

Music and Development: MCC Workers in Chad

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Introduction

It was late evening in April 1999. We were perched on the tailgate of a market truck full to the brim with Chadian travelers and market goods. A warm, light rain fell on us, and we were quiet. Celia mentioned that soon we would be at the Lutheran Brethren theology school at Gounou-Gaya, where she was living, on a Mennonite Central Committee cultural exchange. When we arrived, we would hear the theology school students singing.

When the truck slowed to a halt, we hoisted our backpacks and walked through the rainy mud to a small white building. It was full of the students, and their singing – one tall student up front, conducting with one hand, but not in a Western pattern, singing a call, the other students singing a response. Though they spoke a variety of ethnic Chadian languages, the students all sang in French. Some songs were recognizable as Western-origin hymns, while others were totally new to me. I tried to sing along, reading the text from a small red hymnal – which contained no notated music – but couldn't quite catch the melody. They sang several more songs in that warm room, with Celia and me their only audience. Only after the last song was sung was I introduced to Celia's friends and schoolmates, the leaders and singers of this worshipful performance.

I only later found out that the event was not a service, but a party for the family of a theology school teacher who was leaving to pursue church work elsewhere in Chad. Singing and dancing, not only of hymns but also of "local songs" in traditional styles associated with particular Chadian ethnic groups, were frequently part of such celebrations at the school, Celia told me.

I begin with this short fieldnote from my visit to southern Chad in 1999 to introduce the sound and character of my experience of Chadian church music. Several aspects of the singing I described above marked the Chadian

church services and Christian gatherings I attended: the central place of Western hymns, sung a capella but often with melodies that differed strongly from their Western counterparts; the use of these hymns, sung in French, as shared repertoire at an inter-ethnic church gathering; and my own marginal, observational role as a new Western visitor.¹ However, not all Westerners are marginal to music in Chad.

I was there to visit my fiancée, Celia Mellinger, who was nearing the end of her year working for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Gounou-Gaya, Chad. Nearly a year before the singing just described, she had begun her journey as a development worker in Chad in the MCC-SALT program² and I had started graduate studies in ethnomusicology at the University of Alberta. In that year of correspondence with Celia, I became interested in the questions I address here: particularly, how can we describe the involvement of MCC workers in music in their host country? How does this cultural involvement “map” onto the official discourse of MCC’s statements on the role of its development workers? What can we learn, from answering these questions, about the cultural dimensions of development work?

These questions presume that a musical occasion is not only a set of sounds but a set of interacting roles that people perform both during the musical occasion and during the preparation for, and subsequent evaluation of and discourse about, that occasion.³ Such musical roles are relevant to what a person does musically and to how those musical acts are understood by others. The meaning of musical activities as I analyze them here depends on multiple actors who negotiate symbolic meanings through their performance and reception of musical roles.⁴

This paper addresses the relationship between roles in music and development through a case study of MCC workers and church music in southern Chad,⁵ drawing on interviews I conducted in 1999-2000 and in 2005 with North American MCC Chad workers, especially in the SALT program, and with Chadian MCC workers and other Chadians who have significant contact with MCC in Chad. Additional fieldwork data was gathered in a three-week trip in 1999.⁶ My argument centers on the roles performed and experienced by MCC workers in music, not the sonic or structural content of “the music itself” in Southern Chad. Consequently,

my own ethnographic and musicological observations as a fieldworker in Chad do not form the primary data for my account. Instead, the perceptions among my interviewees of their own roles and those of others are the most important pool of data. Missionary accounts and the records of MCC-Chad from the annual *MCC Workbooks* provide a historical point of comparison.

MCC's Official Statements of Role

Ronald J.R. Mathies, executive director of MCC, has outlined several successive and cumulative “generations” of the organization. While MCC began as a relief agency in response to the devastation of World War I,⁷ it was during the 1960s that it began to pursue development as such. As many African states became independent, MCC instituted the Teachers Abroad Program that placed Mennonite teachers in African schools; the role of the North American MCC worker was that of a teacher.⁸ In the 1970s MCC recognized that service work provided education for workers themselves; the role of the North American worker now shifted to that of a student or learner.⁹ In the late 1980s and 1990s MCC began to work consciously on education of North Americans to encourage international structural change; workers used their cross-cultural learning as material for teaching other North Americans.¹⁰ Mathies described MCC's work in the mid-1990s as connecting its Western and non-Western constituencies; North American MCC workers and those in partner organizations in the non-West entered into a relationship of mutual teaching and learning.¹¹

These “generations” of MCC workers' roles in education correspond to broader shifts in development work. Fred DeVries identifies three such generations for both MCC and secular agencies: relief work (pre-1960s), local small-scale development work (1960s-70s), and sustainable development work (1980s-90s).¹² During the 2000s, development theorists have been promoting a fourth generation of approaches that focus on cultivating transnational networks in order to change problematic policies and structures.¹³

Whether conceived of in terms of education or development more broadly, these “generations” are all cumulatively present in MCC's current organizational mission statement that identifies the agency's roles as relief work, working as a “channel for interchange” so that “all may grow and

be transformed,” and “peace, justice and dignity” through the sharing of resources.¹⁴ This statement is used in planning and representing MCC programs; for example, MCC’s 1999 *Workbook* described its Africa programs in respect of their fidelity to the statement’s priorities.¹⁵

Symbolic interactionist theorists have argued that statements made by elite spokespersons of an organization can form the basis of the roles that rank-and-file members try to perform in their interactions with clients and partners.¹⁶ This implies that MCC’s reflections on the roles of its workers as a group could represent not only MCC’s public face but also on-the-ground roles for its workers. When workers play these roles, they effectively perpetuate organizational culture. Richard Yoder, Calvin Redekop and Vernon Jantzi’s recent study suggests that Mennonite development workers have been strongly shaped by the role models of the previous generation; many grassroots-level workers placed high value on engaging in a cross-cultural interchange, symbolized by the phrase “drinking tea with MCC.”¹⁷ Similarly, many MCC workers return to North America and value the activity of educating other North Americans on the global context of development.¹⁸

However, members of the organization must also try to play the roles that its partners and clients expect; negotiations with partners and clients shape organizational culture as well.¹⁹ MCC’s partners and clients often expect MCCers to play roles that are rooted in their experience and understanding of other Western activity in their local context.

Mennonite missions in Africa, beginning in the early 1900s, laid the groundwork of connections for MCC to begin development work in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁰ It is thus not surprising that one key role expectation encountered by MCC workers has been that of the missionary. For example, Janice Jenner, the MCC country co-representative in Kenya from 1989 to 1996, described her initial concept of her role as a worker doing “service” and “development.” She describes herself as using both words chiefly to distinguish my work from ‘mission work’. . . with which I was decidedly uncomfortable.”²¹ As Jenner worked in Kenya, she began to feel that “peacebuilding” was the most necessary role to play. However, another set of client and partner role expectations came into play: the Western teacher, technical expert, or government worker who provides

knowledge in a short-term trip. Jenner began to understand that many Africans resented short-term Western-led conflict resolution projects. In the end, she aspired to a different role, that of an “interpreter” between African community peacebuilders and “the powers” of the international community.²² Similarly, Fremont Regier, an MCC and African Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) administrator of rural development in Congo (Zaire) found that his Western MCC workers, who traveled to villages with Congolese co-workers and promoted agricultural strategies there, had to work at relationship-building with locals because of “the memory of harsh, demanding Belgian agricultural agents.”²³

These stories highlight the negotiations between Western concepts of appropriate worker roles in development and the expectations of Western involvement already present in African contexts, particularly those of the missionary and the teacher or technical expert. While these roles do not directly concern music, I will argue that this kind of negotiation is also important for the often unofficial cultural roles played by MCC workers, and that role-expectations derived from past contact with Westerners, especially missionaries, provide a key context for the roles played by MCC workers in music.

A History of Roles in Chad: Missions and MCC

What sorts of roles, then, did missionaries play in the musical and social life of Chad, prior to MCC work there?²⁴ Protestant and Catholic missions in Chad began in the 1920s.²⁵ Both evangelized, established social services such as hospitals and schools, pushed converts to conform to Western styles of worship at first, and moved to indigenize the clergy and worship styles between the 1960s and today.²⁶ Missionaries negotiated a broad set of roles, some explicitly concerned with worship and music, and some associated with development work.

Jacques Hallaire, a French Jesuit missionary to southern Chad from 1952 to 1989, pursued his missionary role collaboratively. He taught Catholic catechism (including theology and a sung liturgy) to Chadians who became the primary Catholic evangelists in his area.²⁷ He collaborated with Chadian Catholics in translating the Gospels into the Sara language²⁸ and worked with them on agricultural development.²⁹ In addition, he saw

himself as a mediator of conflicts in the church and as a priest administering the sacraments.³⁰ Not a gifted singer himself, Hallaire worked as a musical intermediary. From the beginning, he encouraged composition in local Chadian idioms; when a Chadian Catholic composed a song, he tape-recorded it and played the recording in other villages.³¹ Mathias Ngartéri, the Chadian Catholic priest who succeeded Hallaire, reflected that not only did Catholics in other villages begin to sing the songs but they were also inspired to begin composing their own songs.³² Hallaire helped distribute a substantial body of Catholic hymns and songs in this way, eventually resulting in the production of a hymnal.³³

C. R. Marsh, an English (Christian) Brethren missionary who served in both Muslim northern Chad and N'Djamena from 1961 to 1971, described translation work, one of his primary roles, as follows:

[Listening] to the colloquial languages; sitting round smoky fires... listening to criticisms of the version he was using; sitting behind a bush with a notebook in hand as the men returned from market; sitting in a coffee house, noting each new expression.... This is what makes a man a translator, to sit where they sit.³⁴

Marsh placed a high value on immersion and cultural learning, albeit as a means to evangelism; throughout his memoirs he consistently referred to himself using the Arabic name Abd Al'Masih (Servant of Christ). He also described his activities as an evangelist and evangelical storyteller, and as a language teacher to Southern Chadian Christians, providing them with Arabic language skills so they could better evangelize Muslims.³⁵

Marsh observed Chadian Church music, describing in detail the music of several services.³⁶ He described the tunes as European in origin but, he reflected, "it is very hard for a stranger to recognize the tune."³⁷ Teaching the Western style of singing to Chadians was impossible: "In Africa the Africans were not to be outdone.... In every instance the missionary has had to renounce his efforts and the tunes are sung à l'Africain."³⁸ Though he valued cultural immersion, Marsh found himself an outsider to Chadian music performance. Nonetheless, he compiled a hymnal in Chadian Arabic for use in evangelization and opened every day of his Arabic and French language evangelization training classes with hymns.³⁹

Missionaries in Chad thus played (and play) a broad range of roles

besides evangelist: translator, linguist, teacher, priest or minister, conflict mediator, hymnal compiler, and musical gatekeeper or intermediary. Other missionary memoirs suggest additional roles: for example, Abe Taves, who worked in southern Chad with The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), was known as both “docteur Tahvess” and “pasteur Tahvess” and worked as a consultant on a Lele-language hymnal.⁴⁰

These roles were not universal, but were negotiated between particular Chadians and missionaries. While Hallaire, Marsh, and Taves understood and tried to present themselves as playing the role of the missionary, their highly varied activities contributed to what might be better theorized as a “role set.”⁴¹ While each was recognized as “missionary” by their Chadian partners, being a “missionary” may also have implied being a doctor, pastor, translator, or other things. Roles associated with missions, development, and music overlap in the role sets negotiated between these missionaries and Chadian church members. Though North American Mennonite missionaries did not make inroads into Southern Chad, these missionaries and their negotiated role sets are part of a larger pool of possible understandings of Western church workers in Chad that predates MCC work there.⁴²

How did MCC’s work in Chad relate to the role-sets associated with missionaries outlined above? MCC Chad began its work in partnership with Western-based missions agencies and moved to partner with local Chadian groups in recent years. MCC’s work in Chad began in 1973.⁴³ In 1975 MCC workers were “under the umbrella” of the United Evangelical Mission (MEU), an organization under which French Mennonite missionaries worked.⁴⁴ European Mennonite missionaries supervised an MCC well-building project in 1976-1977.⁴⁵ In 1978 MCC workers built wells for a TEAM hospital.⁴⁶ As Chad’s civil war worsened in 1979, MCC workers and their missionary partners were evacuated.⁴⁷ As MCC workers returned in 1982, they discussed co-operative missions and MCC placements with MEU.⁴⁸

Until the mid-1980s MCC workers in Chad played roles centered on providing technical expertise and training. MCC personnel served as hydrologists, civil engineers, and construction experts in connection with well-building projects, and as agriculturalists in dry areas.⁴⁹ MCCers worked as teachers of English and French, and of appropriate technology

construction and use.⁵⁰ They also worked in public health.⁵¹ In sum, their roles might be characterized as those of an “expert technician” or a “teacher.” Some workers also “preached, led Bible studies [and] taught choirs,” and MCC supported the reprinting of an Arabic songbook.⁵² The MCC worker role-set seems congruent with the model of a knowledge-worker: teachers, technologists and experts, music teachers and experts.

In 1984 MCC Chad gave an operational grant to the Entente Évangélique, an organization of Chadian Protestant churches.⁵³ Three years later MCC provided meeting space for the Entente.⁵⁴ In 1990 MCC workers offered a conflict resolution seminar through the Entente, and the Entente sent the first of many young visitors to North America on the MCC International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP).⁵⁵ By 1991 MCC considered the Entente their primary contact and partner in Chad.⁵⁶ In 1993 the relationship was expanded to include CAEDESCE, the development organization of the Entente.⁵⁷ MCC workers began to act as a resource for CAEDESCE planning and programs.⁵⁸ A Chadian national, Madjibe Levy, was country representative for MCC Chad in 1998-99.⁵⁹ By the beginning of 2001 the MCC office in Chad was closed, and a regional office was created in Burkina Faso that continued to support the work of the Entente, CAEDESCE, and several additional Chadian partner organizations.⁶⁰

Between the mid-1980s and the 2000s MCC workers began to teach Chadian teachers. MCC workers taught various agricultural strategies to a Chadian agriculturalist who taught other farmers⁶¹ and trained Chadian masons in well construction and maintenance, and this group of masons took over these projects.⁶² Similar collaborations took place for health workers, and MCCers also served as advisors to the Entente and CAEDESCE on a larger scale to plan development and peace programs. Rather than playing the role of “technical experts” and “administrators” or “teachers” themselves, MCCers taught this role to Chadian partners and encouraged them to perform it.

The timing of this move towards sustainable locally-run development work coincides with that of MCC’s two exchange programs in Chad: IVEP and Serving and Learning Together (SALT). The *MCC Workbook* reports that the Église évangélique au Tchad saw SALT as “a good exchange for having sent a youth to the U.S.”⁶³ A new role for MCCers in Chad, the

SALTER, thus appeared in 1988 and continued until 2000. While MCC at the time promoted SALT as a way for North American young adults to “test their gifts for future service,”⁶⁴ Catherine and Terrance Sawatsky noted that the immersion aspect of SALT in Chad was highly valued, though it is not clear whether by Chadians or Westerners:

On arrival, SALTERs go directly to their Chadian homes and live the lifestyle of their Chadian families. Their example has been widely remarked on. It is unusual for expatriates to live in the same lifestyle as Chadians – eating, sleeping and working under the same conditions as their Chadian friends and families.⁶⁵

If those who remarked on the example of the SALTERs were Chadians, then the SALTERs helped establish common living and work roles for MCCers and Chadian partners. This role, “liv[ing] the lifestyle of their Chadian families,” is one of cultural learning through immersion. The Sawatskys’ description of SALTERs’ roles seems to strain against “testing one’s gifts for service” – at least when service is defined as a teaching, helping or expert role.

The country reports published in the annual *MCC Workbook* document a broad variety of roles and a significant change over time that broadly conforms to Mathies’ schema of successive generations. Further, the association of MCC workers with missions, especially the MEU, was quite close during the 1970s and 1980s, and interactions with Chadian partners were sometimes played out in the name of both MCC and MEU. What kind of musical and cultural roles, then, were negotiated by SALTERs, given the divergent descriptions of the SALT program and the varied role expectations established by prior MCC workers and missionaries?

MCC-SALT and Music in Chad

Marie Moyer is a young Canadian Mennonite woman who spent 1998-99 in Moundou, Chad as a SALTER. I interviewed her by telephone on March 16, 2000 and October 8, 2005, and we also conducted e-mail conversations.⁶⁶ Marie’s roles in the musical life of her church were significant as were the difficulties she faced in trying to play the learner and helper roles. Marie studied at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC; presently Canadian Mennonite University); her SALT year formed the internship for her theology

degree in Service Education. Her North American SALT orientation in Akron, Pennsylvania offered little explicit guidance as to what her role in Chad might be. For her CMBC studies, however, she wrote down goals for the part she would play: she sought to be a “mirror” of Chadian church culture from her position as an outsider to the community – not to teach, but to reflect in a way that Chadians might find useful.

Marie’s host church in Moundou was the Assemblé Chrétien du Tchad (ACT) de Doyon, an urban church attended primarily by people of the Gor ethnic group.⁶⁷ Her host father was both the pastor of this church and, during the year of Marie’s visit, the president of the ACT denomination. Near the beginning of her time in Chad, the council of elders at ACT de Doyon asked Marie to fill four roles: Sunday School teacher, English teacher, drama troupe member, and choir member. Church leaders also discouraged community members from asking Marie to start or provide funding for new development projects; Marie noted that leaders had been told this was “not my role.”

Marie taught two English classes, one for beginners, and one for advanced students. The beginners’ class did not last long because the night it was to be held conflicted with a weekly Sunday School event during the Christmas season. However, the advanced English class, composed mostly of educated young people, met in each other’s homes, and members “took turns hosting and having a bit of a meal.” This class became for Marie “some of my best friends” and “a tight-knit group.”

The ACT de Doyon also purchased an electronic keyboard and asked Marie to play it with the choir and also to teach keyboard skills to choir members so that the instrument could be used when she was gone.⁶⁸ Marie became part of the contemporary choir, a young persons’ choir that performed sacred African popular music in French.⁶⁹ The performance norms were quite different from Marie’s Western classical training: as a keyboardist, she had to learn a recurring keyboard melody by ear, and then transpose it by ear during performance into the key picked by whichever instrumentalist started the song.

Marie was “fitted in” by her hosts as one of a set of five leaders of the choir (in addition to the choir director). “The choir members expected me to teach them something,” Marie told me. She decided to teach “I Will Sing

for Joy,” a South American chorus from the *Mennonite World Conference Songbook*,⁷⁰ which she thought reflected already-existing performance norms. Marie taught it as songs were usually taught in the choir: she sang each line and the choir repeated it. However, each member sang the line back to her in a version that differed from hers in a uniform fashion. Interested, Marie then asked several members to sing what they considered to be a very traditional Gor song. After notating it she found that, as she had guessed, it was pentatonic. Marie taught from the keyboard to help choristers increase their proficiency in singing the diatonic scale.⁷¹ She also taught keyboard skills to several members, including other leaders and instrumentalists.

Being a choir leader and a choir member was not a trivial commitment. In addition to its three weekly practices, the contemporary choir often led congregational music and taught new songs to the congregation. The choir also sang by itself, and occasionally offered very quiet singing as a meditative backdrop to congregational prayer. The choir was involved in nearly all parts of the worship service, except for the sermon.

A particularly intimate aspect of Marie’s involvement was her participation in singing all-night mourning services with the choir after the death of a community member. Marie guessed that the choir was likely taking the place of traditional mourners when a Christian died. She felt privileged to be an insider to such important community events as part of the choir.

Marie also described attending a workshop in Moundou offered by some visiting North American speakers.

I was with the [ACT de Doyon] choir.... [T]hese guests ... were sitting at the front in this position of honor, and I was dancing with my choir.... Part of me wanted to go and sit with them and talk with [the North Americans]. The other part of me did not want to be invited up there.... I was very conscious that I was placed in this particular role, as a Chadian more than as a North American.

Marie’s roles as choir member and leader were internal to the choir, and had existed before she arrived. Her descriptions of the community mourning event and the workshop illustrate the significant extent to which being part of the choir provided Marie with an “insider” role in the existing social fabric for young people at the church.

What did her Chadian hosts expect of her? “I think what they saw me as having was knowledge, that I should give them,” she said. Marie felt that this knowledge-worker expectation covered most of the areas in which she contributed, including public health, Sunday school teaching and English teaching, and music. However, she was sometimes described and understood by her friends as a missionary. She “would complain and protest loudly that I wasn’t. I didn’t like all the other things that went along with that.... And they would ... say, ‘but a missionary is someone who’s sent for the church, so you are.’” When I asked Marie what she told her friends she was, instead of a missionary, she said, “I think that was the problem, I didn’t know....”

One way to understand the confusion and difficulty that Marie encountered in trying to negotiate a role for herself at the ACT de Doyon is to note the conflicting roles for Westerners that preceded her time there: the missionary as teacher and leader, the development worker as teacher and expert. In addition, MCC-SALT prescribes a different role for its workers from that of other MCC workers who preceded Marie in Moundou. While she tried to create her own role as “mirror” – as a respectful outsider reflecting on the Chadian church – she felt she was expected to be a teacher and a missionary. Despite this confusing position, through her own creativity and that of her friends in the Chadian choir and advanced English class, Marie was at times understood as playing roles internal to the ACT de Doyon that she neither expected nor knew about before arriving in Chad.

Marie’s experience was not the same as that of other SALTers or MCCers in Chad in 1998-99. Celia Mellinger described having a relatively clear sense of role, as mediated by her host father: “to learn how to be Chadian.” However, navigating it was very difficult in the absence of other North Americans with whom she could process “how to be Chadian.” Celia was a choir member and was also asked to teach her choir a song, but unlike Marie she was not a choir leader.⁷² Other MCCers whom I interviewed found themselves alienated by the music of their church and said they had “no role” in it.⁷³

On the other hand, Madjibe Levy, a middle-aged Chadian man who was the MCC-Chad country director for 1998-99 and is now a leader in the MCC West Africa office, offered his own view of the history of SALTER

contributions to music in Chad. His description shares a great deal with Marie's experience. He noted that former country representative Verna Olfert started the choir "Les joyeux serviteurs" in his church, L'Église du Foyer Fraternel of N'Djamena. Levy sang and provided leadership in this choir from 1983 to 1991.⁷⁴ He described the role of Anita Hershey, the first SALTER whom his church received, in 1991: she taught his church choir to sing solfège, which "allowed the choir leaders to better master melodies, notes, and harmonies."⁷⁵

Levy stated that "MCC volunteers have played the role of encouragers, teachers, and gift-givers of music to Chadian choristers" through sharing with Chadians the training in music they received in North America.⁷⁶ He placed this gift in the context of the vitality and importance of music in Chad: "For Africans and for Chadians in particular, music is an irreplaceable means of communication."⁷⁷ This means of communication, for him, was enhanced by the teaching of SALTERs – though, as Marie's navigation of her role demonstrates, the SALTERs' attempts to teach likely also constituted cross-cultural musical learning.⁷⁸

Conclusions

How, then, can we describe the involvement of MCC workers in music in their host country? In the case of Chad, MCC workers have had an important impact on church music, especially choral music (though choral music, as Marie's example demonstrates, rarely duplicates Western classical performance styles or repertoires). MCCers founded church choirs, taught various skills and ideas in those choirs, and also simply sang as choir members. In Marie's case, the choir provided an "insider's" place in the social fabric of the community – a profound learning experience, though Marie was also viewed as a teacher. Her experiences were not universal; MCCers' experiences ranged from disinterest and alienation from local music and worship, to limited participation in music, to strong and proactive involvement in it.

How does this cultural involvement map onto the official discourse of MCC's statements on the role of its development workers? While MCC statements emphasize the extent to which workers have moved from a teaching role to a partnership role – and the MCC-SALT program in particular

addresses itself to partnership and cultural exchange – Marie’s experience with music in Chad shows that Western MCCers may play multiple roles encompassing teaching, learning and partnership, and may understand those roles differently than do their local partners. “MCC development worker” comprises a role set containing multiple roles in both the worker’s official capacity and the everyday cultural life that the Western MCCer lives in the host country and host church.

What can we learn from this about the cultural dimensions of development work? While MCC officials have a great deal of power in describing and prescribing roles for their workers, and while MCCers themselves are reflective and creative role-players, in the Chadian case that I have described MCCers found many already-existing roles and role expectations for Western workers. The history of interactions between Western missionaries and Chadians, and between MCC and other development workers and Chadians, overlapped and formed a framework through which Western MCCers and Chadians had perforce to understand each other. New roles in development and in music were not simply invented but collaboratively constructed from pieces of old and well-known roles.

This history of interaction is no discriminator between the work of inter-cultural teaching and learning, and the more official or structural roles that MCC workers might play. The negotiation of roles can be confusing and difficult on both sides of the interaction. Both MCCer and Chadian church partners may well arrive at different but simultaneously held understandings of the roles.⁷⁹ In sum, MCCers have played important cultural roles in local Chadian churches, not least through their involvement in music. Chadian Christians and MCC workers together have created, out of their individual hopes and their already-existing expectations, new musical sounds and new cultural roles in their on-the-ground relationships.

Notes

¹ In Protestant churches that I visited both in Gounou-Gaya and in N’Djamena, hymns were printed, text only, in the *Chants de Victoire* hymnal: Commission des Chants de Victoire, *Chants de Victoire: recueil de cantiques pour réunions d’évangélisation, d’édification, missions de réveil et classes d’enfants* (Genève: Éditions «Je Sème», 1970).

² SALT stands for Serving and Learning Together. MCC ceased offering its SALT program in

Chad in 2001, though other programs continue through a regional office located in Burkina Faso.

³ Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982); Jonathan Dueck, “An Ethnographic Study of the Musical Practices of Three Edmonton Mennonite Churches” (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Alberta, 2003); Ruth H. Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English Town* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

⁴ These multiple actors present not one but many performances of musical roles, and receive them in not one but many ways. However, there are also shared musical meanings that are emergent in and change through the interactions of these actors.

⁵ In this paper, I will use the English spelling of Chad, rather than the French spelling of Tchad.

⁶ Interview data gathered in 2005 has been collected under the terms of the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board. All data has been gathered according to the ethical norms of the discipline of ethnomusicology: that is, with the informed consent of all interviewees in the context of an honest and open research relationship.

⁷ Robert S. Kreider, “The Impact of MCC Service on American Mennonites,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 44 (1970): 245-46.

⁸ Kreider, “The Impact,” 247; Ronald J.R. Mathies, “Service as (Trans)formation: The Mennonite Central Committee as Educational Institution,” *CGR* 13.2 (1995): 120-21; Ronald J.R. Mathies, “Service as (Trans)formation: MCC as Educational Institution” in *Unity Amidst Diversity: Mennonite Central Committee at 75*, eds. Robert S. Kreider and Ronald J. R. Mathies (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1996), 69, 72.

⁹ Mathies, “Service as (Trans)formation,” *CGR*, 123; “Service as (Trans)formation” in *Unity Amidst Diversity*, 73-75.

¹⁰ Mathies, “Service as (Trans)formation,” *CGR*, 126-30; “Service as (Trans)formation” in *Unity Amidst Diversity*, 77-78.

¹¹ Mathies, “Service as (Trans)formation,” *CGR*, 131; “Service as (Trans)formation” in *Unity Amidst Diversity*, 78.

¹² Fred DeVries, “Worldviews and policy action: a comparative study of the Mennonite Central Committee Canada and Oxfam-Canada” (M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Guelph, 1991), 17-21.

¹³ Richard A. Yoder et al., *Development to a Different Drummer: Anabaptist/Mennonite Experiences and Perspectives* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005), 34-36; Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 97-102.

¹⁴ MCC, “Mission Statement,” *MCC Contact* 15. 3 (1991): 1; Mennonite Central Committee, “MCC - About Us - Mission Statement.” 2005. <http://www.mcc.org/about/whatis.html>.

¹⁵ MCC, *Mennonite Central Committee Workbook: Reports and Statistics* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1999).

¹⁶ Tim Hallett, “Symbolic Power and Organizational Culture,” *Sociological Theory* 21.2 (2003): 128. This role-making capability only functions if rank-and-file members recognize the elites as legitimate spokespersons.

¹⁷ Yoder et al., *Development to a Different Drummer*, 208-11. While Yoder, Redekop and

Jantzi's study concerns Mennonites working with Mennonite Economic Development Associates and in the secular non-governmental organization world as well as with MCC, their sketch of values held by Mennonite development workers in general specifically mentions the role model that previous generations of MCC workers provided. The study characterizes MCC work as often focused on local relationship-building. Further, these roles and values become important to the identity of not only MCC workers but of other Mennonites in contact with MCC workers. See Donald B. Kraybill, "From Enclave to Engagement: MCC and the Transformation of Mennonite Identity" in *Unity Amidst Diversity*, 19. Leo J. Driedger and Howard Kauffman, *The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989), 176-78, 257-58.

¹⁸ Kristen Grace et al., "MCCers and Evangelicals: Perspectives of Development," *CGR* 13.3 (1995): 365.

¹⁹ David R. Maines, "Social Organization and Social Structure in Symbolic Interactionist Thought," *Annual Review of Sociology* 3 (1977): 235. My argument here reflects a fundamental principle of frame theories of symbolic interaction: that sources of information about role that are external to the interaction context impact the kinds of role the role-player can perform, as famously argued by Erving Goffman. See Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor, 1959), 222-24.

²⁰ Robert S. Kreider and Rachel Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 85-86; Yoder et al., *Development to a Different Drummer*, 42-46.

²¹ Jan Jenner, "Development and Peace: You Can't Have One Without the Other" in *Development to a Different Drummer*, 97, 99.

²² *Ibid.*, 97, 110-11.

²³ Kreider and Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger*, 92.

²⁴ In contrast to the resources found in missionary accounts, ethnomusicologists have produced very little documentation of church music in Chad. Monique Brandily has contributed substantial ethnomusicological documentation of music there, but she has focused on the Muslim North. See Monique Brandily, "Songs to Birds among the Teda of Chad," *Ethnomusicology* (1982): 371. French-language anthropological studies in Chad also provide some documentation of musical instruments in Southern Chadian life, but these sources avoid music associated with Christians. Examples are Françoise Dumas-Champion, *Les Masa du Tchad: Bétail et société* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983); Claude Pairault, *Boum-le-Grand: Village d'Iro* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1966).

²⁵ Mario J. Azevedo and Emmanuel U. Nnadozie, *Chad: A Nation in Search of its Future* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 108; Jacques Hallaire, *Naissance d'une église africaine: Lettres et chroniques du pays sar, Tchad 1952-1989* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1998), 5.

²⁶ Azevedo and Nnadozie, *Chad*, 108-9; Hallaire, *Naissance d'une église africaine*; Rodney Venberg, "The Lutheran Brethren Church in Chad and Cameroun" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1970).

²⁷ Hallaire, *Naissance d'une église africaine*, 37.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 75, 87-88.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁰ Ibid., 92.

³¹ Ibid., 25.

³² Ibid., 278.

³³ Ibid., 234. In addition, in the 1960s, both the political climate of the newly independent Chad and the advent of the Second Vatican Council meant the entire Mass had to be reconstructed in the Sara language. This language is tonal, like many sub-Saharan African languages. Hallaire reflected that using Gregorian tunes for the liturgy was no longer possible, since the melodic contours of the chants would change the meanings of Sara words by distorting the tonal contours of the words. He set this task before a group of Chadian catechists, who reconstructed the liturgical music of the mass in newly composed tunes, using local musical idioms. See Hallaire, *Naissance d'une église africaine*, 187-88.

³⁴ C.R. Marsh, *Streams in the Sahara* (Bath: Echoes of Service, 1972), 36-37.

³⁵ Ibid., 50-51. Marsh's descriptions of his evangelical activity are especially interesting, since he describes his evangelism and evangelical storytelling in terms strongly reminiscent of his descriptions of traveling Muslim religious experts. See Marsh, *Streams in the Sahara*, 10-11, 21, 123-24, 138-41.

³⁶ Ibid., 62-65, 78, 91-97, 103-105.

³⁷ Ibid., 94.

³⁸ Ibid., 95.

³⁹ Ibid., 166, 162.

⁴⁰ Abe Taves and Hilma Taves, *From Thatched Huts to Celestial City* (Three Hills, AB: Abe and Hilma Taves, 1996), 14-15, 94, 61.

⁴¹ Robert K. Merton, "The Role-Set: Problems in Sociological Theory," *British Journal of Sociology* 8 (1957): 106.

⁴² There is some documentation of Mennonite mission activity in Chad though not, to my knowledge, of activity in the south. Raymond Eyer, a French Mennonite missionary, was present in Abéché in the north of Chad from 1958 until at least 1971. See the following for a description of the beginning of his mission: Raymond Eyer, "Lettre du Tchad" *Bulletin du Comité de Mission Des Eglises Evangeliques-Mennonites de France (Extrait de Christ Seul)* 1 (1960): 6. C.R. Marsh records two contacts with Eyer on trips to the North, the second in 1970-71. See Marsh, *Streams in the Sahara*, 118-19, 169-72. Marion Hostetler wrote a fictional account of a girl's experience in the north of Chad in "Achéba" with a development organization called "Church Overseas Aid," usually printed in its abbreviated form, "COA," describing the girl's father's work in agricultural development in the arid north and the co-operation of COA workers with a northern missionary station. See Marion Hostetler, *African Adventure* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1976). Descriptions of music in a church in the north, whose congregants are mostly southerners who work for the Chadian government, conform to the accounts of church music in Chad cited above: European-origin hymns sung with a leader, who lines out the hymn, and a congregation who respond. See Hostetler, *African Adventure*, 106-108. Hostetler's book was written on the basis of a research trip to Chad in the summer of 1974, just as MCC work in the area began.

⁴³ Eric Olfert, "Chad (Country Report)" in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1980* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1981) 34, 35.

⁴⁴ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1975* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1976), 9. The United Evangelical Mission (MEU) originated with Western missionaries from the Sudan United Mission and TEAM in 1969, and in 1988 MEU became part of the organizational structure of the Église évangélique au Tchad, a national Chadian church initially connected with TEAM. See: Reformiert online, “Chad - (Afrika).” 2002. Database on-line. Available from Stiftung Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek Grosse Kirche Emden. http://www.reformiert-online.net/weltweit/25_de.php. See also Worldwide Evangelization for Christ, “WEC Chad’s organisation.” 2005. http://www.wec-int.org/chad/wec_chad's_organisation.htm.

⁴⁵ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1976* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1977), 15. “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1977* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1978) 17, 18.

⁴⁶ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1978* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1979) 19, 20.

⁴⁷ Eric Olfert, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1979* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1980), 20.

⁴⁸ Eric Olfert, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1982* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1983), 24.

⁴⁹ See “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook 1976*, 15; MCC, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook 1978*, 19-20.

⁵⁰ David Foxall and Justine Foxall, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1985* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1986), 48, 50; same authors, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1986* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1987), 45, 47.

⁵¹ Foxall and Foxall, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook 1985*, 48, 50.

⁵² Foxall and Foxall, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1983* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1984), 47, 49; same authors, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook 1986*, 45, 48.

⁵³ Foxall and Foxall, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1984* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1985), 49, 52.

⁵⁴ Foxall and Foxall, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1987* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1988), 47, 46.

⁵⁵ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1990* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1991), 41, 43.

⁵⁶ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1991* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1992), 49, 51.

⁵⁷ Catherine Sawatsky and Terrance Sawatsky, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1993* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1994) 15, 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 15, 16; Greg Brandenburg, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 2000* (Akron, PA: MCC, 2001) 13, 14.

⁵⁹ Levy Madjibe, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1998* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1999) 14; same author, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1999* (Akron, PA: MCC, 2000), 14.

⁶⁰ Greg Brandenburg, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics*

2000 (Akron, PA: MCC, 2001), 13, 14; same author, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 2001/2002* (Akron, PA: MCC, 2002), 13, 15.

⁶¹ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1988* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1989), 47.

⁶² Brent Friesen and Judy Friesen, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook: Reports and Statistics 1996* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1997), 17-18.

⁶³ “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook 1988*, 43, 47.

⁶⁴ Kreider and Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger*, 332.

⁶⁵ Sawatsky and Sawatsky, “Chad (Country Report)” in *MCC Workbook 1993*, 15-16.

⁶⁶ This section of the paper is based on personal Interviews with Marie Moyer, former MCC-SALT volunteer in Chad, conducted in 2000 and 2005. Unless otherwise cited, all references to Marie Moyer are to these interviews.

⁶⁷ Doyon is a *quartier* of Moundou.

⁶⁸ The church had two keyboards: a small battery-powered keyboard and a new, large one that needed to be plugged in. The church normally did not have power but rented a generator so this keyboard could be used for performances in celebration of the new church building.

⁶⁹ Most of each church service at the ACT de Doyon was conducted in the Gor language, with which Marie was unfamiliar on arrival in Chad. That the contemporary choir practiced in French was helpful as she developed relationships within the group.

⁷⁰ Doreen Klassen and Mennonite World Conference, *International Songbook* (Carol Stream, IL: Mennonite World Conference, 1990).

⁷¹ Moyer noted, however, that some choir members knew both the diatonic scale and the solfège system well before she arrived.

⁷² Personal Interview with Celia Mellinger, former MCC-SALT volunteer in Chad (2000).

⁷³ Personal Interview with Dan and Phebe Balzer (former MCC-Chad volunteers (2005).

⁷⁴ The choir, “Les joyeux serviteurs,” originated in N’Djamena but due to the war was relocated to Moundou until 1985. The choir subsequently continued both in Moundou and in N’Djamena, to which Levy moved, from 1985 to 1991.

⁷⁵ My translation. Levy’s text: “La formation donnée par le volontaire du MCC a permis aux animateurs de mieux maîtriser la mélodie, les notes, les accords.”

⁷⁶ My translation. Levy’s text: “Les volontaires du MCC ont joué le rôle de stimulateurs, formateurs et encadreurs musicaux des choristes au Tchad car les jeunes du Tchad n’ont pas accès à la formation musicale.”

⁷⁷ My translation. Levy’s text: “Pour les africains en général et tchadiens en particulier, la musique est un moyen de communication irremplaçable.”

⁷⁸ The successor to the MCC-SALT program in Chad, which ended in 2001, is a cultural exchange program called Harmonie, sponsored by MCC-Québec in which Francophones from Africa, Europe and North America live in community in Montréal and practice theology, service, and music. While music was by and large an unofficial part of the MCC-SALT program in Chad, it is an official and central part of Harmonie.

⁷⁹ MCC-SALT workers in Chad may well have been at a special disadvantage in understanding the context of their interactions with Chadians, by which they negotiated the roles they played in Chad, because of the emphasis MCC-Chad’s SALT program placed on immersion

in the Chadian context. In the experience of workers whom I interviewed, this meant a lack of discussion and processing time with other Westerners in Chad. Key ethnomusicological studies and studies of cross-cultural education stress the importance of having an interpretive community with whom the cross-cultural worker or student shares cultural background, in understanding and negotiating appropriate roles in the cross-cultural environment. See for example Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance Among Syrian Jews* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998); Susan Talburt and Melissa A. Stewart, "What's the Subject of Study Abroad? Race, Gender, and 'Living Culture,'" *The Modern Language Journal* 83.2 (1999): 163.

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