different from common take-for-granted thinking of arts can help to communicate and promote peace among nations and cultures, Seeger proposed a somewhat different picture for the relation between art/music and international relations. In doing so, two arguments stand out as the essence of this article. First, Seeger observed that as opposed to the common topic of "arts in politics", the situation of "politics in arts" also deserves attention. He then went on to examine this relation in a fourfold continuum. Seeger provides concrete example for each of these levels. The first three are in scope smaller than the fourth one, namely, the "political relations among governments and within intergovernment organizations".

Elaborating on the fourth level, Seeger proposed his second most important argument: the analysis of the art-government tie-up situation. The dichotomy of competition and corporation, exist in both art and politics, is the key concept here. According to Seeger, arts can be used differently by the government thus can promote either competition/chauvinism/war or promote pure artistic, cultural, social, and cooperative values. It is dependent on how it is used. Seeger commented that “to gain best reception they [art] must appear to be objective, but to have continued financial support they must be propaganda.” This argument, different from our common image of art as an universal language to always promote corporations, is indeed a sharp observation.

Music and Class Structure in the United States

In this article, Seeger seeks to explore the issues of music with regarding to the dimension of social class structure in addition to his previous discussion on the contact of the different music cultural traditions coming together in the United States. Despite the title and intention to discuss class structure, my overall impression upon reading this article has less to do with the common-sense class structure (economically high, mid, or low, etc), but more with the interaction between large pressure groups of control and between the mass production (control) and the consumers in the realm of music and music industry.

As Seeger pointed out himself, much of his discussion in this article appears to be “descriptive” in character (pp.293). Seeger first traced the history of how the three major idioms are being transmitted and received in the New World, among different social classes. The classification of these idioms is of course linked to the rise of different social classes. Two development of class structures in the early times are identified: the first, a neo-European class structure, which gives rise to the “music art upon the folk level”; the second, a classless, Euro-American, equalitarian society, of which secular folk song and popular hymnody was mixed by amateur musicians. Among these developments, conflicts and attitudes are seen between social classes, reflecting upon music.

Two important large pressure groups of control dominate the discussion of the second half of the article. These two are make-America-musical(MAM) group and the sell-America-musical(SAM) group. These two groups promote different kinds of music for different purposes, but they both agree at first that folk music is “bad music”. Later in the 1870s, however, this is changed by the discovery of Negro spiritual and the emergence of music industry. The two groups had conflict with each other in the early time, but Seeger argued that they can be better seen as complement each other rather than conflict in the later stages. The music education system is also discussed in light of these two groups.

Because of his interest in folk music, Seeger stressed the leadership of music industry and music education in promoting folk music and the issues related. Then he shifted his discussion to the consumption side of the music in America. He argues that despite the large “intake” of music of various kinds, we cannot be satisfied with the situation now because “yet in America today, the vast majority of population virtually incapable of using either a normal oral music tradition

on the one hand or an effective music literacy on the other.” In conclusion, Seeger extends his discussion on the controls of pressure groups, and hopes that the checks and balances in the control groups could be maintained in order to achieve an ideal goal that he proposed.

Three points interest me in this article. First, I wonder whether the use MAM and SAM is an actual reference to the historical terms. Otherwise, if Seeger constructed these terms himself, these are really shrewd conceptions to analyze how the pressure groups play different roles in the development of American music and music industry.

Second, I am confused about Seeger’s last sentence: “...we might shed light not only upon some of the darkest corners in our civilization in general but also upon some age-old questions such as *why do people make music and what is the function of the art of music in a culture overwhelmingly dominated by the art of speech.*” I don’t quite see where this comes from given what is discussed in the article.

Finally, I find it quite interesting that Seeger refers to himself as “this writer” instead of something more regular such as ‘I’.

Feb 28 Seeger Review

Shuo Zhang

“ The Folkness of the Nonfolk and the Nonfolkness of the Folk”

In this article, Seeger discusses the folk, non-folk, folkness, non-folkness in various contexts, in American society, in the study of folklore and folk music, etc. Written ten years before publishing in this book (SIM), Seeger added some extended comments in the end. Frankly, neither the part written ten years ago nor the comment at the end is easy for me to understand. That is, for most of the time I have no idea what is he really talking about. As much as I can understand his words, I don’t know their meaning. Whatever I try to write down here is mere an attempt to understand, as much as I don’t.

One thing that is clear to me and appears many times is that Seeger talked about the functionalists and the purists. He talked about how functionalists, by the 1960s, became more anthropologists than folklorists and came back to look upon the situation with the scientific detachment. In the end he suggested that both applied learning and pure learning is desired in the study of the folkness of the nonfolk and the nonfolkness of the folk. This also echoes his argument about the two types of learning in the previous articles. Historical and systematic approach to the study is also re-mentioned here.

As for the overall organization of the article I have no clue to tell it. However, what I want to know that most is whether Seeger is trying to call for a combined study of the two approaches and of the two –ness, as he always did in the scheme of musical studies? I gathered vaguely that is the case. If we are clear about this the we can try to see what is the relationship among other parts of the article to this point, especially the added comments in the end. For now I look forward to hearing other’s thoughts on this in class.

“USA-Folk Music”, in New Grove (old version)

In this New Grove dictionary entry, Seeger talks about the study and field of folk music in the United States in a comprehensive manner. He talked about various issues revolving around the study of folk music in the USA, including the concept and the specific contexts of folk music in this young country. What distinguished this entry from other encyclopedia entries Seeger wrote, is that he spent several independent sections of the music in the US which he usually doesn’t. These include the detailed discussion on British-American folk music, and folk music of “foreign language minorities”, namely, Hispanic-American, French-American, and other minorities. In addition, Seeger also extended his discussion on the post-1960s new development in the study and practice of folk music (including the contribution of SEM, and the mutual influence of folk and popular music, etc.) , and finally on the established musical genres of African American music.

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Shuo Zhang

***Note:** since these four articles have a lot in common, when I proceeded to read the third and fourth article my understanding of the whole got better. Yet I decided to preserve my questions in the reviews of the first two articles, since they are a phase of my thinking.*

Most important keywords of all these four articles:

Speech and music/Linguocentric predicament value and fact

The Musicological Juncture: Music as Fact

The Musicological Juncture: Music as Value

These two articles are among the most difficult Seeger articles for me to understand. The difficulty does not lie in the particular ideas, or upon the quotation of European history and history of value theory in philosophy; the most difficult to understand is how Seeger designed these two articles and what kind of whole idea is his intention to deliver. For

instance, the titles of these two articles seem to form a pair, whereas in the content I don't quite see it. The first article mainly introduces the concept of what he refers to as the musicological juncture, and talks about the linguistic predicament with great length. However, it seems to me that this article can be just titled "The musicological juncture" without mentioning "music as fact". In addition, it occurs to me that the linguocentric predicament has not only to do with music as fact but also with music as value, as seen in the second article, thus eliminating the assumed exclusive connection between the title "music as fact" and its content about linguocentric predicament. In the second article we see Seeger talks about music as value versus music as fact, thus the title of this article in fact covers the two titles above. This is the threshold point that I don't understand Seeger's intention.

Also confuses me is the primary term of the articles: the musicological juncture. As I have no experience with the word "juncture", I don't understand in the first place why Seeger has to use this term, where is its significance in understanding what he is talking about, and particularly, what it has to do with the whole discussion of value vs. fact in music and in general philosophy. This brings out the other question of mine, which is, why the two articles share the part of the title "musicological juncture", except for the last part in article two that he considered the musical value within the six considerations of musicological juncture. But this seems like a rather minor point in this article, especially does not seem like the important place of first-phrase material in the title. My proposed title for these two articles would be "The Musicological Juncture and the Linguocentric predicament" and "Music as Fact vs. Music as Value". I know in Seeger's writings the titles do not always agree with the text, but I doubt that is the case in these two articles, since it seems to be well designed to form a pair. Thus I assume that I did not understand his intention in these two articles.

Despite all the difficulty, the idea of music as fact vs. music as value does seem like a very crucial insight into the musicological study. The second article shows properly the role of Seeger as a "music philosopher". Seeger draws upon history of Europe, philosophy of value and critical theories, science, religion, etc, to explore the issues of value vs. fact in both general philosophy and in music studies. A continuum upon the attitude towards fact vs. value is constructed in the extrinsic musical terms, and finally a consideration of speech valuation of music in intrinsic terms. Throughout the article Seeger demonstrated the shrewd observation and comprehensiveness as a music philosopher.

Besides its theoretical value, this article also provides thinking and direction to the actual study of music. As Seeger pointed out, for instance, that ethnomusicological study has been concerned with descriptive studies rather than dealing with value, a fact still holds true today. Also, Seeger's observation about ethnomusicologists' dislike of studying some "changing" traditions also echoes my attitude struggle of the changing tradition of Chinese modern instrumental music.

The Musicological Juncture: 1976

If the previous article "Musicological Juncture: Music as Value" draws upon philosophy a lot, this article starts discussion on the first two of the six considerations in Seeger's "musicological juncture" by analogy from biology, namely, individual musicologist as biological organism against the society as the whole evolution. In this case, Seeger introduced what he calls the "two of the highest values known to us and our musicologist", namely, the "aggression of the self's appetite to

live and procreate and the altruism required by the well-being and survival of the society". He then introduced two terms, infrastructure, formed by biology of individuals and superstructure, the sociology of its members. Seeger used these concepts to illustrate the musicologist. Meanwhile, we should notice that Seeger mentioned the term "biocultural" in all of his other three articles, and this article might be a key to the understanding of this term.

The next three items, speech, music, and musicology in the juncture are addressed by the introduction of the distinction between the reasoned mode of speech and what Seeger calls the "affective mode" of speech. The two terms correspond to the fact and value. Seeger contends that the musicologists concerns both reason and feeling, but goes on to point out clearly the major difference and some resemblance between them. Seeger states clearly that he doesn't like to speak of music as "having a content" or speak of meaning in music. I believe this is a threshold point to explore Seeger's whole perspective to "musical meaning" or semiotics. Finally, Seeger examined the sixth item in the juncture and discussed the significant place of fact and value in the musicology study.

Combined with Seeger's concluding remarks, I'd like to offer a few comments. First, this article gives me a relatively clearer idea of what Seeger is talking about as "musicological juncture"—more than the two articles whose titles form a pair in SIM. I made three possible interpretations of this juncture, of which I cannot decide which one is closer to Seeger's idea. In some level, I find them to be all present in this issue: first, the juncture as the endeavor of musicology study, described into six considerations, from the so-called "infrastructure" to "superstructure"; second, the juncture of speech and music; third, the juncture of fact and value. Interestingly, semiologist Nattiez seems to agree with the second interpretation, which I doubt whether it is Seeger's primary consideration.

Second, Seeger emphasized strongly that speech and music are two different compositional processes, and that music helps us to discover the true power of speech, which is often overstated. He commented in the end that speech is the most dangerous invention of men. This again made me feel that Seeger does have many different levels when he talks about music and speech and linguocentric predicament, as I pointed out in the first Review of the Seeger Seminar. His argument on this point rests sometimes on the musical level(two sublevels can be distinguished: a practical level--speaking of the competence of musicologists in both speech and music, and a technical level—speaking of the intrinsic difference of the two system), sometimes outside of music, sometimes even concerned with the human being and civilization as a whole. As far as I'm concerned, this constant argument might have an unusual weight in Seeger's mind—more than we realize, and more than just to the extent of study of music.

Music as Concept and as Percept

If I were to be the judge to vote for the best and most exciting Seeger article, this one is without doubt the best candidate so far. Dealing with the common topic of Seeger writing—speech and music, value and fact—this article has by far the most clearly and explicitly stated examples and theoretical frameworks on these topics, and it has a exciting conclusion envisioning the possible alternation of human communication system in a practical and genius manner.

The core argument of this article's theoretical construction lies in the many sets of dichotomies which Seeger introduced in the first half of his text: concept/taxonomy/abstract/definition/similarity/fact/intellection vs. percept/hierarchy/concrete/description/difference/value/feeling. I tried to make this list more comprehensive, if not all inclusive. Seeger construct a chart for his theory, with taxonomy on the left column, running upward from the most concrete to the most abstract, and hierarchy on the right column, running downward from the most abstract to the most concrete. Above of the chart there lies the question "what can be communicated by speech?" along with the box read "world view as the intellection of reality", and below the chart "what can be communicated by music/what cannot be communicated by speech?" and the box read "world view as the feeling of reality". Seeger then discussed extensively of the chart and beyond the chart into the study of music.

Two comments of mine are provided here. First, two examples that Seeger used to illustrate his constant concerns for speech and music are by far the best concrete examples that I encountered, thus helping me to understand what Seeger is talking about all the time on this subject. The first one, telling the story of four people with different knowledge and background describing the same piece of music they hear. This revealed to us very vividly how different way of talking about music differ so drastically from each other, and how important it is to be aware of such ways of talking. The second one is about the computer prediction of the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No.3, which in turn revealed how music has a dimension that speech and speech logic has no way to illustrate. These examples are also the best supportive materials to understand Seeger's argument about speech and music, especially for those who always hear his talk in general sense but without a precise sense, including me.

Second, I find Seeger's argument about the human communication system in the end quite genius. The reason is that this is not only a theoretical speculation which bears no practical values at all—rather, I find they have high practical values even in today's world. Seeger wrote,

"Humanity does not have to continue in bondage to this one system of communication and make only minimal use of others...Of all six, eight or nine systems, music is in the best position to be the base for a critique of speech."

As we have seen, music, as a system of communication (not necessarily communicate meaning in the speech sense), has a dimension that speech cannot deliver. So are other communicate systems, compared to which speech seems so much less effective. One common example is graph/visual representation. Here I'm specifically thinking of the graph/chart in the scientific use, which is an extremely powerful tool for communication, and so much more effective than speech. It is not exaggerating to say that it has a dimension that speech cannot deliver. However, as we have already come to see, that how badly the visual representations are being used in the musicological/ethnomusicological papers—this totally corresponds to Seeger's "minimal use" of other communication systems. I believe that if our educational systems can put more weight on such alternate communication systems—such as visual and audio—it must be the best thing that could happen, at least in the academia, in almost every field of study.

Sources of Evidence and Criteria for Judgement in the Critique of Music

REVIEW by Shuo Zhang

This article is mainly divided into two sections. In the first section, Seeger discussed the sources of evidence for the critique of music by providing eight sources. He then discussed them one by one in great detail. Each discussion of one kind of source is accompanied by a chart with specific markings, different from markings on all other charts. These charts, especially the markings, are incomprehensible to me. It would be probably more comprehensible if Seeger articulate the explanation and the chart in a clearer manner.

These eight sources, except for individual and law, can be broke down into two categories: general considerations and musical considerations. As usual, theories from general history, sciences, etc, are cited in general considerations.

The second section is concerned with the "criteria for judgement in the critique of music". Here, a synthesis of charts provided in the previous section is considered, entitled "sources of criteria and evidence of music value". Here, the main dichotomies in question are considered, as in many other places: fact vs. value, reasoned judgement vs. affective judgement, name and named, biological vs. cultural, concept vs. percept, etc. For the last pair, Seeger consider them in a chart of "hierarchies of value: conceptualization and perceptualization", as analogous to a two-way street.

According to the perspective I adopted for understading last week's article, I see this article of the similar structural construction, which may be one of the patterns of Seeger's writings: he starts by discussion of some basic concepts, and then in the middle, he goes towards many directions. These, occupy the main body of the text, are mainly philosophical discussions, providing ways and possibilities of thinking about things, but not necessarily leading towards a single, step-by-step deducted conclusion. Then in the end, Seeger draws his conclusion (for recent articles the conclusion is always concerned with the speech and music as human communication systems, the risk of over-trusting speech/linguocentric predicament, etc), bearing some connections to the main discussion but not necessarily so. In any case, although the conclusion might not be directly linked to the most part of the discussion, it almost certainly closely related to one of the main ideas of the article, if we try to understand what Seeger wants to show in this article, without being concerned with the length of the discussion of each idea.

In this article, in the final part of the second section, we see, not surprisingly, Seeger began to talk about speech and music. This time Seeger considers the issue within the framework of three kinds of human communication systems, namely, tactility, audition, and vision. Charts representing different levels of devisions and overlapping are given for consideration of different scenarios. Seeger vividly speaks of the over-dominance of speech in modern society as "cancer" of the civilization and this is also visually represented in a chart.

So far we have read quite a few articles of Seeger's (including the musicological juncture ones that I read) that ends with the concluding discussion on the issue of speech and music, or the so called linguocentric predicament, despite the fact that the title of these articles and the main discussion in them are totally different from one another. As I have pointed out, I perceive them as different ways of proving and elaborating Seeger's argument on the one single topic that is in the center position of all Seeger's writings: the linguocentric predicament. Seeing from this perspective, I feel that (1) these articles are linked together as different ways of discussion on one single topic, and (2) through the discussions in all these articles, the argument about human speech and music and the linguocentric predicament is indeed becoming full-fledged and being supported by evidences from many directions.

Systematic (Synchronic) and Historical (Diachronic) Orientations in Musicology

In this article, Seeger envisions the systematic based musicology, with a division of systematic and historical orientation. His initial idea for the discussion comes from Ferdinand de Saussure, French/Swiss linguist who distinguished synchronic and diachronic studies, and *langue* and *parole* in linguistic study. Seeger sees Saussure's theory valuable but warned that the "absolute divergence" of historical and systematic holds only for the early stage of the development in systematic orientation. From this point until the end, as I understand it, Seeger sees systematic orientation as the foundation of musicology and historical orientation must reply upon it.

By using his theoretical construction of general spacetime and musical spacetime, Seeger provided three propositions with regarding to the distinction and relationship between the systematic and historical orientation in musicology. (I'm not sure whether his use of spacetime and timespace has any distinction; it seems he uses it interchangeably). In the second and the third proposition, Seeger argues that (2)elaboration of a concept of music timespace rests upon its distinction from a concept of general spacetime, and (3)the concept of the music event as occurring in both general spacetime and musical timespace is very important to musicology.

While I agree with Seeger's argument of the significance of systematic study in musicology, I'm not sure if I totally understand his construction of musical spacetime. From a physics point of view a musical spacetime seems does not make much sense. Yet Seeger's example about Beethoven Eroica symphony measure 10 and its actual performances may imply what he has in mind: he is thinking in terms of Western prescriptive notation in particular. But may we also think that in non-Western music, without the aid of prescriptive, a piece music as in mind and its numerous radically different realization in performances also shows the same scheme about music spacetime? This I'm not sure.

It is also interesting when Seeger spent time to talk about how he formed the new word from Greek roots and in relation with Kant's philosophy. From this article, I wonder, does Seeger imply that because many words in common speech bear too many meanings(non-musical), thus developing new terminologies exclusively used for music might be a way to escape the linguocentric predicament and the distortion of understanding music through speech?

Towards a Unitary Field Theory

In this very long article, Seeger discussed the field theory of musicology in the form of an imaginary interrogation by Boris Kremenliev and a student. Because this article is in Seeger's late periods, and because it is too inclusive and touch upon many topics elaborated in the former articles, it is hard to summarize everything in a few paragraphs. Although I see one of the merit of the article as clarifying some of the relationships among the topics discussed in various previous

articles. In any case, I want to only summarize two topics that gave an impression of occupying quite some space through the interrogation.

First, Seeger considers musicology within six universes he perceived in our world, namely, the universes of Physical, Cultural, Speech, Music, Individual, and Value. The relationships among these are not only parallel but any one includes all the others. With this scheme of universes Seeger constructs his diagram of musicology in a larger scope of human studies of everything.

Second, the discussion of fact and value, a discussion not quite unlike our discussion when John Spitzer visited, occupies an important place in this article. It turns out that not only to us, but to Seeger, his imaginary figures, and even the philosophies, religions of the world, the relationship between fact and value is a tough one. Seeger's Figure 5 on page 123 showed different ways of relating the two by the major influential thinkers and religions. It also shows that there might be indeed nothing that human studies, even natural science, is entirely about fact. This shows the point where the ultimate question of the world is asked and science seems to converge with religion. It also resonates on some level the point of the book *Physics as Metaphor*.

Seeger also commented (is it for the first time?) explicitly the 20th century composition as musicological composition, antimusic and non-music. This article clearly enforces the argument of linguocentric predicament for sure.