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REGULAR ARTICLE

Cultivation of global consciousness through intercultural music engagement

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Abstract

This article explores the potential for intercultural music engagement to cultivate global consciousness through an overview of interdisciplinary research into this social practice, and literature on cultural identity, diversity and globalisation more broadly. Experimental design, action research, ethnographic and therapeutic case studies reveal a social practice with capacity to prime affiliation with other cultures and identification with all humanity, as well as develop reflexivity and ethical action in contexts of cultural diversity. The complexity of both global consciousness and intercultural music engagement warrants inquiry from multiple disciplinary perspectives, using a variety of research approaches. A broad understanding of psychology, inclusive of therapeutic practice and orientations underpinned by pragmatic philosophy may be a fruitful direction for future research into global consciousness, given it comprises knowledge, emotional and ethical components, as well as reflexive action.

KEYWORDS

cultural identity, diversity, global consciousness, intercultural, music, reflexivity

1 | INTRODUCTION

The impacts of globalisation are many and varied, including migration, advances in communication technologies and the rise of the global marketplace. While increased connection may help address global issues such as climate change, as Liu and MacDonald (2016) observed, globalisation raises complex issues related to cultural identity and dialogue across different cultural values. Collective success requires global consciousness (GC), ‘a state of being in which one's actions are reflexively defined in relation to an awareness of global interconnection, cultural heterogeneity and moral interdependence’ (Liu & MacDonald, 2016, p. 313). This is a highly nuanced state, with operationalisation of the GC construct having since been developed to encompass Cosmopolitan Orientation (Leung et al., 2015), Identification with all Humanity

(McFarland et al., 2012) and Global Orientations (Chen et al., 2016). Research points to the capacity of participants in a state of GC to demonstrate greater cooperation and pro-social behaviour directed to outgroups compared to those high in national consciousness (Chen et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). Among other research directions first proposed by Liu and MacDonald (2016) are those that explore the development of GC. Cultivating a state that encompasses knowledge, emotional and ethical components as well as reflexive action, calls for approaches such as therapeutic practice, socially embedded research and action research approaches. Liu and MacDonald (2016) stressed the importance of studying GC using these methods, however they also placed them in the domain of ‘less empirical disciplines than psychology’ (p. 326). Despite this, their conceptualisation of GC drew heavily from the work of Hubert Hermans and colleagues,

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which they described as ‘centered in clinical psychology and situated at the intersection between the arts and sciences’ (Liu & MacDonald, 2016, p. 314). In this article I engage extensively with Liu and MacDonald’s (2016) early conceptualisation of GC and their proposed research directions, and propose that a broader understanding of psychology may be fruitful for GC research. I also consider the potential for intercultural music engagement (IME) to cultivate GC, through an overview of interdisciplinary research into this social practice and literature on cultural identity, diversity and globalisation more broadly.

Intercultural music engagement is ‘the process whereby people come into contact with cultures other than their own through participating in a musical act’ (Crooke, Thompson, et al., 2024, p. 29). Drawing on Small’s (1998) concept of *musicking*, a musical act encompasses musical performing, listening, rehearsing, practicing, composing or dancing. The most superficial level at which IME may develop GC is via priming through music listening. Lending support to the viability of this research direction is the increasing cultural diversity of music consumption via global streaming services (Bello & Garcia, 2021), and research revealing a decline in GC with age, suggesting a cohort effect where younger generations learn from mass media (Zhang et al., 2024). It is also supported by existing study into cross-cultural music engagement for empathy and social connection (Li et al., 2023; Neto et al., 2016; Vuoskoski et al., 2017) which will be discussed further in this article. Broader research into IME from psychology, sociology and ethnomusicology suggests a field ripe for exploration of GC, the practice requiring understanding and acknowledgement of cultural difference, shared features and issues of power. To coordinate musically with others requires listening and action—a reflexive manner. Since music is embedded within social and cultural contexts, this kind of reflexivity can readily extend from auditory and physical coordination to considerations of social roles and cultural expectations. In particular, IME requires cultural sensitivity as well as coordination to honour the respective cultural elements brought to the music and the context in which it is played. This level of awareness, understanding and response mirrors the hallmarks of global consciousness identified by Liu and MacDonald (2016)—holding space for both interconnection and cultural heterogeneity as well as respectfully navigating the deeply held values of diverse groups. The act of coordinating on musical forms that reference different cultural elements can promote bonding and the development of new collective identities that value both cultural difference and identification with humanity as a whole. Research related to each of these aspects of IME will be elaborated upon, highlighting its potential to offer new directions in the study of GC. A brief explanation of my disciplinary position follows to contextualise my perspective.

1.1 | Disciplinary position: psychology as a heterogeneous field

As a researcher and practising psychologist, I consider myself part of a broad and heterogeneous field of psychology. Liu and MacDonald (2016) pointed to the relational ethics of indigenous Chinese psychology for their inclusion of an ethical component to GC—a departure from a purely natural science epistemology popular in psychological science. As a community psychologist, I found the inclusion of ethics consistent with the orientation of psychology in which I was trained. Community psychology—a field of inquiry and practice—is explicit about guiding values and principles, which include social justice, collaboration, empowerment, citizen participation, sense of community and respect for human diversity (Kloos et al., 2012; Riemer et al., 2020; Tebes, 2017a). The action component of Liu and MacDonald’s (2016) conceptualisation of GC also called to mind a pragmatic philosophical position in the tradition of scholars including Dewey (1910/2007) and Peirce (1940/1955) who considered knowledge to be generated through active problem solving in particular social contexts. My main research area is IME, and as well as engaging in therapeutic practice I have also been a community music practitioner. A pragmatic philosophy underpins my inquiry and practice. Tebes (2017b) argued that pragmatic philosophy is aligned with community psychology principles of being ‘participatory, pluralist and action focused’ (p. 29). Likewise, I have found it well-suited to the study of IME, which like GC, requires bridging knowledge of the global with the local and specific.

My experience of both therapy and community music have been that they are characterised by relational knowledge practices—‘engaging “with” and “for” rather than “on” or “about”’ (Sonn et al., 2022, p. 274.) the communities and individuals I have served. Knowledge production in both therapeutic and community music practices are necessarily context specific, embodied and experiential. There is a turn within community psychology to qualitative enquiry into arts engagements to promote affiliation and togetherness (Andriolo et al., 2022). The co-production of artistic work, involving arts practitioners and researchers, is argued as being most important in theorising the work. Such action research is a departure from the highly logical positivist approach that characterised my early training in psychology which followed the scientist-practitioner model (Petersen, 2007). Nonetheless, I continue to be influenced by my early and subsequent training, while negotiating the contradictions this can produce. In a similar state to that of GC, I remain open to an ecology of knowledges. I begin therefore with research directions in IME that are more aligned with what is broadly understood as empirical research

in the psychological sciences, including priming and implicit association tests (IAT; Greenwald et al., 1998). A review of these studies is presented first, followed by a broader examination of research in IME that encompasses a variety of approaches, including social network analysis, action research, ethnography and therapeutic practice.

2 | REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON INTERCULTURAL MUSIC ENGAGEMENT

2.1 | Exposure to cross-cultural music: Implications for priming global consciousness

Liu and MacDonald (2016) proposed a research direction investigating what short-term emotion-based primes might induce states of GC. Drawing on evolutionary theory that music promotes social bonding, as an emotional, expressive medium (Brown, 2000; Tarr et al., 2014), Vuoskoski et al. (2017) investigated whether music listening could prime cross-cultural empathy and affiliation. Their research brought together two lines of enquiry: the capacity of music to evoke empathic responses and emotional contagion (Clarke et al., 2015); and the use of short and simple manipulations to shift implicit attitudes to outgroups (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006). Randomly allocating 61 British study participants to one of two conditions, Indian instrumental music or West African instrumental music, Vuoskoski et al. (2017) found listening to Indian music led to implicit preference for Indian people relative to West African people, and listening to West African music led to implicit preference for West African people relative to Indian people. Those high in trait empathy were more susceptible to the effect.

Vuoskoski et al. (2017) sought to isolate the musical component, using instrumental music listening to control for other factors such as lyrics and cultural contexts. While this is ideal for experimental design, cultural context represents an important part of IME. Other studies have used the IAT following deeper IME, which included further exploration of the cultural context of the music. Neto et al. (2016) exposed half a sample of 229 light-skinned sixth-grade pupils in Lisbon, Cascais and Setúbal, Portugal, to a 20-week (comprising a 90-min session per week) cross-cultural music program about Portuguese and Cape Verdean (West Africa) music traditions. The control group attended their usual classes. The IAT and Explicit Anti-Dark Skin Attitude Test (Greenwald et al., 1998) were administered at four time points—one before commencing the program and three following the program—immediately, after 3 months and 2 years. For the experimental group, implicit and explicit anti-dark skin attitudes were lower after the program, an effect that endured in subsequent testing.

Li et al. (2023) devised a model for Rich Intercultural Music Engagement (RIME) and a corresponding music program. White Australians ($n=58$) were allocated randomly to learn one of two string instruments—Chinese *pipa* or Middle Eastern *oud*. Participants learned the cultural and social context, music traditions and a folk song from a musician of the respective cultures over 4_30-min modules. In addition to the IAT, pre and post measures included the Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies (MIRIPS) Questionnaires (MIRIPS Collaboration, 2013), Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003) and a modified version of the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) Scale (Aron et al., 1992). A significant increase in tolerance toward people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnocultural empathy followed the RIME intervention. Feelings of social connectedness toward Chinese people by participants who learned the Chinese *pipa* and toward Middle Eastern people by participants who learned the Middle Eastern *oud* significantly increased. Implicit bias against Chinese people was significantly reduced following the RIME intervention, however this effect was not observed for the Middle Eastern *oud* group, ‘perhaps reflecting the entrenched nature of biases against Middle Eastern people’ (Li et al., 2023, p. 11).

While these findings suggest research into music as a prime for GC would be a fruitful direction, the nature of the musical primes require reflection. In the context of globalisation, numerous questions are raised as to the nature of culture, cultural identity and diversity, and these questions are not removed from issues of power. These considerations are further elaborated in the next section and may serve to orient thinking on suitable musical primes for such research.

2.2 | Music, cultural identity, diversity and identification with all humanity

In the aforementioned studies, cultures are treated as independent and internally coherent. However, in the context of globalisation several scholars have questioned the utility of conceptualising culture as a categorical entity (Benhabib, 2002; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Jacoby et al., 2020; Morris et al., 2015). In this age of *super-diversity* (Vertovec, 2007), it is increasingly hard to conceptualise social identity solely as ingroups and outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Berry et al. (2011) discussed the development of global identities, ‘without having to physically live next to other cultural groups’ (p. 359). This also raises questions about how to conceive of cultural diversity. In a review of cultural research and associated policy, Morris et al. (2015) outlined three paradigms—universalism, culturalism and polyculturalism—and their corresponding ideologies—colourblindness, multiculturalism and interculturalism. Rosenthal and Levy (2012) differentiated these

three ‘diversity ideologies’ as colourblindness—that cultural group distinctions should be downplayed; multiculturalism—that the distinctness of racial/ethnic groups are important; and polyculturalism—which focuses on interaction and influence across cultures. Diamond (2024) argued for the addition of ‘globalisation’ as a distinct ideology—the feeling of belonging to a global and international community to which cultural groups play a valuable role.

For Morris et al. (2015), interculturalism is an ideology associated with policy that aims to stimulate intercultural contact and dialogue, and polyculturalism is a scientific paradigm that purports that cultural influence is partial and plural. For Rosenthal and Levy (2012) polyculturalism is the lay belief that cultures are continuously interacting and shaping one another. Polyculturalism and interculturalism are related, but used differently by different scholars, and in the remainder of this article I defer to the terminology used by the cited author. Notably, polyculturalism/interculturalism contrasts with multiculturalism in that the latter emphasises preservation and distinctness of cultures over their interconnection. While Liu and MacDonald (2016) referred to the relative merits of conceiving of, and managing cultural difference through the lenses of multiculturalism, rooted cosmopolitanism and paternalism, the following study of IME considered cultural difference in terms of Rosenthal and Levy's (2012) diversity ideologies.

Using social network analysis to consider IME among Australian musicians ($n=104$), the study highlighted the importance of cultural elements in music practice, with higher endorsement for polyculturalism and multiculturalism, than for colourblindness (Fraser, 2024). Further contextualising their ideological position on cultural diversity, 36 of the musicians identified with two or more cultural identities, and affiliations to 195 different music genres were nominated, including popular genres such as pop, jazz and world music, specific cultural genres such as Klezmer, Rebetiko and Okinawan folk, fusion genres such as Afrojazz, Indian fusion, Italian jazz and more unique genres such as contemporary Iranian/Australian. This study hinted at the complexity of IME, where coming ‘into contact with cultures other than their own’ (Crooke, Thompson, et al., 2024, p. 29) is far from straight forward. Identification of distinctive genres such as contemporary Iranian/Australian alludes to how IME may provide a rich context for the articulation of *hyphenated selves*—identities formed through the negotiation of cultural difference and shaped by the dynamics of shared creative practice (Fine & Sirin, 2007). As suggested by Fine and Sirin such identities emerge in contested and multilayered environments where cultural boundaries are both traversed and redefined. Similarly, Bhabha's (2004) concept of the *third space* offers a valuable framework for understanding IME as a generative zone of hybridity, where musicians from different traditions come together not to merely blend styles, but

to engage in a process of mutual transformation and meaning-making. Finally, Anzaldúa's (2012) concept of *borderlands* and *nepantla*—a state of cultural liminality—speaks to the complex positionality of artists who operate between cultures, navigating ambiguity and contradiction. The way such lived experience might cultivate a ‘dialogic type of ethics that is able to respect and incorporate a variety of moral perspectives across a variety of situations’ (Liu & MacDonald, 2016, p. 321) is worthy of further research.

Hermans and Kempen (1998) encouraged the field of cross-cultural psychology to turn toward investigation at the cultural contact zones, given the development of cultural hybridisation, a heterogeneous global system and increasing cultural complexity. Investigations of IME necessarily occur at these zones and demonstrate the range of different configurations of contact and ways that cultural diversity is acknowledged and celebrated. Berry (2005) defined acculturation as the ‘dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members’ (p. 698). Berry proposed four acculturation strategies including assimilation (adopting receiving culture and abandoning heritage culture), separation (rejecting receiving culture and retaining heritage culture), integration (adopting receiving culture and retaining heritage culture) and marginalisation (rejecting both receiving and heritage cultures) (Berry, 2006). The integration strategy or biculturalism, has been most strongly associated with positive adjustment and well-being (Berry, 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). While much of the acculturation research considers adjustment of immigrants to a new host-culture, the contact zones extend far beyond this context and the unidirectionality implied by such research. A review of IME programs for adults identified music participation facilitating contact between host communities and new arrivals in community and educational settings, and between diverse groups, by virtue of their shared experience of displacement, marginalisation or resettlement in places such as refugee camps (Fraser, 2024). Digital platforms represent another contact zone. During COVID-19 lockdown people turned to technology to facilitate remote intercultural music collaborations, broadcasting performances via YouTube to a global audience (Fraser et al., 2021). Performances reflected cultural diversity in participation and musical style, evoking comments such as ‘We are in this together from every corner of the world’ (Fraser et al., 2021, p. 7) about the collective musical response to the pandemic. Liu and MacDonald (2016) observed that the superordinate category of all humanity is in constant tension with self-categorisation as individual and subordinate group membership. The shared global experience of the pandemic and international music collaborations appeared to prime this superordinate category. Liu and MacDonald (2016) also noted that ‘distance-transcending technologies like the internet’ (p.

325) may provide a social space responsive to the needs of diverse groups. Through online presentation of a diversity of cultural genres of music, the YouTube case studies considered by Fraser et al. (2021) highlight how music within such a social context can prime a multilayered identity, acknowledging both shared humanity and cultural difference.

That the global transmission of music predates contemporary communication technologies speaks to the potency of music as a highly mobile cultural artefact, readily adapted for different cultural contexts. Versions of *Bella Ciao*, a folk song from the 16th Century made famous by the Italian anti-fascist resistance in the mid 1940s, include those with Argentinian, Spanish, Polish, Kurdish and Egyptian lyrics and musical stylings (Salerno & van de Warenburg, 2023). *Bengawan Solo* is another such example, a song written by Javanese composer Gesang Martohartono just before the Japanese occupation of Java in the early 1940s (Kartomi, 1998). Kartomi (1998) described the wide popularity of the song with versions in Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Burmese, English and Japanese. The musical style of the original song is known as *kroncong* which draws influence from Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese and Malayo-Indonesian musical traditions resulting from centuries of intercultural contact (Kartomi, 1998). These cultural artefacts capture the integration that occurred at numerous contact zones and reflect the hybrid cultural identities that resulted. They point to musical stimuli that could be investigated as a potential primes for GC, including music accompanied by visuals that show culturally diverse musicians collaborating on fusion genres, or multiple versions of the same song performed in different cultural contexts. Such stimuli may prime elements of GC such as respect for cultural diversity and identification with all humanity.

Bella Ciao has been used to mobilise support for different social movements (Salerno & van de Warenburg, 2023) and *Bengawan Solo* has been used in educational settings to engage students in integrative thinking about global issues such as history, geography and ecology (Wang, 2021). Both examples demonstrate the potential for music as a cultural artefact to prime GC, not solely through representation of cultural diversity, but also through its capacity to convey pro-social messages. Moving beyond music listening, music participation in community choirs at the cultural contact zones can highlight complex dynamics arising from colonial histories (Rickwood, 2014), and those occurring in liminal spaces such as refugee camps can emphasise shared humanity in the context of cultural difference and displacement (Lenette et al., 2015). Beyond the medium's capacity to convey messages, such examples demonstrate the capacity for music practice to build awareness of global issues through relational knowledge practices. The way people develop an understanding of their position in relation to broader social, cultural, political and

historical context through music practice will be considered in further detail later in the article.

While developing awareness of social movements, ecology and history may cultivate GC, music should not be considered a panacea. Critical engagement is required in selection of musical stimuli. Returning to a consideration of *Bengawan Solo*, the song achieved further notoriety in the 1990s when Indonesian lawyers took Japanese musicians to court for marketing the composition as their own (Kartomi, 1998). Aside from the issue of the composer's intellectual property, Kartomi (1998) illustrated how the *kroncong* version of the song evoked feelings of national pride, with the hybrid musical styling associated with Indonesia's motto of 'unity in diversity' and the song itself reminiscent of the time just preceding national independence. Benedict Anderson (1991) wrote of the power of national anthems to connect people in 'imagined communities'. Numerous scholars have acknowledged that this capacity for music to connect is also a capacity to divide (Bergh, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Kent, 2007; Sandoval, 2016). Like any product of human culture, it is difficult to untangle music from the social, historical and political contexts in which it is created. Aside from songs written in particular political contexts to reinforce ingroup and outgroup differences, there are also power dynamics inherent in fusion genres. Just as Hermans and Kempen (1998) characterised the dichotomous treatment of culture in cross-cultural psychology as 'West versus the rest' (p. 1111) so too has the world music genre been argued to imply this binary (Haynes, 2005). Other criticisms of the genre include the potential of world music to homogenise diverse styles for Western tastes (Connell & Gibson, 2004; Lewis et al., 2021) and to promote cultural stereotypes (Feld, 2000; Haynes, 2005; Silverman, 2015; Taylor, 2015). This not only promotes Western ethnocentrism but also draws attention to global inequalities in cultural power (Feld, 2000; Silverman, 2015; Taylor, 2015). These issues are rooted in the commodification process itself, where meeting Western market demands often involves presenting music in a way that fits pre-existing, often simplistic, Western ideas about 'other' cultures (Taylor, 2015).

Such nuances emphasise the importance of interdisciplinary research in this field, of which Vuoskoski et al.'s (2017) study is an example, comprising expertise in music cognition, psychology and sociology. Suitable stimuli to test the capacity of music to prime GC may also need to be varied depending on the location and cultural identity of the participants. The ethical implications of power imbalances in IME necessitate mindful practice, which itself has the potential to cultivate GC. As argued by Christiansen et al. (2017) the inherent risks involved in cultural encounters are a necessary precondition for transformation. The next section will consider how IME can develop reflexivity to manage tensions between diverse cultural values and build awareness of

power differentials, in turn developing a sense of global moral interdependence.

2.3 | Cultivating reflexivity through intercultural music engagement

A framework has been developed to provide guidance for people working with IME in communities to avoid pitfalls such as tokenism, appropriation and cultural othering (Crooke, Davidson, & Fraser, 2024). Crooke, Davidson, and Fraser (2024) proposed approaches such as experiential and embodied engagement, adopting a stance of cultural humility, prioritising cultural safety, being informed by context and acknowledging power dynamics. Developed in consultation with IME practitioners, its application is most suited to in-person IME where dialogue and negotiation are possible to respond to changing contexts and the experiences and interpretations of participants.

The ability to remain open and responsive to new knowledge about one's own actions within complex social and cultural context are the hallmarks of reflexivity and an important component of GC (Liu & MacDonald, 2016). Scholars from sociology and psychology have theorised how reflexivity is honed through music practice, as it requires self-awareness and interaction with instrument, sound, other musicians and time (Bishop, 2018; DeNora, 1995; Maslen, 2022). As music exists in social and cultural context, such reflexivity shifts easily from motor, auditory, visual and temporal awareness to issues of social position and cultural norms. Numerous studies of IME in contexts of unequal power have used action research and ethnographic approaches to interrogate issues of cultural appropriation (Fay et al., 2022; Fraser, 2022), colonisation (Bartleet, 2019), negotiating difference in multicultural societies (Waterman, 2016) and intercultural dialogue in music teaching (Timonen et al., 2021). Such research demonstrates the capacity for IME to create conditions facilitating study of 'dynamics in cross-cultural situations of unequal power and knowledge' (Liu & MacDonald, 2016, p. 327) deemed important for studies of GC.

As IME promotes engagement with music of cultures other than one's own, it can easily cross over into assimilation or cultural appropriation, both of which having been observed to erode cultural difference (Kunst et al., 2024). Mantie et al. (2021) observed an example of how IME can result in assimilation at a folk and world music camp. Tonal differences between Western and Palestinian music were resolved by changing the tone of a Palestinian folk song to suit Western instruments, eliminating the quarter tones characteristic of the tune and rendering it unrecognisable to the participating Palestinian musicians (Mantie et al., 2021). Just as Liu and MacDonald (2016) argued

for the need to sometimes 'maintain a separate space for competing values and group identities' (p. 323), such tonal incompatibilities can be resolved in IME by drawing on music conventions that support both harmonious simultaneous engagement and turn-taking. In this way music practice and musical forms serve as models for how diverse cultural values can be held in a space that resists assimilation.

While superficial contact with culturally different music can serve as an entry point for deeper engagement (Fraser, 2022), likewise it can be considered negatively appropriative, if taking the form of cultural borrowing without consideration for power dynamics and the originating cultural group (Silverman, 2015; Taylor, 2015). Kunst et al. (2024) argued that 'genuine cultural change is distinguishable from appropriation when it is characterized by deep cultural learning (as opposed to cultural engagement that remains superficial), concerns other groups as equal, and is consented to by the group whose culture is being adopted' (p. 1). Action research and autoethnographic approaches facilitated deep exploration of Egyptian music and dance form *ashra baladi*, and the line between cultural appropriation and appreciation, among a group of community arts practitioners creating a virtual performance during COVID-19 lockdown (Fraser, 2022). The resulting performance, while a homage to *ashra baladi*, reflected the context in which it was performed—in Australia, by a culturally diverse group of artists whose "respective cultural positions and perspectives are also present in the virtual performance" (Fraser, 2022, p. 854). As discussed previously, the experiential and socially embedded nature of this work gives rise to relational knowledge practices, where participants develop an understanding of where they fit—socially, culturally, historically and in some cases ecologically (Wang, 2021). The way that music participation fosters this sense of belonging has been theorised in various ways, including through the lens of social aesthetics, where music workshops provide a space for shaping communal values and sensibilities (Andriolo et al., 2022). Hassanli et al. (2020) drew on Case and Hunter's (2014) counterspace framework to theorise how a cultural music festival provided a safe, affirming environment where migrants and refugees could disrupt negative stereotypes and express themselves in diverse, culturally meaningful ways. Notably, IME has been observed to foster belonging without imposing homogeneity, by providing an inclusive space that holds both commonalities and differences (Balsnes, 2016; Bolden & O'Farrell, 2020; Hassanli et al., 2020; Joseph, 2022; Joseph et al., 2018; Mani, 2022).

The pitfall of essentialising or stereotyping when musical styles are differentiated based on cultural categories is widely noted in the IME literature (Bolden & O'Farrell, 2020; Davies & Ritchie, 2021; Dieckmann & Davidson, 2018; Fay et al., 2022; Mantie et al., 2021; Marsh & Dieckmann, 2016). A similar criticism is levelled at multiculturalism, where the importance placed on conserving

cultural difference has been associated with both inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes and inhibiting intercultural dialogue (Cantle, 2012; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). While intercultural music performances may avoid such pitfalls, they may not be openly received or deemed appropriate in certain cultural or social contexts. Research conducted in monocultural versus multicultural settings suggests the development of polycultural ideology may be curbed in societies where people have little experience of intercultural contact, and furthermore people may regard cultural mixing as a threat to heritage culture (Tjipto & Bernardo, 2019). As Liu and MacDonald (2016) argued, there are differential effects of globalisation in diverse cultural contexts, necessitating sensitivity to embedded cultural values and reflection on appropriate actions in specific contexts. Deep IME has the capacity to develop nuanced sensitivity to the appropriateness of drawing on a diversity of musical traditions in different cultural settings. As argued by Crooke, Davidson, and Fraser (2024), this entails engaging with a sense of cultural humility and awareness of cultural safety.

Similarly, this sensitivity is required at the individual level, where the impact of globalisation can cause identity confusion (Liu & MacDonald, 2016). The complex way music engagement can interplay with such identity confusion is captured by a therapeutic case study of a professional Australian musician of mixed heritage, who presented with anticipatory anxiety about performing music related to her estranged father's cultural background (Fraser, 2025). Music was simultaneously a source of healing and tension, allowing the client to understand and identify with part of her cultural background, but at the same time raising concerns for her that by drawing on this cultural form in Australia she was guilty of orientalism—exoticising and stereotyping the culture (Said, 1978). This case calls to mind Herman and colleagues' dialogical view of self, referred to by Liu and MacDonald (2016), where the client's cultural hybridity and music practice prompted reflection of the other within the self and awareness of the import of space, body and power in one's perspective. The resulting ambiguities were worked through in a therapeutic context, and while the client's goal was not to develop GC, the case demonstrates the potential for the development of GC through therapeutic practice, an area that warrants further investigation. Likewise, action research and ethnographic studies of collaborative IME demonstrate the potential for new research directions into the development of GC, as a social practice that provides rich material for developing reflexivity in complex cultural contexts.

3 | CONCLUSION

Global consciousness holds promise as a state of being that may enhance collective success and progress on global issues such as climate change. How GC can be

cultivated requires further investigation. The research reviewed in this article highlights the potential for IME to cultivate GC through various pathways. Experimental studies by Vuoskoski et al. (2017), Neto et al. (2016) and Li et al. (2023) suggest music listening and participation can prime implicit attitudes and feelings of social connection toward cultural outgroups. However, deeper investigation is warranted into the specific musical stimuli that may effectively prime the multidimensional components of GC, including respect for cultural diversity, identification with all humanity and awareness of global moral interdependence (Liu & MacDonald, 2016).

As a highly mobile cultural artefact readily adapted across contexts, music provides a rich site for exploring complex dynamics of cultural identity. Interdisciplinary research is needed to critically examine issues of power, appropriation and representation inherent in musical fusions and the world music genre (Connell & Gibson, 2004; Feld, 2000; Haynes, 2005; Silverman, 2015; Taylor, 2015). Methodologies that facilitate relational knowledge practices, such as action research, ethnography and therapeutic case studies are well-suited for this inquiry given their capacity to foster reflexivity among participants. Thus, as has been argued, it is the engagements between participants in arts-based practice and cultural encounters that facilitate transformation and should therefore be considered central in such research (Andriolo et al., 2022; Christiansen et al., 2017). Through embodied, experiential engagement with music across cultural boundaries, IME can heighten sensitivity to contextual nuances and develop ethical reasoning around navigating diverse cultural values, as highlighted in the practice framework by Crooke, Davidson, and Fraser (2024). The socially embedded nature of IME aligns well with pragmatic philosophical orientations—engaging 'with' and 'for' communities through participatory methods (Sonn et al., 2022).

Ultimately, the study of IME offers promising avenues for understanding how to cultivate reflexive and multi-layered action, from the micro processes of listening and acting in musical harmony with others to understanding the appropriateness of different musical performance based on social, cultural, political, and historical context. As processes of globalisation increasingly bring cultures into contact and dialogue, music may serve as a powerful medium for negotiating tensions between cultural heterogeneity and shared humanity, as illustrated by cultural artefacts like *Bella Ciao* (Salerno & van de Warenburg, 2023) and *Bengawan Solo* (Kartomi, 1998). Future research directions could explore how IME fosters dialogic ethics, develops nuanced understandings of self in relation to global contexts and shapes new collective identities and imaginaries. In doing so, we may gain deeper insight into music's capacity to attune us to the interconnectedness and moral interdependence characterising our globalising world (Liu & MacDonald, 2016).

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Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

RESEARCH MATERIALS AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

PRE-REGISTRATION STATEMENT

There was no preregistration for this study.

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