Global History of Music

Please answer three of the five questions below in the time allotted. Support your answers with references to specific scholars, publications, or musical details (artists, styles, compositions, etc.) wherever appropriate. Should you run out of time, list at the end of your essay a few remaining points in abbreviated form. Although some of the questions are closely related, and some redundancy in your answers may be inevitable, please try not to dwell on the same information if possible. Both breadth and depth of knowledge are important.

1. What does it mean to write “music history” in the context of the Arab, North African, and Ottoman/Turkish Middle East? Based on your knowledge of extant scholarship, identify the major historical narratives, trajectories, or discourses that you discern and discuss their major issues or concerns as they have evolved since ca. 1930. How do these narratives intertwine or overlap? Where are the lacunae in this literature? What scholarly preoccupations, scholarly biases, or obstacles to scholarship do they reveal?

2. Although the discipline of ethnomusicology, especially among its more anthropologically minded practitioners, has conventionally focused more on synchronic rather than diachronic studies, recent years have witnessed renewed attention to historical process and documentation, in tandem with the emergence of a new subfield dubbed “historical ethnomusicology.” Drawing upon specific examples, discuss the nature of contemporary historical studies in ethnomusicology. To what extent do these studies differ, in approach, emphasis, or nature of inquiry, from historical work pursued by professionally trained historians? Similarly, based on your own experience, how do they differ, in approach or emphasis, from the scholarship of historical musicologists? Is this new subfield really so new? If so, how? If not, what (or who) are its roots?

3. Select five publications (either book or article-length) that to your mind constitute pivotal works in the intellectual history of Middle Eastern music studies—preferably, but not necessarily exclusively, from different decades scholarly eras. Write a review essay that provides an overview of the works’ contents, and that details, in specific terms, their scholarly significance and impact. How have these publications shifted the discipline’s focus, corrected prior misconceptions, or pointed scholars in new directions? Conclude with a general statement about how any of your chosen studies might have relevance for your own dissertation project or future work.

4. Christopher Waterman begins *Jùjù: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (1990) by writing, “This is a book about the relationship of music, identity, and power” (1). What does identity mean to Waterman, and why is it important to him? In the last twenty-five years, how have scholars of music approached the topic? What changes do you see between the moment when Waterman wrote and today? Is identity still an important concept in music studies?

5. Compare and contrast scholarship on music in the continental United States with that from elsewhere in the Americas (i.e., Latin America and Hawai’i). In what ways is mainland U.S. music “exceptional” and in what ways is it part of a single larger hemispheric American history?