

Music as Knowledge in Shamanism and Other Healing Traditions of Siberia

Marilyn Walker

Introduction. Several presenters made the point that one cannot look at narrative alone, without taking into account the music, dance, and drumming that, in many settings, go along with it. One of these presenters was Marilyn Walker, who has had the good fortune to work with healers in Siberia. Although academic in approach, Marilyn's paper also recognizes the importance of experiential ways of knowing. In her Quebec City presentation, she shared some of this experiential dimension by showing and commenting on videotaped segments featuring three Siberian healers. Walker's paper discusses healing at several levels. In addition to several healing dimensions that she lists at the end of her paper, she mentions the physiological effects of music, dance, and drumming. Current research is leading to a better understanding of how trauma affects the brain and the body, and ways that various therapies, including new therapies focusing on sensorimotor effects, can promote healing. Along with these developments has come a greater appreciation and understanding among some mental health practitioners of some of the neuropsychological processes by which traditional practices such as narrative, singing, drumming, and dancing, may bring about healing. *WHA*

We are finding that the universe is composed not of matter but of music.

Symphony of Matter
(Donald Hatch Andrews in Balfour 2000)

Introduction

In conversation and interviews, stories and dance, ceremonies and academic gatherings where Native voices are well-recognized,¹ Indigenous peoples of the Russian Far North identify music as central to their individual identities as distinct nations and as central to their position as ethnic minorities within the new Russian Federation. Music also asserts their collective identity as Native peoples in relation to the dominant Russian ideology and culture, and fur-

ther, as northern peoples in the global context. The expression, preservation, and revitalization of their diverse and common musical heritage are seen as key to sustainable cultural, economic, and political development. Shamanism is also becoming a base of spiritual identification and, by extension, even an ideology² amongst northern peoples. Shamans are coming to represent a broader community than in the past. They are assuming the role of spokespersons of ethnic groups with national and international orientations rather than serving their more

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immediate communities—family, village, or clan—as they did in the past.

Music and shamanism together provide a base for emerging associations with northern and other Indigenous peoples throughout the world. The association of music with shamanism is well-documented (Pentikäinen 1998:12) but the phenomenological connection between music and shamanism in Siberian cultures has not been fully explored. This paper examines the importance of music in Indigenous communities of Siberia and especially the role of music in shamanic ritual. In the section following, I look at the politico-geography of Siberia, a part of the circumpolar world only recently opened to Western researchers, even to Russians themselves. This provides a context for discussion of historic and current relations between the State and Indigenous peoples; of music in relation to the study of Indigenous Knowledge, ethnic identity, and shamanism; and of some of my personal experiences with healing involving music in Siberia and among other indigenous cultures.

The Indigenous Peoples of Siberia and the State

Siberia³ is a vast area, the largest region of the world's largest nation. About the size of the United States, Siberia covers about two-thirds of the landmass of Russia, extending over the Arctic and Subarctic regions of tundra, taiga, and grassland. Siberia is ecologically diverse; it is also diverse linguistically and culturally, more so than any other northern country. Indigenous peoples—Buryat, Mongol, Yakut, Tatar, Even, Samoyed, Tungus, Chukchi, and others—are minority peoples in numbers, and also in terms of their relationship with the Russian state and the dominant Russian culture and ideology. Of some 32 million inhabitants, Aboriginal people number about a million and a half according to the 1989 Soviet census.

Indigenous peoples of Siberia are struggling to maintain their identity and also to redefine it in the still-emerging context of post-Communism (Walker 1999, 2000, 2001). They have been under Russian rule for about 350 years, but little attention has been paid to their role in the history of Russia or to the impact of the state on their lives and aspirations. Siberian Native peoples have fared no better in their relations with the State under Communism than indigenous peoples in other parts of the world in which I have worked (the subject of a forthcoming paper). Russia's ethnic minorities were affected by the eastward expansion, colonization, pacification, and decimation by disease and massacre that took place under the Imperial Russian Empire. Forcible conversion to Christianity began in the eighteenth century. Especially after the 1930s, minorities were

affected by administrative pressures during the period of the Soviet Union, and by the assimilationist policies of the Communist Party. Educational reforms initiated by Krushchev in the 1950s eliminated many languages spoken by Indigenous people, and the boarding school system removed children from their communities. Krushchev's initiation of a "Conquest of Siberia" program was carried on by Brezhnev with devastating ecological and demographic consequences.

As in other countries with indigenous populations, Siberian languages and cultural traditions are at risk. Lands traditionally occupied by indigenous populations have been damaged by pollution and deforestation, mining, farming, settlement, industry, and the notorious work camps that resulted in an influx of outsiders. Acid rain has decimated fish stocks, pastures have been spoiled. Collectivization and sedentarization policies altered traditional Siberian nomadism; one-third of the aboriginal population is now fully urbanized. Economic alternatives to the traditional means of subsistence have not been provided. As a result, the trades of cattle and horse-breeding, reindeer-husbandry, hunting and fishing, trapping, and gathering are all in jeopardy because of the infringement on traditional territories by outsiders and the environmental effects of industry. Environmental contamination is severe due to militarization of the North during U.S./U.S.S.R. conflicts and its use as a nuclear testing ground. Disease, suicide, assimilationist policies, and the brief life expectancy for ethnic peoples of Siberia (under 50 years for men; the lowest life expectancy in Russia) have all taken their toll. The Republic's largest scientific organization, the Russian Academy of Sciences Siberian Division established the unit "Institute of the Northern Minorities Problems" in 1991, this action emphasizing the on-going difficulties of State/Indigenous Peoples relations.

As Native lands, languages, cultures, and means of subsistence have been under siege, so has Native spirituality. Mainstream Russian attitudes towards Indigenous peoples have not been restricted to their own peoples, as material from Archimandrite Anatolii Kamenskii illustrates. The Kamenskii book ([1917] 1985), translated and introduced by Kan, is a collection of materials on the Tlingit of Southeast Alaska written by Russian Orthodox missionaries at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It includes a monograph by Fr. Anatolii Kamenskii entitled *Tlingit Indians of Alaska*, published in Russian in 1906. Kamenskii arrived in Sitka in 1895 and left in 1898, a period when Alaskan native culture was "in a state of change caused by Western colonization." Kan points out that Kamenskii saw his major task as combating what he saw as the two greatest evils of native life—intemperance and the clan-based mode of life. In particular, he "attacked sha-

manism, belief in witchcraft, or memorial feasts for the dead." (Kamenskii [1917] 1985:14). He did provide, however, Kan points out, "detailed information on Tlingit shamanism, witchcraft, beliefs about spirits, mythology and other aspects of the indigenous religion" (Kamenskii [1917] 1985:14) and he supported traditional subsistence, viewing hunting and fishing as essential for native survival and well-being. As in Russia itself, Native spirituality was seen as "separable" from other aspects of daily life, contributing to a disjunction in Indigenous people's lives that continues through to today.

As with other Indigenous peoples of the circumpolar world, Siberian Native peoples are shamanic peoples. Shamans suffered severe persecution especially under Stalin in the 1940s, including death or incarceration in concentration camps. Communist propaganda, outlawing shamans as parasites, intentionally created fear and distrust in their communities. Shamans' drums were burned and their paraphernalia confiscated for museums. Even today, some Siberians will not mention the word "shaman" out of respect for their remembered power and also in recognition of the success of the Soviet propaganda in undermining the traditional belief system. In the past each unit, village, or clan had a shaman. Today few practicing shamans remain. Most contemporary Sakhas, for example, consider only five shamans to be genuine and even their authenticity is contested (Balzer 1997). Yet their legitimacy is also being reinstated. Hoppál describes how shamans at a 1984 conference, "no longer had occasion to feel shame, as shamanism had ceased to be an object of opprobrium—that it was, instead, an integral part of identity-building national self-awareness" (Hoppál 1993:280).

Shamanism is now being written about, not simply as a practice, but as a world view; not as a past evolutionary stage in human development or an unviable, outdated tradition but as a marker of ethnic identity and cultural survival. Contemporary writers have described shamanism as an expression of northern identity, the religion of most Siberians (Van Deusen 1997), as an ethnic religion and culture (Pentikäinen 1998), as a way of life (Harner 1990), and as the pivot-point of native Siberian society (Gorbacheva and Federova 1999). In this society the chosen leader, or shaman, occupies a central role that permeates a culture and survives the deaths of individual shamans (Pentikäinen 1998). This shamanic worldview incorporates music as communication amongst humans and other sentient beings (plants, birds, animals, lakes, echoes, and other phenomena), and as power and knowledge that is accessed by the shaman from the spirit world for the benefit of this world. Music also actualizes this other reality. In shamanic ritual, music articulates the integration of mind/body/spirit/emotion in the cosmology of Indigenous peoples, their relation-

ship with the land as the source of life and culture, the subtle connections between this physical world and the spirit world within the Indigenous world view, and the dynamic nature of traditional knowledge.

The shamanic worldview of Indigenous cultures remains distinct from the dominant ideology and culture in Russia today. Traditional land-based economies, languages, spirituality, and culture (including music) have all suffered neglect and incursion. At the same time that Native peoples continue to experience the effects of marginalization, however, the North's severe natural and climatic conditions and difficulties of access have acted as a natural barrier to the spread of industrialization. Many traditions remain strong in Siberia, and are a source of pride and hope for the future. As with Indigenous peoples everywhere, Siberian Native peoples define their future in terms of their traditions, which are symbols of survival and strength. "We have survived both communism and capitalism," an Elder remarked before he sang to us at the 2000 conference in Yakutsk City. Ancestral traditions, especially music and shamanism, are foci around which ethnic identities are coalescing at the local, regional, national, and international levels.⁴

Music as Indigenous Knowledge

In the last ten years or so, considerable attention has been paid to documenting and reviving Indigenous Knowledge and to legitimizing it from the perspective of mainstream culture and western scientific knowledge; however, western science has not considered music as part of this emerging field of study. As academia has marginalized Indigenous Knowledge as ethnoscience, the music of Indigenous peoples has been relegated to the margins of mainstream music as "folk music" and to the margins of anthropology as an expressive art and as ethnomusicology. Generally, we have not recognized the fundamental and pervasive role of music in indigenous cultures and especially in shamanic ritual.

Music has been studied as a manifestation of social ideology, as a product of historical processes, and as a representation of acculturation.⁵ Ethnography and ethnomusicology have produced historical, distributional, and acculturation studies. Many of these have been reconstructive (from archives, archaeology, and oral history). As with other areas of Indigenous Knowledge, studies of Indigenous music, are weighted in terms of studies of material culture. In the ethnographic collections of museums in which I have worked and carried out research, for example, physical description (measurements, materials), terminologies, and typological inventories especially of drums or other musical instruments, predominate.⁶

Existing description is also partial and incomplete. Russian and Western collections of the music of northern peoples include audio and video recordings, but generally the analysis was based on the spatialization into text and musical score of the songs, chants, and tunes that make up a musical repertoire. Much of the existing description has been reductive; for example, notation of a single verse of a song, thus losing the meaning generated in performance through repetition, variation, elaboration, or adaptation. Generally, the historical art has been isolated from the technical or interpretive arts, resulting in "analysis" rather than "experience" of music, and thereby fragmenting the musical experience. Restudies require a more holistic approach.

Music and Identity

Music, more than any other aspect of culture, may provide the means of expressing, reviving, and generating renewed, if redefined, identity in Russia today. Music, for example, may be able to transcend linguistic differences amongst Indigenous peoples to provide a common means of communication where language cannot. It appears that music has maintained elements of language that have been lost or normalized in other contexts. Shamanic music, for example, may archive language that has been lost in everyday speech. As Hoppál (1999:58) points out, the shaman has acted as, "the guardian of linguistic traditions. . . . Especially among the people of the ex-Soviet Union, the shaman texts are always heard, even today, in languages which the authorities had almost succeeded in making these minorities forget."

As shared experience, music provides a base for political and economic linkages in the newly emerging regional, national, and international contexts, thus expressing and generating Native peoples' aspirations for their individual and collective futures. It symbolizes the struggle of Siberian minorities to express, maintain, revitalize, and redefine their ethnic identities. Music also provides the means to represent those struggles and experiences in ways that are creative and sustaining for the individual and the community. Music links the past with the future, providing a sense of stability and continuity in rapidly changing times; it also provides a cognitive map for navigating such times. Music provides a way to encompass the unknown, to incorporate and assimilate new events, new people, and new practices into culture-relevant forms of expression. Songs and dances convey traditional values of sharing and reciprocity, respect, solicitude, compassion, and kindness, reflecting on events, people, and places, and especially reflecting on people's feelings about these interrelationships.

Music mediates between the individual and his/her community; it also mediates between hu-

mans and the context in which the musical event takes place, as well as between the people, plants, animals, and other phenomena within a landscape with which Indigenous peoples describe a profound connection. It mediates between this world and the subtle realm of the spirits and the ancestors, bringing past and future generations into the experience of the present and generating a sense of belonging beyond the parameters of the immediate and physical. Through the experience of music, rather than the study of it, and through the experience of passing on information and knowledge, ethnic identity is celebrated and community cohesion is generated. Music is a community's archives on the physical, symbolic, and subtle planes.

The music of northern peoples encompasses a wide range of genres. Songs are commemorative and celebratory. They lament the passing of traditions, people, places, and ways. There are songs of hunting, songs of courtship, love songs, healing songs, and epic songs. Songs and dances convey rights to the performance of a piece and convey messages of ownership. They encode intellectual property rights, as well as concepts of proprietorship over land and resources and the associated rights and obligations. Song accompanies storytelling and many stories are told in song and dance.

Music is "thick" experience, to apply Clifford Geertz's terminology. Siberian Indigenous peoples say that music allows them to express things that are too important for mere speech. I have been told how music affects you "deeply," "deep inside," and the speaker puts a hand over the heart. It is also said that music predates language in human consciousness; the origins of many songs and dances go back in time, even beyond memory. A musical event is by nature ephemeral, but music remains in memory longer and more deeply than the spoken word. As mnemotechny,⁷ music connects the ephemeral nature of the moment with the past, and transports the past into the present. It carries us from the specificity of the moment into timelessness and universality. As a form of resistance, music often transcends the limitations of the present circumstances to remind us of how things should or could be. While it creates the moment, music also transcends the moment.

Shamanism and Music

Hoppál (1993) refers to systematic studies underway on the Siberian shaman as musician including investigation of shamans' musical dialects that vary by ethnic group, and according to characteristic local features and genres. Hoppál also notes that various musical genres are associated with shamanic rituals. The role of the shaman's drum, which has been called "the liturgical handbook of shamanism" (Pentikäinen 1998:12), has been especially well doc-

umented. Recognition of the drum's importance explains the vast numbers of drums that missionaries confiscated and often destroyed in all parts of the north including Alaska, Canada, and Siberia.

G. N. Gracheva, who made trips to the Taymir Peninsula from 1969 to 1978, noted that each shaman had a song (or melody) which belonged to him only, and that no one else was allowed to imitate:

Every person, even the shaman's helping spirits, have their own distinctive melodies, which the shaman has to sing during the shamanistic ritual (mostly at the beginning and end). During a séance, the appearance of the helping spirit—according to local informants—was signaled precisely by the start of a particular melody or a change in the rhythm of the drum. All this points to the close relationship that exists between rhythm, words (often with no meaning), melody and ritual context, which—according to a later paper—together presents the world-concept of the given culture. (Gracheva 1984 in Hoppál 1993:262)

The shaman's use of music is comprehensive in that she/he is a singer, dancer, and instrumentalist, although the complexity of this interrelationship has not been fully explored. Shamanic ritual is a multisensory complex of movement, rhythm and sound, color, and symbol in a sanctified context with established protocol. Much description has focused on one or another of the constitutive elements rather than on their constitution. The shaman's voice, the drum and other percussive sounds produced by metal pieces attached to the shaman's dress, bells or rattles—all these combine with the movement of the shaman's body and the tassels and fringe on the shaman's dress to produce a rhythmic sound bridge that facilitates travel to the other world in search of knowledge that will benefit people in this world. This sound bridge is a conduit for the transmission of knowledge, power, inspiration, awareness, or intent between worlds or consciousnesses.

Diamond Jenness, always worth reading and rereading for his detailed ethnographic description and especially because of his sensitivities and insights, writes of an early experience with shamanic incantations amongst the Copper Eskimos of Arctic Canada:

From generation to generation, from *inyuit sivulingni*, "Men of the first times," as the natives say, various incantations, *akeutit*, have been handed down to appease or drive away the malignant spirits. The incantation is usually sung by all the people, with one of their shamans standing in the center of the ring; and as they sing their bodies sway from side to side, though their feet remain stationary. At the conclusion of the refrain, the shaman invokes his familiars, and with their aid produces the desired result. Children are generally excluded from these performances. Many of the incantations are very old

and have lost whatever meaning they had originally; but this does not lessen their potency. I heard one sung during a snow-storm in the late summer of 1915. Tusayok and Kesullik had no tent, so they improvised a rude shelter by stretching some skins between two crags; but since in spite of this they were very cold and uncomfortable, Tusayok chanted an incantation and repeated it over and over again for about an hour. There were only about half a dozen words in it, and each taken by itself was intelligible enough, but no one had any clear idea of what the whole song meant. Tusayok thought, however, that the mere singing of this incantation, even though he was not himself a shaman, might have the effect of driving away the evil shades or spirits who were causing the storm and produce fine weather again. Literally translated the song ran:

I come again, I, again.

I come again, I, again. Do you not know?

I come again, I, again.*

*A spirit is supposed to be speaking all through. (Jenness 1923:187)

Here Jenness points out how the power of the words comes through action—vocalization in song. He refers to the handing down through generations of the incantation, the meaning of which seems to be unimportant, although the words have power in themselves, and power also comes from their repetition with intent. The shaman(s) contact the spirit world and stand at the center of the circle, like the hub of a wheel or a grounding mechanism. The swaying from side to side connects the left and right brain functions (further discussion of this in a forthcoming paper) and has the intended (but sometimes unconscious) effect of restitution of calm in the participants and in their environment. This account is misleading on one point; it gives the impression that shamans are always male. The first line translates *inyuit sivulingni* as "men of the first times." In Inuktitut, *inyuit*—now written *Inuit*—translates as "the people" and is gender-neutral.

The shaman, and sometimes other healers, musicians, or even "just people" with similar intent, may then connect with and sometimes transmit this life force to others in the form of healing energy. In this next section, I describe the presentation I made at the Quebec City Conference to show how music, more than any other form of knowledge, is "felt" knowledge, and how music is constitutional/constitutive as a healing medium.

Conference Presentation

At this conference, I showed video and audio clips of three of the many healers and shamans I met in Russia, some of whom participated in academic conferences. The first video shows a circle dance of

the Tungus-Manchurian Peoples; the second, records Bokova Evdokia Nikolaevna as she performs a healing song she composed; and the third, an audio clip, features Bair Rinchinov, a Buryat shaman.

Regular ethnographic field methods, such as participant-observation, are based on analytical skills of the anthropologist. We need to find new research paradigms and methodologies more suited to the kind of experiences, involvement, and enhanced awareness produced through music and shamanism. These are new ways of knowing to the western scientific mind, especially because much of what happens, takes place at the subtle energy level. I have coined the term "emic" as a complement to the usual "emic" and "etic" perspectives of anthropology. In the emic, the experience is "entered into," made possible by a "non-analytical" or intuitive framing of the mind and a sensitivity to the physical sensations created. Eastern traditions call this "awareness" or "mindfulness"—being present in the moment and mindful of it; or, "sharpening the mind" to be highly aware of the impact of external stimuli on the senses. Shamanic ritual and certain types of music bring about these states, which can be studied for their effects on other people and on oneself.

Writing about such an experience is difficult. The experience is immediate, sensory, and (ultimately) transitory; through writing it becomes abstracted, linearized, and textualized. It is interesting that new technologies provide more suitable ways of documenting such traditions.

Circle Dance of the Tungus-Manchurian Peoples

As part of the 2000 Yakutsk Conference, participants visited the Ethnographic Center "Bakaldyn" about one hour's drive outside Moscow. Here, a village has been set up with government assistance so that villagers can continue their traditional lifestyle based on reindeer-herding. A shaman's ceremony—of dancing, singing, and drumming—brought us all together through the rhythmic call-and-response format, a format also followed later in the circle dance. A (female) assistant, who held onto "reins" attached to his body, grounded the shaman in this world while he traveled to the other world to ask for assistance.

The circle dance that followed had been the focus of a morning session at the academic presentations. Everyone was invited to join hands and participate. The circle dance can be as large or as small as the number of participants and it can accommodate people entering and departing. It does not matter whether one is host, guest, foreigner, or local; dressed in Native dress or a business suit; speaker of English, Russian, or any of some thirty-odd Sibe-

rian Native languages. Leadership of the song passes from one person to another in a call-and-response format. The rhythm and the stepping speeds up or slows down depending on the pattern set by the lead singer.

This is probably the most ancient form of dance—perhaps created when people danced around the hearth, tree, or hill.⁸ In Siberia today, it is symbolic of the unity-in-diversity that has potential as a development model for Siberia's future.

Bokova Evdokia Nikolaevna (Kulun-Elbut, Momski region)

Bokova is an Even⁹ Elder and a widely celebrated composer. At the 2000 Conference, she gave a paper on Even folk musical instruments, some of which she donated to the Yakutsk Museum of Folklore and Music. The new generation, she pointed out, does not know these instruments; those who know the music are very few now: "We are the last to remember our songs and instruments," she said (using a translator)—a matter of great anxiety for her. She thinks it is important to establish competitions to attract young people to play, and told us how important our conference was in providing an opportunity for her native songs and instruments to be remembered.

As nomadic people, Evens made their instruments, string, percussive, membrane, and whistling, from what they had (mammoth bone and reindeer horn, for example). Masters made very complicated instruments. Many rattles were used. Bokova gave her presentation and performance in her native dress, decorated in the Even tradition, as were the instruments. When we met more informally later, she spoke about the connection between music and healing. Every bell, for example, had its own sound and name, and the beautiful sounds of each bell had a cleansing quality.

I asked Bokova about her healing methods. She is not a shaman, although in my experience her techniques are similar to those used by shamans, as are the results.¹⁰ Using her voice and gaze for healing, she told me how, "I convey good thoughts, feelings to you through my voice to bring you health." I asked her if she could sing for me. "Not now," the translator conveyed, "Today her voice is not good and there is a lot of smoke. She will sing tomorrow." "Tomorrow" brought a special evening performance where some of the Siberians at the conference, wearing native dress, shared song, dance, story-telling, and other traditions.

The whole group became very excited when Bokova announced that I had spoken to her the day before and that she had composed a song for me that evening. The Vice-Minister of Culture of the Republic said this was the highlight of the conference.

Bokova drew feelings out of the group, brought them together, and focused them in her song, as she painted out. She also reiterated her perspective on the comments made at the conference, concerning the disappearance of shamanism in Russia. While only in the last ten years has traditional healing become "open," she pointed out that there have always been people who cared for their neighbors. Bokova herself, she wanted me to know, is one such person.

Bokova dedicated this song to me to wish me good health. Also, through her performance of this song, she wished all of the audience good health. Throughout the song, which lasted several minutes, Bokova accompanied herself with a rattle. The first part of the song she sang in her regular singing voice, then switched to a very deep, throaty voice—her healing voice. During the first part of the song, she directed her gaze at me at times, and at other times to the whole audience; during the second part, she focused her gaze intently on me. This factor of intent—the intent to do good—is spoken about by healers everywhere.

I felt an unanticipated warmth in the upper part of my body. Afterwards, she came to ask me how I felt: "Very happy," I said, "and I felt a warmth across my chest and deep inside." She was pleased. That is very good, the translator said, because that shows the skill of the healer, if she was able to transfer that to you. By singing my name, she brought me to her and made me receptive to her offered gift and to the opening of my body, thus allowing the music to enter and do its work. She also brought me in by extending her hand towards me with an upturned open palm and included the audience with the same gesture.

We often talk about traditions as existing in "past time." Nevertheless, this healer incorporated me, an outsider, into her repertoire. She was able to work cross-culturally, like many Siberian Native peoples, including shamans who are starting to work internationally. As someone whom she had met (and helped), I became part of her community's archive, my visit and request to her documented and celebrated in her song. It made me very aware that in such music (including the epic songs that are the region's historic documents) people are not just relaying events. Through performance, they bring into the present the feelings and experiences generated by the events.

Bair Rinchinov

Bair Rinchinov is a hereditary Buryat shaman from the Buryat-Aginsk Region of Siberia. Invited to the 1999 Conference in Moscow, he conducted *khamlanie* for all Conference participants, assisted by his helpers, and at times by the other shamans. He also sat through the academic sessions. A

descendant of twelve generations on his father's side and eight on his mother's, he is committed to revitalizing shamanism after its suppression under Communism. Dedicated to revitalizing traditions amongst his own people, Bair is also comfortable working cross-culturally and in non-traditional contexts. He gave me a reading of my health by casting small pieces of bone, then sang and drummed a healing song to me and to the Canadian people. At his request, I recorded it on a CD so that it could be broadcast widely here in Canada. (I was also able to send him a copy for his own use—a more effective medium of collaboration than sharing a written text.) A copy was forwarded (with Bair Rinchinov's consent) to Michael Harner for the Archives of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies.

The impact of his song was immediate, even though the words of the song had no meaning for me. Rinchinov's drumming is amongst the most powerful drumming I have ever heard, either in person or recorded. Its effects are multisensory, not simply aural. Rinchinov sings to call the spirits of his sacred ritual objects—his drum and dress, including his headdress.¹¹

Healing in Music and Shamanism

Shamanic music serves several purposes on different planes—physical, symbolic, and subtle. In summary:

1. Music activates the items of clothing, ornaments, amulets, and other equipment, such as drums and staff, received by a new shaman from his/her community.¹²
2. Music induces the shaman's altered state of consciousness within which operates what Hoppál (1993:276) refers to as the dualistic contradictory nature of shamanism—the unity of total control with unconscious activity.
3. Music activates the shaman's helping spirits and conveys the request for help.
4. Music (singing, dancing, and the drum) is a means for community members to help build up the psychic energy for the shaman's journey to his/her healing spirits.¹³
5. The shaman receives messages from the other world in the form of songs or rhythms. Hoppál points out, for example, (drawing on an unpublished paper by O. Dobzhanskaya on the Nganansan shamans, given at a 1992 conference in Yakutsk City, Sakha Republic, August 15–22, 1992) "that shamanic helping spirits are passed on from shaman to shaman, and that, correspondingly, the helping spirit melodies, too, are handed down from shaman to shaman" (Hoppál 1993:275). Power is said to exist "outside" the shaman who calls, through sound and movement, to his/her helping spirits from whom she/he "receives" the gift of music and the knowledge and power conveyed therein.¹⁴

6. Music mediates the inner and outer worlds of the shaman. It mediates this world and the spirit world, and the shaman and the audience. Thus hereditary/intergenerational connections and metaphysical connections with the subtle world are made through music.

7. Music is a manifestation of the shaman's journeys and it exteriorizes the shaman's experience for the audience.

Conclusion

Music, more than any other means of expression, bridges the rational and the intuitive, the individual and collective experience, and the physical and the metaphysical realms of our existence. Innovative methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches are required in order to begin to understand the complexities of shamanic music and other forms of transcendental healing. I have discussed methodological and other research implications, including the need for different receptivities and understandings on the part of the researcher. As academics and researchers, given access to some of this knowledge and benefiting from it in a number of ways, might we consider singing the results of our research to communicate them to others? (Probably not but I like to imagine it.)

Through the discussion of the place of music in Indigenous and shamanic cultures, I have considered how Siberian ethnic minorities are reasserting their ethnic identities in new configurations, and the potential for music to do more than ease the transition between the marginalization of the past and the uncertainty of their future, by mediating the two. I have also suggested ways in which the study of shamanic music expands our research paradigms so we may more fully understand Indigenous ways of knowing.

There is an acute need to further document the Indigenous knowledge of Siberian Native peoples, and especially Indigenous music. In addition, we must look for ways to sustain the carriers of this knowledge. In contexts within which Indigenous peoples maintain control over its expression, the expression of music and the sharing of experience sustain Indigenous musical traditions.

End Notes

1. Among these, the following conferences at which I presented papers:

Music as Knowledge in Siberian Shamanism. International Interdisciplinary Scientific and Practical Symposium on Ecology and Traditional Religious Knowledge. Moscow—Abakan, Khakassia—Kyzyl, Tuva, July 9–21, 2001.

Indigenous Knowledge and Aboriginal Identity. Narrative That Heals session ICASS, Quebec City, May 2001.

The Spiritual Function of Language. The Ethnomusicology of Tungus-Manchurian Peoples International Conference, Ministry of Culture of the Sakha Republic, Yakutsk City, Siberia, 2000.

Mi'kmaq Traditional Medicine and Cancer. Removing Barriers: Inclusion, Diversity and Social Justice in Health, Vancouver, May 2000.

Indigenous Arctic Architecture and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Fourth Circumpolar Ecosystems Conference, Churchill, Manitoba, February, 2000.

Shamanism and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. International Conference on Shamanism, Moscow, June, 1999.

2. After discussing the issue with leading Yakut intellectuals, for example, Hoppál suggests that "in Yakutia today, at a time of ideological vacuum, shamanism might perform the role of an ideology strengthening national identity" (Hoppál 1993:272).

3. Another name for northern Asia (approximately everything east of 60°E and north of 50°N).

4. In 1990, five years after perestroika, state sovereignty was announced. Then, in 1992, as an example, the Sakha Republic assumed the status of a Subject of State in the new federal system that guaranteed economic independence, and addressed issues of land ownership, Indigenous people's rights, language, and culture. All Yakut schools now teach in the Native language and children learn about their own national culture, including music. Funding remains a problem, however.

5. Diamond et al. (1994) summarize the approach of ethnographers and ethnomusicologists to Indigenous music to date.

6. Pentikäinen, for example, states that "Nordic research on drums has hitherto been mainly preoccupied with the production of a typological inventory with a special emphasis on the figures drawn on the surface of the drum" (1998:35). He points out the need to examine the drum in relation to its "hammer" or beater and its ring, which together formed a "whole" amongst the Sami: "... each piece of equipment played its own role as a part of the shamanic session which should be interpreted holistically" (Pentikäinen 1998:35). Further, the drum "must be regarded only as a part of the whole that includes the other ritual repertoire and all the other attributes of the shaman in his culture" (Pentikäinen 1998:41). He also points out that with shamanic drums, emphasis has been placed on documenting

illustrations found on the front surface of the drum, "which is space for collective symbolism. Almost completely forgotten was the inventory of the back side" which was the "private" side of the shaman's drum. Front and back need to be read together.

7. Pertaining to or aiding the memory; the art of or a system for aiding or strengthening memory.

8. Personal communication, Dugarov Dashinima Sanzhievich, a Doctor of Science and Buryat.

9. The Even people are one of the Indigenous minorities of Arctic Russia.

10. Corroborated by Winkelmann (2000) in his work on physiological bases for shamanistic therapies and ritual effects on the autonomic nervous system.

11. "A shaman who has undergone many *shansars*, or protective rituals, acquires a great set of horns on his *argay*, the metal headdress that looks like a set of deer antlers. A shaman puts on his *argay* when he goes into a trance" (Zhambalov et al. 2000:39). The Zhambalov et al. article provides a 7-page translation of one of Rinchinov's invocations.

12. Discussed further by Gorbatcheva and Federova (1999:182) who describe this activation in the form of chants, a community's beliefs, and lore.

13. Demonstrated in a dance performance of the Folklore Group of the Nani-Ulchi People, Khabarovsk, Siberia at "The Ethnomusicology of Tungus-Manchurian Peoples International Conference," Ministry of Culture of the Sakha Republic, held in Yakutsk City, August 17–23, 2000.

14. For further discussion, see Walker 2001.

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