

# A Brief Note toward a New Anthropological Practice about "Network" : Fragments of Music and Photo

Tanaka Rieko\*

## 1. Introduction

The author is currently conducting research on the execution of "classical music" (academic music) in Latin America, with a focus on Cuba. Classical music in non-Western society is one of the most advanced topic, alongside endeavors to understand such already ambiguous "art-like situations" (Gell 1998) from an anthropological perspective. This brief note will consider the case study from an anthropological framework. More specifically, alluding to art research methodology beginning with a network theory approach, especially actor network theory (ANT) which will be discussed later, this investigation will attempt an ontological consideration of music.

In the present day where cultural diversification has already accelerated significantly, a reconsideration of "art" supported by modern Western concepts is imminent. As anthropology has already demonstrated, it is now impossible to separate the discourse surrounding the authenticity of art from politics. However, from today's perspective which allows for the premise of "art as a cultural system" (Clifford 1988), the liquidity of contemporary music cannot be emphasized enough. Therefore, by considering the dynamics of music creation that raise the question as to why such music appears in the "here and now," it should be possible to relativize the existence of music as a contemporary topic.

The classical music in Latin America must truly be considered as "here and now." This is because this musical phenomenon was able to "become" (exist as) "classical music" in Latin American only as Western-derived music in the place of its respective society. Classical music in Latin American was at first considered a genre that was not "original," but based on a European model, which was at the same time supported by the elite consciousness of the Latin American upper middle class. As is already known, classical musicians of the American continent became aware of this art form's existence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it was constructed (reconstructed) as a so-called "new" form of classical music. Given such a process, it is clear that the people of Latin America are prone to the voracious absorption of a diversity of elements based on the place of Latin America, and thus it will become essential to investigate the various phases in the creation of "classical music" in Latin American in the "here and now."

Thus, how can we attempt to understand this music which appears in the "here and now?" One effective methodology is that of an anthropological network theory approach to art. This methodology has attempted to illustrate the dynamics of the state of equivalency of art appearing and being

---

\* Lecturer, Saitama Institute of Technology, Faculty of Human and Social Studies.

created within its various mutually interactive relationships, using the theory of "art worlds" beginning with Becker's critical premise of "art as a cultural system." In other words, it overlaps with considerations of systems for classifying "art" (Becker 2008). Moreover, there is an affinity between this discussion and Gell's argument for the stratified interconnectedness of art worlds and people as an "art nexus" (Gell 1998). Furthermore, within the study of music in recent years, there has been a dire need for creation theories that criticize reductivist viewpoints, and attempt to illustrate the underlying mechanisms of music's appearance and its totality. This is precisely a problem of music's presence, by which fluid music is able to exist through its own creation. In other words, network theory research for art displays the potential to describe music by viewing the various aspects by which the creation of music is manifested in the "here and now" as a fluid network.

Paradoxically, the biggest topic in anthropological research has been the difficulty of understanding art as an "object" which is not a material or visual "thing." Music includes a variety of constituent components, but those "things" are not merely entities that generate material sensations. That being said, music does not exist a priori. Therefore, while steering clear of the material cultural research that has been conducted at the center of conventional studies in art and anthropology, there is nonetheless a need for a theoretical framework that overcomes the supposed imperative to define an object that is invisible and fluid (Hennion 1993:15).

Regarding this issue, while drawing considerable influence from ANT, the aforementioned theory that situates humans, things, systems, and technology in equal relation, Hennion has also developed her own original sociological methodology for music. On top of acknowledging the fluidity of music, Hennion has, taking Bach as an example, addressed a variety of phenomena that appear within various "mediation," including the musicians' technique, musicologists' tendencies, compilation processes, taste formation, recording technology, and market correlations (Hennion 1999). Following Hennion, it can be interpreted that the Bach music that is listened to today is indeed contemporary music which can only become as such in the "here and now."

The methodology used in this investigation earnestly analyzes the way in which music occurs, and portrays it within a network. This is both a problem of the interrelatedness of things, and of whether the very thing that remains after the "various things" (media) have dispersed is indeed some aspect of a presence called music, or whether it is something that remains only within ourselves (Hennion 1993 : 369). Furthermore, within the process by which these things occur is also concealed the dual proposition of the nature of the chaos held by sounds that have yet to become anything at all, and what these actors' creativity actually is (Hennion 1993 : 75-76). The "object" in this case is truly the creation process stated in the introduction, and is nothing less than the process by which music "becomes music." The author predicts that it is in this instance that the various phases involving the actors surrounding music creation will simultaneously appear.

Thus, as stated above, taking an anthropological network theory approach, this paper has attempted to portray the fluidity of art as it exists under sociocultural restrictions. Schneider

suggests that art creation be defined not based on the verb "to be," but rather based conceptually on the process of "becoming," by taking a Deleuzian perspective that gives heed to the wriggling and chaotic power of "compositional forces," which precede and occur within the form of all phenomena (Schneider 2006). Following this line of thought, it becomes possible to ask not what music is per se, but whether or not it indeed becomes music. Moreover, drawing from the example of Cuba, we can make a legitimate inquiry as to whether music will indeed become "classical music" in Cuba in the context of contemporary Cuban society. The chain of actors discovered through this illustrative work thus helps to indicate the actual uncertainty involved in a conception of classical music that has up to this point been considered merely as representational art, as well as its richness. Furthermore, as this thesis is continually developed, we will certainly gain deeper insight into presence of music.

For better understanding of such new practice, I would like to take up an innovative photo analysis such as Bateson and Mead in anthropology (Bateson and Mead 1942). They considered unrelated 759 photos as a chain of image by placing side by side on a single page. And this experiment succeeded in throwing invisible relations lying between different time and space. Here, it is impossible to use a huge volume of reference material, but the following fragments of music and photo would be the preparation to explore the invisible network on classical music in Cuba.

## 2. (1) Imaged representation

Cuba is an island country floating in the Caribbean Sea. *Malecón* Street in Havana is one of the representations of Cuba, and the art also functions as Cuban representation. (Photo 1. *Malecón*. Photo 2. Children jumping into the sea from *Malecón*. Photo 3. Young people taking a walk along *Malecón* and tanker floating on the sea. Photo 4, 5. International Ballet Festival. Photo 6. International festival of Cuban representative composer, Leo Brouwer.)



## (2) Unifying space

Havana is the central place of Cuban classical music. In the area of *Old Havana* where tenement houses are built up densely, there are historical churches and halls for the concert (Photo 7, 8, 9.). On the other hand, *Vedado* area is dotted with apartments. The National Theatre, known as Cuba's largest playhouse and the National Orchestra's home music hall, is located on the Revolution Square (Photo 10, 11, 12.). This area also has some institutions for artist, and many international events are held. *Playa* side has National University of Art (ISA) and National high school of Art (ENA) (Photo 13, 14, 15.). Both schools produce most of Cuban musicians. Musicians unify these different spaces by coming and going in everyday life, and create Art network of Havana.



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15

### (3) Becoming place, becoming artist

Around the musical situation, we are able to recognize that some spaces "become place" for music such as university of music. Some people "become artist" for music. (Photo 16. Violin class. Photo 17. After the morning concert. Photo 18. Before examine of saxophone. Photo 19. National music school. Photo 20. Piano class. Photo 21. Orchestra class. Photo 22. Pianist in his home. Photo 23. Self training of pianist. Photo 24. Piano concert. Photo 25, 26. International Festival. Photo 27. Award of festival.)



#### (4) Materiality – as mutual relation of "object"

In the musical practice, musical "objects" appear by making mutual relation for musical instruments such as score, musical instruments, and so on. (Photo 28, 29, 30, 31. Reading, playing, writing and Sharing. Photo 32. Placing. Photo 33. Taking off. Photo 34. Given social status as a musician. Photo 35. Given musical instruments. Photo 36. Given payment. Photo 37, 38. Given honor.)



### (5) Leaving paths open

To leave the door open is usually seen in Havana, and it makes lively and active sound toward the outside. (Photo 39, 40. Open windows. Photo 41. Watching the outside sound. Photo 42. In the hall. Photo 43. Standing on boundary of the hall. Photo 44. Exceeding the boundary. Photo 45. Inside the hall. Photo 46. Open paths for the concert. Photo 47. Lights for the paths. Photo 48. Practicing out of doors.)



## (6) Sharing the time

Music practice is based on sharing the time during playing and listening, and this process is a prominent factor for "becoming music". (Photo 49. Preparing the time in ante-room. Photo 50. Setting the place for the time. Photo 51, 52. Waiting the time of concert. Photo 53. Sharing and engaging the time for music. Photo 54. Time to become untied.)



## (7) Re-creating "flow"

When the "flow" such as flow of water or flow of life does not circulate in society, people re-create it by themselves. (Photo 55, 56. Flow of people after the concert. Photo 57. Retained water in the theater. Photo 58, 59. Sweeping the rainwater away. Photo 60. Water storage tanks lined up on the roof. Photo 61. Water hose for re-creating water flow. Photo 62. Storing water for drink. Photo 63, 64. Music flow and body in the private space. Photo 65. Flow of music on the anniversary.)



55



56



57



58



59



60



61



62



63



64



65

## (8) Invented new practice through art network

The way of art practices in Havana, which re-create the space and time, are often seen their everyday life. Such behavior among art network is heavily involved in social-cultural changes in Cuba in the recent years. (Photo 66, 67, 68. Process of making cafeteria by themselves in their home. Photo 69, 70. The overlap of the music space, living space and relaxation.)



### Bibliography

- Bateson, Gregory and Mead, Margaret. 1942. *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*, New York: Academy of Sciences.
- Becker, Howard S. [1982] 2008. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Clifford, James. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hennion, Antoine. 1993. *La Passion musicale. Une sociologie de la médiation*, Paris: Métailié.
- Schneider, Arnd. 2006. *Appropriation as Practice. Art and Identity in Argentina*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.