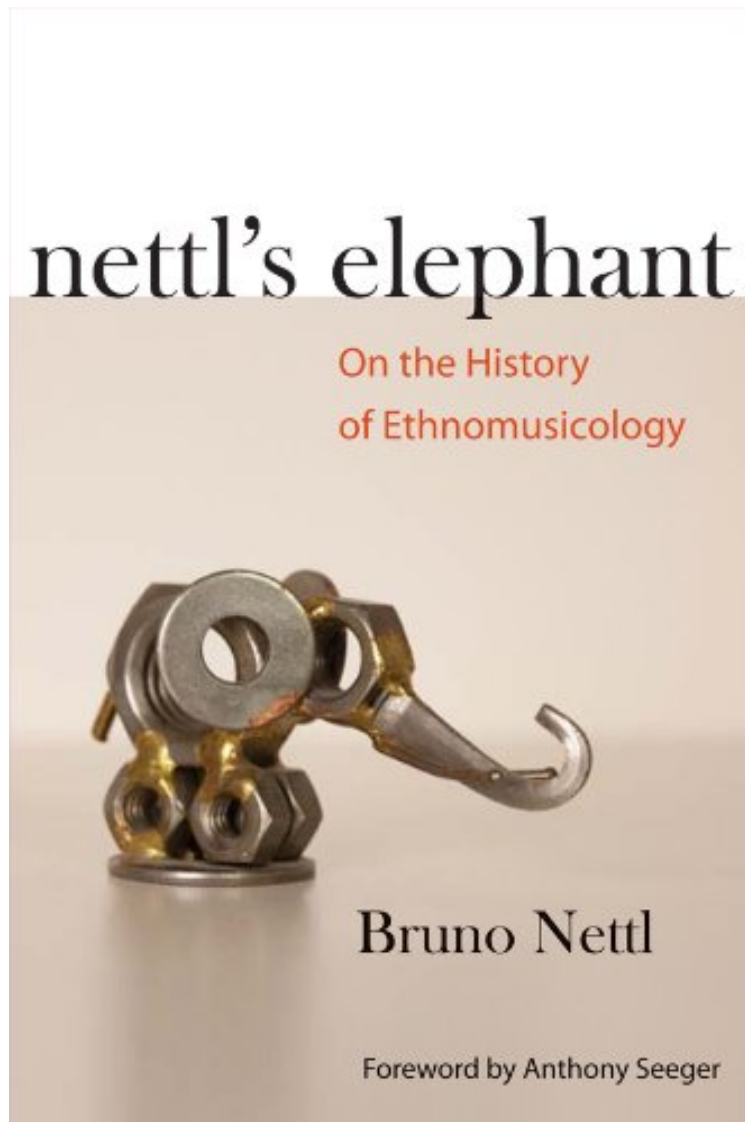


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Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology

Bruno Nettl

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Bruno Nettl : Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nettl's Elephant: On the History of Ethnomusicology:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Holding A Cloud: The Rise of Ethnomusicology By Dr. Debra Jan Bibel Never before in history has the world's music been in such flux. Musicians in their travels have always shared and exchanged ideas, tunes, rhythms, and instrument design, but in increasing fashion over the past 50 years, such adaptations among musicians, appreciated by the educated ear of listeners, have developed a spreading, somewhat homogeneous global popular music, with overlaying and fusing of American and West European styles. First radio and recordings and now the internet with YouTube and iTunes and other digital downloads have truly made this planet

a global village. Musical boundaries (never rigid) are porous and even amoeboid. Traditional and folk musics are fast becoming library documents of scores and recordings. Such is among the challenges of a relatively recent (since circa 1950) area of music study, ethnomusicology (neacute;e comparative musicology and cultural musicology), which is more about anthropology than systematic musical structures. Among the doyens of this field is Bruno Nettl, now an emeritus professor, who looks back in this collection of his essays and papers. He observes the origins of interest in the "others" of music from a Western perspective, on the changing attitudes over centuries and decades on the merits of exotic, improvised, and unnotated music, the expansion of what constitutes music and world music in particular, and the creation of scholarly societies to focus on the different musical traditions. The essays often cover the same territory because the questions of form, scope, and methods have been debated continually with only consensus rulings and cease-fires. Even some terms are relative. After all, an ethnomusicologist from Chicago might study South Indian devotional songs, but an indigenous Indian doing so would find the term offensive and consider herself a pure musicologist (perhaps regarding Anglican hymns in England, ethnomusicology). This nebulous state of the field is why in part the book refers to an elephant (as three blind men giving different descriptions of the beast depending on where they touch). While the basic world music fan may find such academic reading irrelevant and boring, I find myself fascinated and amused. Nettl's frank views have a dry wit and are always constructive. This ethnomusicological book is indeed about the institution, the very notion of a distinct formal program of study, but it touches some central problems of music in general: the evolution of music within society (including the societies of whales and birds, whose songs have been established to be learned dialects and which change over time); the commonality of social unifying purpose and of listener appreciation; medical or healing aspects across cultures; authenticity and core traditions; the love-hate status of musicians (often malcontents, free-spirits, ethnic minorities, lower economic classes) and the role of their diaspora in spreading and adapting music. Nettl brings his book to a conclusion with some diverse reflections on recent approaches in gender distinctions; musical cartography (regional mutual influences); the Blackfoot Native American pow-wows; the guru-student relationship of learning a set of musical canon. He also includes a thoughtful riff on Kurt Weil, the German-Jewish composer of *Threepenny Opera* and *September Song*, who fled the Nazis (as Nettl and his family did from Czechoslovakia) to come to America. The music-related identity of such an eacute;migree becomes the underlying focus. Aaron Copland, whose ballets *Rodeo*, *Appalachian Spring*, and *Billy the Kid* and his *Fanfare for The Common Man* tap into the American ethos, was a Russia-born Jew. What, then, is the musical identity of a general ethnomusicologist? Is it, as with many cultures which do not distinguish art nor music apart from associated socio-cultural activities, AUM?0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Elephant of Musicology World. By Anant NArkkong Very useful historical resource for Ethnomusicological studies. Much of critical thinkings, humour sense and insightful information. I always enjoy reading Nettl books. chob mak mak krab.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Patricia R. Campbell Bruno Nettl is fabulous and great help with my research!

From one of the most lauded scholars in ethnomusicology comes this enlightening and highly personal narrative on the evolution and current state of the field of ethnomusicology. Surveying the field he helped establish, Bruno Nettl investigates how concepts such as evolution, geography, and history serve as catalysts for advancing ethnomusicological methods and perspectives. x000B_x000B_Nettl's entertaining collection covers his scholarly interests ranging from Native American to Mediterranean to Middle Eastern contexts while laying out the pivotal moments of the field and conversations with the giants of its past. Nettl moves from reflections on the history of ethnomusicology to evaluations of the principal organizations in the field, interspersing those broader discussions with shorter essays focusing on neglected literature and personal experiences.

"This compelling new collection of essays by Bruno Nettl, the master chronicler of the discipline of ethnomusicology, should be regarded as essential reading for ethnomusicologists of all stripes, from neophyte graduate students to senior scholars. Erudite yet accessible, always insightful, beautifully written, and laced with Nettl's signature touches of wit and humor, it represents an important addition to the historiography of our field by the scholar who knows it best."--Michael Bakan, author of *World Music: Traditions and Transformations* "A brilliant collection by a renowned author who has for decades shaped thinking in the field on which he reflects in these essays. . . . No other author could write with such authority and personal experience about ethnomusicology."--from the foreword by Anthony Seeger, author of *Why Suya Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an ian People* "The last living member of American ethnomusicology's pantheon of founding fathers, Nettl has written yet another classic. . . . Essential."--"Choice" "A brilliant collection by a renowned author who has for decades shaped thinking in the field on which he reflects in these essays. . . . No other author could write with such authority and personal experience about ethnomusicology."--from the foreword by Anthony Seeger, author of *Why Suya Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an ian People* About the Author Bruno Nettl is professor emeritus of music and anthropology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the author of *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* and many other books.