Key factors in the sustainability of languages and music:

A comparative study

Catherine Grant
Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre

The challenges posed by a fast-changing global environment to the vitality and viability of musical traditions continues to be a topical issue on the ethnomusicological agenda. Investigations into ways to help keep musical traditions strong are still incipient, however, relative to parallel strategies to protect and promote endangered languages. This article identifies key synergies and disconnects between language and music specifically in relation to factors that impact on their vitality and viability. In this way, it pinpoints areas where theory and practice from the field of language maintenance hold greatest potential to inform the development of ways to keep 'small' music genres strong.

Over two decades ago, in the pages of this journal, Jill Stubington (1987) published an article about the preservation and conservation of Australian traditional musics. It argued for a need to record and document musical traditions, explored the relationship between preservation and the maintenance of living, vital musical heritage, and suggested appropriate roles for scholars in these processes. Stubington's article represents one manifestation of the long-standing ethnomusicological interest in 'dying' cultures, which over time has undergone notable shifts in nature and degree. Indeed, early disciplinary efforts (from the late nineteenth century) to document musical traditions seen as doomed to extinction are sometimes now rather depreciatively referred to as 'salvage ethnomusicology' (after the anthropological term 'salvage ethnography') for their romanticised, neo-colonial perspectives on 'exotic' and threatened cultures.

Recent approaches to musics in decline are typically more pragmatic than these earlier ones, acknowledging the natural emergence, change, and decay of musical traditions (e.g. Kartomi & Blum 1994; Letts 2006). While allowing for these processes, current ethnomusicological scholarship remains alert to the many forceful global processes acting upon 'small' music genres, well beyond the natural forces that governed their survival in earlier times (e.g. Mundy 2001). Since Stubington's article, awareness has grown that global communication systems, travel and tourism, mass media, and hegemony and the dominance of Western culture (among other things) are

jeopardizing the vitality and viability of many smaller music genres of the world (see Grant 2009, 46-50).

Thus, over the last decade or so, earlier 'preservationist' rhetoric has been replaced by discourse that embraces natural processes of musical change, but that also acknowledges and responds to the global predicament of music genres. A recent report commissioned by the International Music Council, for example, calls for the 'protection and promotion' of music genres and musical diversity at large (Letts 2006). The rhetoric of 'sustainability' has also found prominence: The journal *World of Music* recently featured a special 'music and sustainability' issue (Titon 2009); a five-year project (2009-2013) funded by the Australian Research Council is investigating '*Sustainable Futures for Music Cultures*'; and sustainability was a focus topic of the 2010 meeting of the Applied Ethnomusicology Study Group of the *International Council for Traditional Music* in Hanoi, Vietnam.

UNESCO's 2002 *Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* draws our attention to the fact that it is not only music that is facing challenges to its viability, but many other cultural expressions too, including dance, theatre forms, rituals and ceremonies, and languages. This is no co-incidence: Many of the threats to music genres (like those mentioned above) are similar or identical to those confronting other cultural expressions. This includes the approximately 3,000 endangered languages across the world, of a total around 6,000-7,000 (Krauss 1992) – and languages may be singled out here, since research into their endangerment, maintenance, and revitalization is considerably more advanced than that relating to the sustainability of any of these other intangible expressions of culture, including music. In the early 1990s, agitated by several landmark articles about the world's language crisis in the journal *Language* (foremost among them, Hale et al. 1992), academic research quickly gave rise to practical initiatives directed towards supporting languages under threat. Since that time, the study of language endangerment has underpinned a considerable range of theoretical and practical approaches to maintaining and revitalising threatened languages.

Language and music, then, are both intangible manifestations and expressions of culture, impacted by similar forces within their local and global environments, and facing similar challenges to viability. Ethnomusicologists therefore might be well positioned to draw on related insights from the more mature field of language

maintenance to determine the most effective ways forward for endangered music genres. This would be no new interdisciplinary marriage, of course: Language-music relationships is an enormous, wide-reaching area of scholarship (Feld & Fox 1994 give an overview). Minimal research exists, though, on the parallels between language and music specifically in relation to their vitality and viability. While several recent studies have investigated how music sustainability resonates with environmental sustainability (e.g. Ramnarine 2009 and sections of Titon 2009), most ethnomusicological research on issues of viability largely ignores the field of language maintenance.

There are many potential benefits of assessing what this better-established field may have to offer us. Language maintenance may point to pathways for developing practical initiatives to help sustain music genres. It may indicate some of the possible consequences of our actions (and inactions); show how natural processes of change in a tradition may be reconciled with efforts to ‘safeguard’ it; suggest roles the advocate, researcher, or fieldworker might play in maintaining vitality; or offer theoretical frameworks that might be adapted for use with music, such as a tool to identify ‘endangerment’. None of these possibilities – or any others – can be realised without a foundational understanding of the synergies and disconnects between language and music specifically in relation to issues of sustainability, since only then will the extent to which language maintenance might inform ‘music maintenance’ become apparent.

This article attempts that groundwork task, by drawing on existing sources from language maintenance, ethnomusicology, and cognate areas. The raw data are not new, then; the contribution lies, I hope, in juxtaposing perspectives from these two fields within the context of musical vitality and viability. To structure the discussion I employ *Five Key Domains for Assessing the Sustainability of Music Cultures* (Schippers 2010, 180-181), a framework that identifies five broad areas impacting on music sustainability (making no reference to languages). Each section of this present article begins with the boxed précis of the respective domain, as found *verbatim* in Schippers.

A brief note on terminology: Below, I use the term *music genre* to refer to a discrete, defined or in some way unified sub-set of the repertory – sometimes referred to in the literature as *musical tradition*. Boundaries between one music genre and

another (just as between one language and another) can be difficult to define; I leave this matter aside, as it is not central to the discussion.

Domain 1. Systems of learning music

Systems of learning are central to the sustainability of most music cultures. This domain assesses balances between informal and formal training, notation-based and aural learning, holistic and analytical approaches, and emphasis on tangible and less tangible aspects of musicking. It explores contemporary developments in learning and teaching (from master-disciple relationships to systems based on technology/the world wide web), and how non-musical activities, philosophies and approaches intersect with learning and teaching. These issues play a key role from the level of community initiatives to the highest level of institutionalised professional training. (Schippers 2010, 180)

For both languages and musical traditions, learning and teaching (implicit or explicit) are cornerstones of sustainability. Without them, inter-generational transmission does not take place, spelling the demise and eventual disappearance of the cultural heritage in question. Beyond this broadest similarity lies a range of more nuanced likenesses between language and music in relation to their transmission, as well as some significant disconnects.

According to a model from music education, the music learning process may be viewed from the perspective of three continua: the analytic/holistic continuum, the written/aural, and the tangible/intangible (Schippers 2010, 124-7). Each of these three factors pertains in processes of language transmission too. Like music, languages can be learnt analytically (e.g. with an explicit focus on grammar; Hale 2001) or via more intuitive approaches, such as full immersion (c.f. Reyhner 2003). Second, tangible aspects of learning/teaching music like technique and repertoire, and intangible ones like creativity and expression, also have their equivalences in language learning/teaching, which can focus on good pronunciation and syntactical accuracy (for example), or emphasize fluency and natural expression. Third, the explicit or implicit emphasis in language learning may either be on reading and writing (literacy), or on listening and speaking (as in most childhood language learning, and in the method known as the ‘communicative approach’).

With regard to this written/aural continuum, linguists generally agree that literacy is vital for successful language revitalisation (Walsh 2002, 17), and not least because of its value in facilitating transmission: It vastly expands the range of

learning resources that can be employed, can act as a memory aide to expedite learning, and enables transmission across otherwise prohibitive distances of time and space. For music, 'literacy' (ability to read notation) can likewise serve all these functions in transmission processes. The concept of literacy in a language or music genre is of course meaningless without the existence of a means to write it down (orthography/notation). Researchers are well aware of the downsides of relying on written forms of musical or linguistic heritage in transmission processes, one of which is the undesired standardisation of those traditions (e.g. Ramnarine 2003, 72). For sustainability of both languages and music, the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive orthographies (that is, for music, between transcription and notation) (Ellingson 1992, 157) helps distinguish between the roles of orthography in transmission and in documentation.

Although the analytic/holistic, written/aural, and tangible/intangible continua themselves are relevant in the cases of both language and music, there may be wide divergences between language and music in how they are characteristically positioned within a learning context. Typically, for example, children learn their parents' language in the home, orally, holistically, largely through imitation, and without conscious intent. For this reason, much of the literature from language endangerment and maintenance places weight on intergenerational transmission between parents and children as the primary factor in viability (e.g. Fishman 1991). Some music genres may be learnt in a similar way (nursery songs, for example). But beyond the home, proficiency in music-making may also be typically *primarily* learnt in any number of other social contexts within a community: from a master or teacher, during social community gatherings, at rituals and ceremonies, or in an institutional environment. This greater variation in primary 'domains' of music learning/teaching, and the corresponding difference in transmission approaches, holds implications for developing appropriate mechanisms towards sustainability.

Another consideration in the sustainability of both language and music is the role of new media and learning and teaching; in recent years, these have featured increasingly in transmission processes. Audio- and video-technologies enable learning from a spatial or temporal distance (Hinton 2001); mini-disc recorders and similar devices enable reinforcement of a lesson, and can compensate for less time spent with a teacher (like having 'a guru in your pocket'; Schippers 2007); CDs, DVDs,

interactive multimedia resources and the internet act as learning aides or even surrogate teachers (Taff 1997; Warschauer, Donaghy & Kuamojo 1997). Yet there are disadvantages to using technology as a tool in language and music transmission. Aside from equipment sometimes being expensive, not always readily available, or requiring some training to use, technology may detract or distract from face-to-face methods of learning and teaching, which are often the most effective (see Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998, 70-71; Hinton 2001). Also, for music, reliance on recordings (like the reliance on notation discussed above) does little to improve a learner's ability to improvise, a central skill in some musical traditions (Ramnarine 2003, 72).

Musical or linguistic competence does not necessarily translate into ability to teach well. The unlikelihood of recalling the process of learning a first language can make it difficult for native speakers to teach their language in a formal way without training (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998, 83). If music learning is explicit and continues beyond early childhood years, a music learner may be more likely to recall that learning process than the process of learning a mother tongue, yet still there is no guarantee that good teaching skills will result. For both language and music, teaching skills of culture-bearers may be a variable in the viability of a tradition – especially true when a language or music genre is endangered, since in that case explicit teaching may adopt a greater role in transmission processes. In fact, as languages become endangered, the processes of their transmission can begin to converge with those typical of some music genres (vibrant or weak): They become more formally and explicitly taught. Therefore, it is reasonable to suspect that the transmission processes of *endangered* languages and music genres hold greater synergies than in situations of linguistic vitality.

The five-domain framework that lends this article its structure does not explicitly attend to the various processes via which music comes into existence, but compositional or creational mechanisms are certainly a factor in musical vitality. Composition as a deliberate and planned procedure is only one means by which new music comes into being; a process of improvisation is another, and yet another is supernatural beings or dreams investing individuals with songs (e.g. Marett 2005). Not infrequently, music creation occurs simultaneously with its transmission (or indeed, the two are one and the same), meaning that this issue is well placed in this *Systems of learning* domain. Language, by contrast, is generally not perceived to be

‘created’ or ‘composed’, and so these issues do not play a parallel role in linguistic sustainability.

Finally, this first domain of the five-domain framework acknowledges the role of non-musical activities, philosophies and approaches in systems of learning music. Here, the synergy with language learning is strong. Events such as ritual social gatherings at community houses, and the ideologies surrounding them, can provide children (and adults) with important opportunities to learn their (endangered) linguistic or musical heritage. Philosophies and approaches located externally to the culture can also directly affect systems of learning language and music, and therefore sustainability. Within the Australian context, this is saliently and unfavourably manifest in the hegemonic governmental attitude to bilingual education in the Northern Territory, which for some indigenous communities presents a considerable danger to linguistic, and wider cultural (including musical), viability.

Domain 2. Musicians and communities

This domain examines the role and position of musicians and the basis of the tradition within the community. It looks at the everyday realities in the existence of creative musicians, including the role of technology, media, and travel, and issues of remuneration through performances, teaching, portfolio careers, community support, tenured employment, freelancing, and non-musical activities. Cross-cultural influences and the role of the diaspora are also examined, as well as the interaction between musicians within the community. (Schippers 2010, 180)

The positioning of a music genre within a society is a multifaceted phenomenon. It embraces its social function, its interrelation with non-musical facets of community, and its economic basis in society – all of which interrelate with the sustainability of a genre. In recent years, for example, music-making for profit has in some cultures overtaken music-making for pleasure, and Mundy believes the ‘consumer boom in listening’ has even effected a decline of actual music-making in some communities (2001, 10), meaning fewer or less proficient musicians. Tongan *lakalaka* illustrates another kind of connection between the viability of a music genre and its positioning in society: The in-depth cultural knowledge needed to compose poetry for it has been lost, and neither are children taught relevant cultural traditions, aesthetics, or history as a core part of their school education (Kaepler 2004, 3). These kinds of issues of social positioning hold less relevance for language sustainability, since language

generally forms the basis for day-to-day communication in a society rather than serving discrete aesthetic, diversional, ritual, or other functions.

If the position of ‘musician’ in a society is a specialist role, carries high status, or is viewed as requiring talent (Merriam 1964, 67, 123-44), then these things may be powerful aids to vitality or viability of a music genre (and conversely, a shift to low status may jeopardize viability). By contrast, in a healthy linguistic environment, speakers hold no unique social function: *Within* any one speech-community (in contrast to the prestige of speaking one language or dialect over another, which certainly obtains), speaking that language is not perceived as specialist, or a talent or skill, and is considered neither of high or low prestige. Therefore, the various issues encompassed by this domain such as remuneration, inter-personal interaction, and the role of technology, media and travel are unlikely to play as explicit a role in being a speaker of a language as in being a musician: For language speakers, these things are likely to be integral to day-to-day living.

From an anthropological standpoint, Merriam proposes that even in those non-literate cultures where music is an integral part of daily life, musicians hold a distinct specialist role within the community (1964, 123-5). In view of this role, they are often rewarded by society in some way that makes a real contribution to their living, whether through monetary remuneration, emoluments, or gifts. Withdrawal of such recompense can play a role in the demise of a musical tradition, as demonstrated by the attrition in the mid-twentieth century of the Indian classical genre *dhrupad*, whose musicians faced financial hardship due to loss of royal patronage (‘Guru-Shishya Parampara of Oral Teaching’ section, Dutta 1999). By contrast, remuneration for language speakers in a healthy linguistic context is atypical (exceptions include language teachers, artistic language-users like bards and poets, and translators/interpreters). In this way, this domain embodies a key disconnect between music and language relating to sustainability.

These and various other complexities of inter-personal relations may adversely affect the viability of both language and music, especially when the heritage is already weak. Within certain indigenous cultures, for instance, internal laws governing cultural ownership enforce that only those who ‘own’ song corpuses have the right to sing them (or to ‘give’ them away); when those people are few, transmission possibilities may be limited. Taboos or restrictions sometimes exist about revealing

one's knowledge of certain cultural practices to 'insiders' (e.g. Evans 2001, 250, for language; Moyle 1997, 78, for music) or 'outsiders', like researchers. Internal 'avoidance relationships' which proscribe interaction between certain kin are another variable in issues of sustainability; Evans (2001) cites a poignant instance where such taboos have forbidden a fluent speaker to communicate in an endangered language with its other few remaining speakers. While they vary in type, then, issues of interpersonal relations are factors in the viability of both language and music.

Even more important in this regard than interpersonal relations are intercultural ones. In an era when 'cross-fertilisation no longer depends on the serendipity of travel or chance encounter[;] it can be at the touch of a button' (Mundy 2001, 14), musical and linguistic exchange is the rule rather than the exception. The myriad and complex ways in which cross-cultural contact affects the viability of musical traditions is extensively explored in the literature (e.g. Kartomi 1981, Kartomi & Blum 1994, Malm 1993, Nettl 2005, 271-290). Some of the results and responses to musical transculturation – *impoverishment*, *abandonment*, *preservation*, and *syncretism*, among others – have direct parallels with the possible outcomes of languages in contact; Kartomi even explicitly suggests that 'the early stages of musical transculturation may resemble the initial stages of linguistic syncretism' (1981, 242).

In an individual, language loss or atrophy is always replaced by another language (barring aberrant circumstances like speech impairment). Similarly, at a community level, language loss always involves contact between at least two speech communities. This reality is alluded to by the term *language shift*, which underscores the move from one language to another. The term *music shift* has been adopted by at least one ethnomusicologist (Coulter 2007), but is arguably less apposite than its linguistic counterpart because attrition of music-making skills or practice (whether in an individual or within a community) is not necessarily concomitant with that genre being replaced (or displaced) by another. As lifestyles changed, entire corpuses of Maori paddling songs and food-bearing songs gradually died out, not as a cause or effect of 'music shift', but rather due to loss of function (McLean 1996, 276).

The diaspora may play a decisive role in the future of endangered cultural heritage, both linguistic and musical. Malm observes that traditional genres 'can be kept alive by an international network of specialized performers spread out sometimes

quite haphazardly around the world' (1993, 350). In the dramatic case of the Polynesian atoll Takū, at imminent peril of being engulfed by rising seawaters, the autochthonous context is likely to disappear altogether, and the future of both language and music will be entirely in the hands of the diaspora (Moyle 2007). Both musical and linguistic diasporic traditions often develop independently of their indigenous context – sometimes changing more rapidly as a result of the displacement and contact with other cultures (Breyley 2007, 111), but sometimes more conservatively, due to preserved values and importance placed by the diaspora on continuing the true 'tradition' (c.f. Ramnarine 2003, 139; Schippers 2007, 131).

Domain 3. Contexts and constructs

This domain assesses the social and cultural contexts of musical traditions. It examines the realities of and the attitudes to recontextualisation, cross-cultural influences, authenticity and context, and explicit and implicit approaches to cultural diversity resulting from travel, migration or media, as well as obstacles such as poverty, prejudice, racism, stigma, restrictive religious attitudes, and issues of appropriation. It also looks at the underlying values and attitudes (constructs) steering musical directions. These include musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, socially and individually constructed identities, gender issues, as well as (perceived) prestige, which is often underestimated as a factor in musical survival. (Schippers 2010, 180-181)

As functions of speech and music differ, so do their contexts. Typical contexts for languages include the home, the community, schools, workplaces, rituals and ceremonies, the media, government, law, and social services, some of which are unlikely contexts for music. By definition, music genres used in limited contexts have limited vitality, but not necessarily limited viability: Christmas carols are rarely heard for ten or eleven months of the year, but the genre seems unlikely to vanish any time soon. A language too can be viable even if it is not found across the full extent of possible contexts. Latin is a striking example: It is still the official language of the papal edicts and bulls, Catholic Roman Rites, and an entire city-state, centuries after it was ever learnt by children in the home as a mother tongue.

A notable point of disjuncture between contexts for language and music is that often, the latter entails the concept of *performance* (in the sense of an individual musician's or group's rendering or interpretation of a work, perhaps publicly, and perhaps in front of an audience), whereas communicative language contexts typically

do not. Whether music is performed as part of a ceremony, an informal community gathering, or a gala opera evening, a performance event is frequently a driving force behind music-making, even if ‘in many cultures, performance is merely the residue of a process of far-reaching community involvement; preparations for the big ceremony can carry more content than their actualization as performance’ (Graves 2005, 63). This concept of ‘performance’ also brings into relief a dichotomy between performer and audience, and in some ways and contexts, the role of the audience may be as important in issues of sustainability as that of the performer (see *Domain 5. Media and the music industry*).

The shifting functions of music in recent years due to new ways of life have resulted in disappearing sociocultural contexts for some genres of music, such as for the Maori paddling songs mentioned earlier (McLean 1996), or the Mongolian string fiddle culture *morin khurr*, whose demise ensued from the shift from nomadic life to urban settlement of Mongolian herding communities (UNESCO 2009). Other genres have successfully found new environments. Ramnarine describes various new urban performance contexts for Finnish folk music, including the striking and highly formalized situation of an examination within the Sibelius Academy’s Department of Folk Music, a context that clearly departs radically from the traditional (2003, 81-83).

In one way, then, a sustainable music genre is arguably one with the ability to reposition itself in new contexts, and adapt to new social functions. Broadly speaking, the same can be said of languages. The vocabulary of the Aboriginal language Kaurna (probably last spoken on a daily basis in the 1860s) required some overhaul as it began to be taught within a school context in the late twentieth century. Learners and speakers developed new words (for example, for *computer*, *telephone*, and *to read*), devised a base-10 number system to enable counting into the millions, and coined expressions for sporting contexts and classroom use, such as ‘Empty the rubbish bin!’ (Amery 2002, 7). For both music genres and languages, then, it seems that not only are contexts themselves essential for viability, but so too is the ability to reposition, should those contexts shift radically or disappear altogether.

One issue addressed in this domain of the five-domain framework, but which in reality extends across and beyond all its domains, is community attitudes: attitudes towards the music genre itself, as well as towards learning and teaching methods, appropriate contexts, innovation and change in the tradition, and the use of media and

technology, as well as more general community attitudes such as to cultural diversity, gender roles, aesthetics, and a host of other non-musical factors. For languages too, broad community constructs have considerable bearing on vitality and viability. For external influences to enter a linguistic or musical tradition, culture-bearers must accept and adopt them; for a language or music genre to successfully adopt new functions, it is crucial that the community is ideologically in favour of the change; for a language or music genre to successfully adapt to a changing sociocultural milieu, its carriers need to hold certain attitudes to ‘authenticity’ and ‘tradition’.

While the complex web of constructs that impact on the vitality and viability of languages and music cannot all be addressed at length here, two must be singled out as critical: first, a community’s attitudes to the tradition itself (that is, its prestige); and second, its attitudes and receptivity to innovation and change in the tradition. Regarding the latter, Thieberger testifies that ‘mixed-up’ Australian Aboriginal language is sometimes rejected by community members, ‘who want either the old language or English and nothing else in between’ (2002, 324) – an attitude that could potentially break intergenerational transmission. A musical analogue is quoted by Neuman, represented in this response of a highly respected master to an enquiry about the possible demise of the Indian instrument *surbahār*:

you think that the ustads want to keep surbahars to themselves. It is wrong to think in that way. We do want to teach, but who is going to learn? It is such a big science, and if anybody asks for it and we give it then it would be like playing *vīnā* [the *bīn*] in front of a water-buffalo, so we only play for those who understand. (1980, 49)

A considerably more pragmatic attitude to change is that of one Finnish folk musician who, in response to an interview question about change in the tradition, replied simply: ‘Before it was like that and now it is like this’ (Ramnarine 2003, 213). Attitudes to broader cultural change also interplay with music and linguistic vitality and viability: The strength and uniqueness of the music culture of Takū are probably at least partially attributable to that community’s ideological opposition to Christian missionary activity on the atoll – opposition that ended in practice, if not in principle, only in 1999 (Moyle 2007, 3-4).

One of the many instances of perceptions of prestige affecting musical viability is given by Ramnarine, who comments that before the folk music revival of the late 1960s, the Finnish *kantele* was played by ‘only a few people’, ‘seriously

encumbered by prejudice, misplaced reverence and uncalled-for ridicule’ – and this despite its being perceived as the ‘national’ instrument (Laitinen, cited in Ramnarine 2003, 64). The Indian *sarangi* still retains ‘the stigma of its “brothel identity”’, and it is partly because of this association that transmission processes are weak; ‘sons [of sarangi players] are learning to become tabliyas and soloists, or are being directed out of the music profession entirely. The sarangi is not taught in music institutions, and it may very well become extinct in another generation (Deshpande 1971:18; Neuman 1977)’ (Neuman 1980, 207). Prestige is inextricably linked to aspects of other domains of the five-domain framework, such as media attention and government policy. The raised status of the Welsh language during the 1970s and 1980s and the simultaneous retardation of its decline are both seen to be at least partly the result of the implementation of various policies, legislation, and media initiatives around that time (including two Welsh Language Acts, the launch of a Welsh language television station, and the establishment of a Welsh Language Board; Welsh Assembly Government 2003).

These multifaceted constructs of culture-bearers are arguably the most critical ones in relation to the sustainability of linguistic and musical heritage: Do community members want their language or a particular music genre to survive, and if so, in what form? But the constructs of significant outsiders – governments, policy-makers, fieldworkers, researchers and other power-bearers – also heavily affect the sustainability of both languages and music genres, in at least three ways: by influencing the community’s own attitudes towards their heritage; by promoting to other outsiders their own values and attitudes in relation to the culture, for example through academic, media or advocacy platforms; and lastly, by making manifest these constructs and values in rules and regulations that affect the culture, whether favourably or unfavourably (see *Domain 4: Infrastructure and regulations*).

Finally, this domain encompasses the impact on sustainability of attitudinal obstacles such as cultural prejudice, racism, stigma, restrictive religious attitudes, and issues of appropriation. Impinging on the totality of a culture, these obstacles can affect its language as well as music. As late as the 1970s, the indigenous Saami language was banned in some schools in Finland as the devil’s language, and at least ten people are recorded as having been executed for singing the traditional Saami joik (Ramnarine 2003, 182). Despotic or totalitarian regimes may be particularly hostile

towards musicians (more than language-speakers), because of their explicit and unique role as carriers of culture, as in the heinous era of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the 1970s, and the recent and ongoing years of Taliban repression and war in Afghanistan. The international non-government organisation *Freemuse* (Freedom of Musical Expression) works against conditions like these, advocating human rights for musicians and composers. Certain other non-governmental organisations advocate for freedom of cultural expression at large, sometimes with a significant focus on the rights of people to speak their heritage language (e.g. the United States-based organisation *Cultural Survival*).

Censorship of quite another kind is the self-imposed censorship of a community on its own music-making or language use. Whether conducive or obstructive to sustainability, this kind of censorship is almost always inextricably connected to constructs and ideologies (of kinship, gender, ownership, authenticity, transmission of tradition, and so forth, discussed above).

Domain 4. Infrastructure and regulations

This domain primarily relates to the 'hardware' of music: places to perform, compose, practise and learn, all of which are essential for music to survive, as well virtual spaces for creation, collaboration, learning, and dissemination. Other aspects included in this domain are the availability and/or manufacturing of instruments and other tangible resources. It also examines the extent to which regulations are conducive or obstructive to a blossoming musical heritage, including artists' rights, copyright laws, sound restrictions, laws limiting artistic expression, and challenging circumstances such as obstacles that can arise from totalitarian regimes, persecution, civil unrest, war or the displacement of music or people. (Schipper 2010, 181)

Infrastructure requirements for making music and for speaking a language differ considerably, both in degree and nature. Unlike much music-making, speaking a language generally does not call for specific locations, instruments, or other tangible resources in order to 'create' or 'perform' it (exceptions include some ceremonial or performative forms of language, which may be site-specific, and formal language learning contexts, which may employ a dedicated space). Also, primarily due to the interrelatedness of the World Wide Web with the commercialisation of music (see *Domain 5: Media and the music industry*), virtual spaces may be pivotal in sustainability of music genres, but not of languages (notwithstanding their role in

language transmission). At this level of infrastructure, then – tangible resources and places to create, perform, practice, and learn music – the parallels between language sustainability and music sustainability are limited.

A broader level of infrastructure, though, potentially affects both a community's language and its music inasmuch as it influences all aspects of life, including health, education opportunities, presence of technology and media, and perceptions of social and cultural identity. Infrastructure both relies on and is affected by economic circumstance, which is a key force in the sustainability of languages (Grenoble & Whaley 1998) and music genres (Letts 2006) – in fact, for music, it is so crucial that it should arguably be added to the list of circumstances identified in this domain as potentially obstructing music sustainability. This, however, brings to light another disjunction between language and music: The economic factors at play in musicians' (and audiences') lives, combined with the tangible resources often required to make music, mean that the impact of poverty on music sustainability is likely to be greater and more direct than on the sustainability of a language. Indeed, poverty may not in the least threaten the viability or vitality of a language – witness Bengali, spoken by well over 200 million speakers in Bangladesh and eastern India.

Like a lack of broad community infrastructure, other disadvantageous circumstances for music sustainability ('totalitarian regimes, persecution, civil unrest, war or the displacement of music or people') may also affect linguistic sustainability, simply inasmuch as these circumstances affect the totality of a culture. The immediate peril of rising seawaters, for example, means that Takū is currently experiencing displacement of both music *and* people (Moyle 2007), holding ramifications for both its linguistic and musical traditions along with its cultural heritage at large.

This domain also deals with the role of regulations and policies in sustainability. At a local and regional level as well as at the level of nation-states, regulations often embody the attitudes to culture and cultural health of governments, who are therefore key players in sustainability of languages and music genres. Artists' rights, copyright laws, and sound restrictions are all examples of regulations, normally government-imposed, affecting musicians and composers. Policies and laws affecting language-use and language-speakers differ in nature from these, but are just as critical to sustainability: Among many others they include laws relating to bilingual school education, to the use of minority languages in the workplace and the media, and to the

provision of translation services in matters of social services. Government policies that significantly affect musical or linguistic sustainability (positively or negatively) do not necessarily directly refer to music or language or even culture, but may instead relate primarily to education, immigration, ethnic discrimination, broadcasting, intellectual property, new media, e-commerce, and international free trade agreements, among other things (see Letts 2006).

Over the past two or three decades, various international instruments have brought increased prominence to the importance of human, language, and cultural rights, and also to duties of government and other bodies to honour them. Among them are the 1996 *Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights*; UNESCO's 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*; and the 2007 *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Although no declaration centres exclusively on music, the heightened awareness of cultural rights matters brought about by international tools like these have lately made significant inroads to protecting and promoting both linguistic and musical heritage.

Domain 5. Media and the music industry

This domain addresses large-scale dissemination and commercial aspects of music. Most musicians and musical styles depend in one way or another on the music industry for their survival. Over the past 100 years, the distribution of music has increasingly involved recordings, radio, television and internet (e.g. Podcasts, YouTube, MySpace). At the same time, many acoustic and live forms of delivery have changed under the influence of internal and external factors, leading to a wealth of new performance formats. This domain examines the ever-changing modes of distributing, publicising, and supporting music, including the role of audiences (including consumers of recorded product), patrons, sponsors, funding bodies and governments who 'buy' or 'buy into' artistic product. (Schipper 2010, 181)

The cuter the animal, it seems, the more likely it is to be earmarked for 'rescuing'; advocates for any endangered species of insect would be hard pressed to gain the degree of publicity – or funding – as for the panda. Metaphorical license aside, it is perhaps interesting to draw the analogy with music genres facing challenges to their viability. The fate of unaccompanied Australian Aboriginal ceremonial songs performed by untrained voices and lasting half a minute may well fail to garner wide public attention, whereas the energy and rhythmic impulse of Cuban *son* holds high entertainment value by most standards. Entertainment value equates with commercial

potential, which in turn helps the promotion and celebration of the music genre in question. An extension of the species metaphor to music genres and languages themselves is also telling: The enormity of the global music industry and the comparative paucity of commercial income generated by languages support the speculation that in the public perception, music is the ‘cuter animal’ than language, arguably giving it a significant advantage in the endangerment stakes.

This domain, then, represents perhaps the most significant disjunction between language and music in relation to issues of vitality and viability – namely, their contrasting potential as a commodity. The commercial potential of music seems to hold particular promise for the sustainability of small music genres, if it is true that

the best way to keep a small musical culture alive is to make it popular with a large enough number of people to make it a profitable profession for its exponents. For many varieties of music this has meant that small population bases, or ones dispersed inconveniently around the world, have been a perennial obstacle to widespread appreciation. Effectively globalisation removes any technical barriers to its enjoyment everywhere. It becomes part of the universal musical tapestry, able to be discovered and valued irrespective of its original context. (Mundy 2001, 11)

Although size and dispersal of speaker population are variables in language viability too (Carnie 1996), those variables lack real potential to be mitigated by any such thing as a language ‘industry’. Languages do not depend on global commerce *per se* for their vitality or viability, and it is hard to imagine a form of language that ‘does away with time and place’, as Erlmann says world music does (1993, 12). It is true that a sustainable language needs to be a ‘profitable’ enterprise for its speakers, but not necessarily fiscally. Much more often it simply serves as the most efficient way to communicate – or it might ‘profit’ speakers by expanding employment options, or by acting as a marker of identity.

Mass media (those ‘that are designed to reach, and actually do reach “mass audiences” – audiences larger than a live performance would reach’; Christensen, 1992, 121) are powerful mechanisms in the viability of small music genres, especially given their nexus with the music industry. In fact, Romero believes

for the ethnomusicologist interested in the safeguarding of musical traditions, the mass media appear as one of the most important forces of musical change: an ideological complement of the social and economic related factors that compel

traditional societies to adapt themselves to modern market economies, or to migrate to nearby urban centers, abandoning their traditional rural habitats. (1992, 191-192)

Media attention and inattention, especially on television and radio, can be key in the vitality and viability endangered languages too (as in the case of Welsh, mentioned earlier), even given the lack of a language ‘industry’ as such.

As one example of a mass medium, the internet provides insight into the powerful influence of media on cultural sustainability, both positive and negative. More than languages, the role of virtual spaces is pivotal to music sustainability, primarily due to their potential to reach mass audiences. Whether or not their use by individuals is fiscally stimulated, online tools like YouTube, MySpace, and iTunes have proven extremely effective ways to disseminate and distribute music, including small genres and those with limited vitality, that may otherwise not have a voice in a regional or global environment. A delightful example of how technology and the internet can work together to give voice to the music of minority cultures is found in one blogged video clip showing a young Peruvian folk singer in colourful traditional costume, dancing and singing a ‘traditional’ *huaylarsh* to the following words:

How are you little friend, I want you to give me your email.

Come on pretty faced friend, I want to get to know you better.

See that I feel very in love, only through internet love.

I think I am very much in love, give me your affection through internet.

(Global Voices 2009)

Alongside the complex questions this clip raises about shifting social functions of music, changing contexts, and tradition versus innovation, it also illustrates how technology and the internet can help promote the music of minorities. But, woes of ‘internet love’ aside, the sometimes uneasy relationship between the World Wide Web and the dynamics of cultural sustainability mean that the internet is not always the superlative tool for promoting cultural heritage it may at first appear. Among other concerns is the fact that it creates an immediate power distance between culture-bearer and consumer: ‘Pronouncements by media experts about the ubiquity of CDs, Internet, and the transnational recording industry notwithstanding, not everyone in the world has equal access to the technologies of world music, and most people in the world have no access’ (Bohlman 2002, 133). Access-related power inequities are of ethical concern in relation to endangered languages too, as expressed in UNESCO’s

2001 *Draft Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace*. Linguists have noted the two sides to the sustainability coin:

The Internet paradoxically facilitates both language diversity and language domination. . . . Far from being a panacea for the very real threats to language diversity in the modern world, technology may well be playing an important role in diminishing real language diversity by supporting a more limited, essentially Eurocentric language pluralism. (Tonkin & Reagan 2003, 7)

Similar concerns arise in relation to other mass media, such as television and radio.

Just as mass media are not always wholly favourable to the sustainability of music genres, neither is the music industry itself. Aside from the considerable challenges sometimes brought about by cross-cultural contact resulting from global music commerce (*Domain 2: Musicians and communities*), the music industry carries systemic anomalies that can fail musicians (as well as publishers, agents, recording companies, and composers). Piracy is a prime example: By depriving copyright holders of their profits, it can relegate music-making to an unsustainable livelihood (Mundy 2001, 13). Industry-related concerns like this do not affect languages or language-speakers to anywhere near the same degree as musicians, though copyright, ownership, and intellectual property issues can and do arise with regard to appropriation of endangered languages by outsiders (Walsh 2002, 7).

Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer write of a 'legitimate fear' within one indigenous society of language-related materials being 'appropriated, exploited, trivialised and desecrated by outsiders, and this fear has led many elders in the direction of secrecy' (1998, 91). Because of its wide commercial potential, music appropriation is an even greater danger than the appropriation or exploitation of language. Music sustainability may be implicated in various ways, for example if culture-bearers' fear of exploitation leads to reluctance to engage with initiatives supporting viability (like documentation). The concern is not always located outside of the community, either: Viability may also be jeopardized when communities themselves begin to 'sell off' cultural heritage to outsiders, as opposed to maintaining it within the community and transmitting it to next generations.

This leads to the area of music tourism, a niche that has boomed in recent decades. Local music is promoted regionally, nationally, and internationally as a

tourist drawcard, and music tours that offer ‘authentic’ and sometimes participatory music experiences from Argentinean tango to West African drumming to Chinese opera are a growing phenomenon (Gibson & Connell, 2005). As with other music industry products (like recordings), shows and other musical events that have been shaped for visitors are not always gainful for sustainability. In fact, tourism that instigates repackaged, devoid-of-context, exoticized culture can have ‘a high impact, socially and economically, on small-scale societies and communities. While the advantages may be short-term economic ones, the disadvantages are of a social nature and usually long term’ (Langton 1994, 20).

These important considerations for the sustainability of music genres are negligible in the case of languages, which are unlikely to be tailored to outsiders’ tastes for economic reasons. Yet there are certain ways in which tourism can benefit both endangered languages and music genres. A little ironically, it seems that endangerment is one attribute of a language that can excite tourism, bringing it recognition and celebration (as in the case of the Norman language, celebrated in *La Fête Nouormande*; Johnson 2005, 74-5). Musical vitality too can be strengthened through tourism, as the festival phenomenon has proven in the cases of Finnish folk music (Ramnarine 2003, 134-46) and Indian *dhrupad* (Widdess 1994), among others. This is not to say that festivals do not leave residual effect on the genre; after all, the ‘festivalization of world music’ (Bohlman 2002, 137) is simply another part of the global music industry.

Conclusions

The above discussion points to both considerable synergies and considerable disconnects between languages and music genres in relation to factors that impact upon their vitality and viability. *Table 1*, in effect a précis of this article, synthesizes these synergies and disconnects into a comparative framework. Like the article, the table is structured according to Schippers’ *Five Key Domains for Assessing the Sustainability of Music Cultures*. It indicates an approximate level of synergy of each domain with issues of language sustainability (*very high – high – moderate – low – very low*) – admittedly a crude system, not least because certain aspects of a domain may hold high synergy while other aspects of the same domain may significantly

disconnect. It proves useful, however, in representing the broader key findings of the preceding discussion.

I proposed earlier that an understanding of these synergies and disconnects is needed in order to gauge the ways and extent to which language maintenance strategies may inform ways to support the sustainability of music genres. Core synergies between language and music in relation to sustainability include the dynamics of their transmission (*Domain 1*), the interplay between the vitality of a language or music genre and the social and cultural constructs and attitudes that surround it (*Domain 3*), and the impact of economic and political circumstances (including policies and regulations) (*Domain 4*). This raises further questions for investigation: Are there language-based transmission initiatives, like the successful Maori *kōhanga reo* ('language nests'; King 2001), that might hold resonance for potential music-specific initiatives towards sustainability (*Domain 1*)? How might tried and tested ways of raising the low prestige of a language within a community help inform such situations for music (*Domain 3*)? To what extent could language-related precedents indicate possible effects of policies and regulations on the vitality

Table 1. *Comparative framework: Key synergies and disconnects between music and language in relation to their sustainability*

Domain 1. Systems of learning music.	<i>Level of synergy with languages: very high</i>
<p>Synergies: Like music, the sustainability of languages is dependent on systems of learning and teaching, as well as related issues like teacher training. As for music, approaches to language-learning can be situated along various continua, such as the written-aural and the analytic-holistic, which can impact on sustainability. New technologies and developments in teaching and learning languages are often linked with sustainability, in that they relate to effective transmission. Non-linguistic factors intersect with learning and teaching languages, as non-musical ones do for music. Disconnects: Typical contexts for language learning differ from music transmission contexts, carrying corresponding differences in transmission approaches. Everyday communicative language is generally not perceived to be ‘created’ or ‘composed’ in the same way as music is.</p>	
Domain 2. Musicians & communities.	<i>Level of synergy: moderate</i>
<p>Synergies: Interpersonal and intercultural contact and the dynamics of community (or individual) “shift” from one language to another are critical factors in language sustainability, as for music. The diaspora also potentially plays a role in language sustainability. Disconnects: The different social role of language and language-speakers compared with music and musicians means that many issues in this domain (including social positioning, remuneration, and career paths) disconnect with language sustainability issues.</p>	
Domain 3. Contexts & constructs.	<i>Level of synergy: very high</i>
<p>Synergies: For language as for music, social and cultural contexts and the capacity to adapt to changes in those contexts are critical for sustainability. Attitudes to tradition/innovation, recontextualisation, cross-cultural contact, and context affect language sustainability, as do constructs surrounding the language, such as prestige. Also playing a part in language sustainability are the broader attitudes of a community, such as those relating to cultural diversity, identity, and gender roles (which for example may be the root of obstacles like stigma and prejudice, either towards the cultural heritage itself or its custodians). The constructs of significant outsiders impact on language sustainability, as they do for music. Disconnects: Typical everyday language contexts are broader than those of music, and do not generally entail the notion of ‘performance’.</p>	
Domain 4. Infrastructure & regulations.	<i>Level of synergy: high</i>
<p>Synergies: As for music sustainability, political and economic circumstances (censorship, prejudice, persecution, war, poverty, population displacement) as well as levels of community infrastructure can greatly affect language sustainability. As for music, policies and regulations imposed from either within or outside of the community can have enormous bearing, both beneficial and detrimental, on language sustainability. Disconnects: Speakers of a language generally require fewer tangible resources than musicians to ‘perform’ or ‘create’ their language, being unreliable for example on instruments or specific performances sites. Virtual (internet-based) infrastructure is less critical to language sustainability than to music.</p>	
Domain 5. Media & the music industry.	<i>Level of synergy: low/very low</i>
<p>Synergies: The sustainability of languages, particularly when endangered, is interrelated with the support of the media (especially television and radio), and may also be linked to the impact of tourists and others who in some way ‘buy into’ language use. Disconnects: Language and music have vastly contrasting potential as a commodity. As a rule, languages do not depend on an industry <i>per se</i> for their vitality or viability. For this reason, industry-related issues in music sustainability such as dissemination and distribution, as well as challenges such as piracy, intellectual property issues, appropriation and exploitation, technological access, and the sometimes equivocal effect of tourism on cultural sustainability are lesser concerns in language sustainability, though they can play a role.</p>	

of music within a culture or community (*Domain 4*)?

Importantly, too, the disconnects between language and music discussed in this article suggest that certain language maintenance strategies are unlikely to be amenable to adaptation for music. Initiatives, for example, that aim to expand the domains of use of an endangered language – from the school to the community to the workplace, legal, and government spheres (see Fishman 1991) – may be only indirectly relevant for music genres, if at all (*Domain 3*). Conversely, there are likely to be potential effective ways to support music sustainability that will lack precedent in language maintenance – most obviously, those engaging industry and commerce as a promotional mechanism (*Domain 5*).

As engaged, action-oriented ethnomusicological perspectives gain ground (the Applied Ethnomusicology Study Group of the *International Council for Traditional Music* was founded only in 2007), ethnomusicological research is striving to determine what constitutes progressive, ethical and useful enquiry into viable music genres. Much remains to be learned. As we try to develop ways to help communities maintain vibrant and viable music genres, and reap the benefits that flow from this in terms of cultural identity, strength, and cohesion, precedent from language maintenance may help us avoid unnecessarily reinventing the wheel.

In this way, the comparative framework presented here is not intended as an end in itself, but rather as a tool that helps identify areas where the potential is greatest for integrating theory and practice from language maintenance within the area of music sustainability. For reasons argued above, it seems logical to afford the extensive experience and discourse from language maintenance a place within ethnomusicological discussions about issues of vitality and viability. To that end, I hope the comparative framework presented here might lay a foundation for understanding their possible contribution, and for future research that explores at a more concrete level how language maintenance strategies might be adapted for music.

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