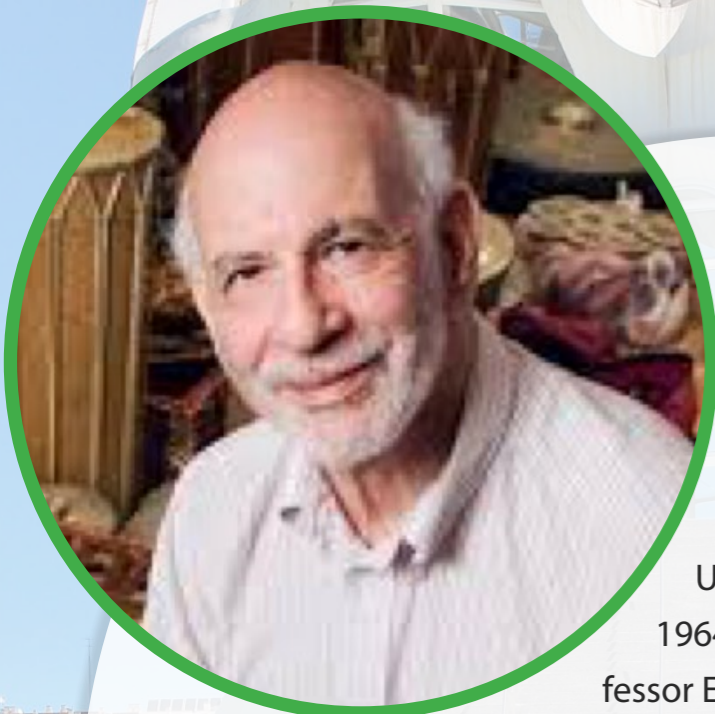




Bruno Nettl



Bruno Nettl was born in Czechoslovakia, he moved to United States, studied at Indiana University and the University of Michigan, and has taught since 1964 at the University of Illinois, where he is Professor Emeritus of Music and Anthropology, continuing to teach part-time. Active principally in the field of ethnomusicology, he has done field research with Native American peoples, in Iran, and in South India. He has served as president of the Society for Ethnomusicology and as editor of its journal, *Ethnomusicology*. Nettl holds honorary doctorates from the University of Illinois, Carleton College, Kenyon College, and the University of Chicago. He is a recipient of the Fumio Koizumi Prize for ethnomusicology, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Nettl was named the 2014 Charles Homer Haskins Prize Lecturer by the American Council of Learned Societies.

In the course of his long career as a scholar and as a professor, he was the teacher of many of the most visible ethnomusicologists active today in the international scene.

by ANA M. VERNIA

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Ana M. Vernia Your two most outstanding professional profiles are research and teaching. In your opinion, what does it matter most to society, to research or to teach?

Bruno Nettl

This is not an easy question. Both are needed in society, and it is difficult to imagine a successful modern society without both teaching and research. I grew up in the system of research universities, in which the teachers are also researchers, and the research scholars also teach. In my personal experience, I found that teaching was very important in giving me ideas for research. And I found that to the extent that I had success as a university teacher, it was through including aspects of my research in classroom lectures and discussions.

AV You know that ARTSEDUCA is a journal aimed at education in the arts and for the arts. From your point of view, does current society value artistic education?

BN I can only speak for the United States. While artistic work of all sorts – most important, what I would call vernacular or popular arts – seems itself to be flourishing – this is mostly not taught in formal situations such as schools or conservatories. I have my doubts that USA society as a whole values artistic education very much as something that must be included in the formal educational system.

AV Of all your researches, which do you consider the most relevant to society?

BN I am not sure I would claim that any of my research necessarily has great relevance to society. Maybe this: After doing research with Native American peoples and in Iranian and Indian music, I undertook to see what would happen if I applied the kind of questions and methods I had used in those cultures also to my own culture of university schools of music, and produced a book titled “Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological perspectives on Schools of Music.” I believe some administrators of music schools and conservatories may perhaps have used this work to gain some new perspectives of their own institutions.

AV Given your experience, do you believe that culture can be an important support for the sustainable development of a country?

BN I presume that by “culture” you mean the arts, particularly the “high” or classical arts. Of course developing these can be important. For example, I am not sure whether a nation – every nation -- must have its own tradition of classical music. I prefer a more holistic definition of the concept of culture, including traditional and vernacular culture, and these are surely essential for development and should be supported, though not guided, by government and formal agencies.

AV What is your opinion about the current migrations? And, can the arts facilitate migration?

BN I am not sure how to interpret this question, or that I am qualified to reply. Certainly for immigrant societies – recent or older – the maintenance of traditional culture helps to encourage social solidarity and also provides an avenue for acceptance by the majority society of a nation.

AV From your point of view, how do you see current research in ethnomusicology?

BN It has certainly changed since my days as a student; some of the values of the 1950s have been turned upside down. For example, when I was a student, one was taught to avoid study of urban popular music but to stay with “authentic” folk and non-Western traditions. Today the majority of research involves what one might loosely call urban ;popular music. Approaches have changed, and I think the new ways of looking at things are beneficial, while at the same time I regret the abandonment of some older research and analytical techniques.

AV In conclusion, what advice would you give the new researcher / teacher?

BN Develop broad knowledge, maintain intellectual flexibility, avoid dogmas. Study the history of your field to avoid repeating past mistakes.

AV Thank you very much for your time and share your knowledge with ARTSEDUCA ♦