

The history of music in england and its context to cultural identity and how it r...

[Countries](#), [England](#)



In this essay, I will approach one of the most relevant global issues that is immigration and its relationship with music. To support my arguments I will start with a brief history of United Kingdom and some geographical details regarding the country that will help the reader to understand better the context of the cause. Furthermore I will highlight my point of view by presenting a brief history of music and approaching the issue of immigration and how this changing and mixing of people on the continent led to a mix of multicultural music with different influences, and also helped the construction of new musical styles.

In supporting my ideas and bringing valid arguments, I will use three main sources. The first source will be a book named "Sound tracks popular music, identity and place" by John Connell and Chris Gibson, the second source will be a great article regarding immigration from "Global Issues" journal and the third source will be another article from a journal from "Studies in Music History" helping us to approach the history of music and how the changes of population influenced the music history and the styles that appear later.

England is a part of Great Britain and takes up about two-thirds of British Isles. The other two parts are occupied by Scotland and Ireland which England has borders. The waters surrounding the isles are the Celtic Sea in the southwest, the North Sea to the east and the Irish Sea to the north west of England. England is separated from Continental Europe through the English Channel.

In the south part, the island is covered by undulating green hills where agriculture is in blossom but in the north and east the land is flat and low lying. From the other side the north part is more dramatic with the Pennines

Mountain range also named as the “ backbone of England” was one of the longest footpaths from U. K. that offers incredible landscapes from above with the most scenic part of England.

England has a population of over 53 million of people with a density of 407 people per square kilometer, this thing making it one of the most populated countries from the European Union. The English people have descendants with some genetic traits from Angles, Saxon and Scandinavian population and also from the German part. Around the 1950 other nationalities began to emerge from the former colonies such as Indian, Pakistan and Bangladesh. England has also a significant number of Chinese and a small percent of population are black coming from Caribbean and other countries from Africa.

Becoming one of the most popular languages spoken by hundreds of people all over the world, English language, originate from England remained now the spoken language in U. K. The language suffered changes along the history and it is a flexible language that gained through the years words from other languages especially from France and also had Latin and Greek influences.

Studies showed that England hosts a mix of peoples. In this statistic made by “ Census” in 2011, researchers divided the population in ethnic groups and the result was that 86% were population of white ethnicity, 7, 5% were Asian/Asian British, 3, 3% were black and another 2, 2% were mixed/multiple.

The history of England started 700. 000 years ago, with Homo erectus people that lived in Norfolk and Suffolk where scientist found bones and tools.

After the Ice Age, England was repopulated 13,000 years ago by migratory people that came from south-west of Europe and from northern Iberian coasts, and were established in England adopting Celtic culture.

In 43 AD, England was conquered by the Roman Emperor Claudius. In this period Britain enjoyed a good understanding with the Romans and developed particularly in the Iron Age. 400 years after, with the fall of Roman Empire, Romans had left England.

Medieval England lasted from the Romans' departure to the Norman Conquest in 1066. In this period Christianity has spread to England, and was divided into seven small kingdoms known as Heptarchy. In 954, the small kingdoms were united when Edward had defeated Eric Bloodaxe in the last battle and became The King of England.

In 1348, England was hit by the plague that killed 70% of population. The plague haunted them for centuries but it had the last burst from 1665 to 1666 in London known as the Great Plague. "100 years war" (started in 1337) ends in 1453 and England lost territories in France which were possessions of the Plantagenet dynasty. "War of the Roses" (1455-1485) between the house of York and Lancaster brings the state leadership of Tudor dynasty (1485-1603). In the 16th century reform is victorious, and the sovereign becomes head of the church (the Anglican Church). Elizabeth I (1557-1603) creates the maritime power of England. In 1588, struggling with the invincible Armada, the Spanish fleet of Philip II is defeated.

English Reformation was different from other reforms in Europe because it had its roots in politics more than theology and this thing started political conflicts arose between Roundheads and Charles which led to the outbreak

of civil war in 1642. The war ended with the Battle of Worcester in 3 September 1651 and assured Roundheads the victory and the execution of Charles I. UK fights against Napoleonic and France revolutionary, and gained the victory at Waterloo in 1815. Britain became the most important industrial and colonial power of the world under the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). The two Opium Wars of 1840-1842 and 1856-1860 of UK forces China to open its borders to trade. In 1875 the UK has control of the Suez. After World War I, in 1919, Britain obtained German colonies in East Africa, Togo, and Cameroon. Also have mandated former provinces of the Ottoman Empire: Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq. In 1938, U. K. has participated at the Munich Agreement, trying to keep the peace. It declared war to Germany on 3 September. In 1941, U. K. attacked the Asian possessions, Japan. In 1940, after Germany invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium, Chamberlain (Prime Minister) went in favor of Churchill, who led the coalition government until 1945, promoting a policy of resistance and lead U. K. to victory.

After several attempts, they successful managed to unite in 1 May 1707 the two political states, Kingdom of England and Kingdom of Scotland into United Kingdom. In 1801, Ireland, with the exception of North Ireland, joined them and this brought in 1922 on today name the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

History if music in England dates from ancient time more accurate from Celtic period when the people where known for their freely improvised polyphonic singing. The music development was produced slowly through rhythm and pitch notation. The first book called " Old Hall Manuscript" from

1410 reveals the first way on developing the harmony and decorating the melody with third and sixth. John Dunstable was an important pillar in development of harmony and counterpoint in early Renaissance.

John Blow was sent by the king to learn new Italian style but when he returned his place as organist at Westminster Abbey but the place was reassigned to his pupil, Purcell which became one of the great composers on the history of England from that period. Handel came to London in 1710 and had a great success here about 50 years. "The Beggar's Opera" was an important piece of that time and from then the audience was split in two; the musical was now for the middle-class and the opera was selected only for the elite.

The burgeoning of the middle class led in the middle of 18th century to commercial orchestra concerts. The stylistic evolution of England was overshadowed by the grandiose development and explosion of composers from classicism period that was happening on the continent. Neither the romantic period wasn't flourishing less than opera field were composers like Balfe, Gilbert and Sullivan which experienced international fame with their operas.

20th century brought a good period in British music that has had many famous representatives like Edward Elgar with his piece "Enigma Variations" and Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst with "The Planets." After the second war, two native geniuses were brought in the light. Michael Tippett and Benjamin Britten came each of them with their skills and talents. Britten founded the opera in English language and Tippett has made the music a valid political tool.

One of the most overwhelming global issues of the world which had a major role in influencing the musical style that appeared is related to immigration. This is a global problem but is treated with great importance also in United Kingdom.

In the last five decades the number of people who emigrated increased considerably reaching a mixture growing globe between populations. Almost 115 million of immigrants are leaving now in developed countries and 33% of all leave now in Europe.

This thing was possible through globalization which opened the "gates" for economics, trades and investments. For this reason people were feeling freely to move around the world. The reason why people immigrated has various and complex reasons. Some of them move voluntarily but there are others forced to go away for escaping persecution and prejudices. Another important factor is economic security, some people are economic immigrants that leave their country for better opportunities, searching for work but for most of the people moving to another country with different culture and norms could be an act of courage or daunting.

The effect of immigration can be positive or negative for the both countries, the original country and the host country. Most immigrants tend to go in Western European countries or in United States where they do work that people from there cannot do or don't like to do it for lower salaries and often they are working longer hours.

This issue was felt in all areas including music because every nation came with its history and musical background which led as to the beginning of new styles of music. In their book Connell and Gibson talk about how music

has three geographical inflected tensions that are related on how popular music function in the world.

The first is “ a tension between music as a commodified product of an industry with high levels of corporate interest, and simultaneously as an arena of cultural meaning”, the second one approached the problem between fixity and fluidity “ between music as itinerant and fleeting, and music as something static, fixed and immobile,” and the third gather them both and is linked to the idea of authenticity, for popular music to have authenticity it must have its roots in a place.(Connell and Gibson, pag. 84)

That was the problem with immigration because each nation came with authenticity from their roots that weren't necessarily a bad thing, it helped developing the process of music, going further with conceiving new style that represented an evolution for the music.

Regarding the problem of globalization Connell and Gibson affirmed that “ In a world of decentralization, fragmentation and compression, all cultures are involve in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic” (Connell and Gibson). This quote highlight the idea that the mix of nation helped the evolution of the cultural and non- cultural style of music, giving opportunity of new hybrid style that came from two or maybe more authentic style that were blended together.

In conclusion the moving of the population had a great impact in the way of influencing the musical style. This thing has been seen in the history of England on developing of the musical process and in the ability to create new and fresh styles. It is a process that pushes things to move forward

regardless of other consequences.

England had a vast and bloody history, and maybe not that rich in musicality in the past but in the last century has undergone an explosion of culture and composers both famous in classical music and pop music.

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