

"A Journey through the Music of the World"

by Nano Stern



The course explores the musical diversity of human culture around the globe, focusing on historical, geographical, linguistic and other cultural aspects that allow for a general understanding of the different musical traditions that have developed, and the relations between them. Through careful listening and analysis of recorded and live examples, light is shed on the interconnections that link apparently unrelated traditional musical styles, and thus, through an understanding of the gradual changes that culture and music undergo, we can finally trace a musical continuum around the globe. The main objective of this course is for participants to be able to "listen" to a map of the world and understand how different musical manifestations are related to one another.

All lessons combine in-depth explanations by Nano Stern, analysis of ethnomusicological recordings, complementary illustrations and maps, a review of characteristic instruments of each region, and live examples played by Nano on many ethnic instruments from around the globe. Along the course, some guest teachers will join and provide first-hand accounts of the subjects discussed. The course consists of eight 60-minute lessons:

1. General introduction to music around the world:

- Why do we speak of "music" of the world and not of "world music"?
- How to listen properly: What do we listen for?
- Basic elements of music:
 - Rhythm: meter, polyrhythm, swing, etc.
 - Melody: different scales, modes, and tuning systems.
 - Harmony: intervals, chords, chord relationship.
 - Timbre: the secret quality of sound.

2. The Celtic world:

- Who were the Celts? Linguistic and historical insights.
- Is "Celtic music" actually Celtic? The concept of "Atlantic music".
- Characteristic elements of Atlantic music.
- Different traditions: Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Bretagne, Northern Spain, etc.

3. The route of the gypsies:

- Are the gypsies a single cultural entity?
- An overview of gypsy history from the "Shahnameh" onwards.
- Exploring the gypsy migrations:
 - Rajasthani origin.
 - From India to the Byzantine Empire.
 - From the Balkans and into Europe.
 - Through northern Africa into Andalucía.

4. Traditional music of Europe:

- The development and rise of polyphony.
- Music of the Balkans.
- The Slavic world, Magyars, and eastern Europe.
- The influence of folk dances on courtly music.
- Scandinavian traditions.

5. Asia, music of the silk road:

- The middle east: Maqams and Iqamat.
- Turkey and the Ottoman heritage.
- Turkic peoples, from Turkey to Mongolia.
- The musical traditions of China, South Korea and Japan.
- Hindustani and Carnatic traditions in India.
- The music of Persia.

6. African music: polyrhythm and beyond:

- The Arabic music of northern Africa.
- Gnaoua.
- An overview of sub-Saharan music.
- West African music: the Mali empire and the Griot.
- The Bantu cultures of central and south Africa.
- The emergence of South African a cappella.
- The music of the pygmies of Congo.
- Eastern Africa: Ancient roots of Ethiopian music.

7. The development of North American music:

- Indigenous music of North America.
- The arrival of slaves and their musical heritage.
- Old Time: how Celtic and African music came together.
- Minstrel shows and the spread of the banjo.
- The development of Jazz.
- The civil war, the end of slavery and the blues.
- Urban migrations and electric blues.
- The beginnings of Rock and Roll.

8. An in depth look at the music of Latin America:

- Indigenous traditions from Mexico to Patagonia.
- The “pure” African music of the Palenque.
- A closer look at Spanish music of the golden age.
- Cumbia: the meeting of slaves and indigenous peoples.
- “Música Llanera”: when the lute began to swing.
- Hanacpachap: Religious syncretism in Cuzco and the advent of Andean music.
- Chacarera, Tonada, Marinera, Cueca: Spanish Jotas with a Latin American identity.