

Issues in the Learning and Construction of a National Music Identity in Multiracial Malaysia: Diversity, Complexity, and Contingency

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Abstract : The formation of a musical identity that shapes the nation in this multiracial country reveals many complexities, conundrums, and contingencies. Creativity and identity formation at the level of an individual or a collective group further diversified musical expression, representation, and style, which has led to an absence of regularities. In addition, 'contemporizing accretion,' borrowing a term used by Schnelle in theology (2009), further complicates musical identity, authenticity, conception, and realization. Thus, in this paper, we attempt to define the issues surrounding the teaching and learning of the multiracial Malaysian national music identity. We also discuss unnecessary power hierarchies, interracial conflicts, and sentiments in the construct of a multiracial national music identity by referring to genetic origins, the evolution of music, and the neglected issues of representation and reception at a global level from a diachronic perspective. Lastly, by synthesizing Ladson-Billings, Gay, Kruger, and West-Burns's culturally relevant/responsive pedagogical theories, we discuss possible analytic tools for consideration that are more multiculturally relevant and responsive for the teaching, learning, and construction of a multiracial Malaysian national music identity.

Keywords : Malaysia, music, multiracial, national music identity, culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy

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