Popular Music and Cross-Cultural Connections

Today’s most popular artists use technology to reach fans worldwide. No longer limited to radio play in their country of origin, artists use online platforms and social media to share their music and connect to their fans. Fans may begin with only the music and/or artist, but social connections can increase their knowledge and experience beyond the music, to art, language, social issues. On her “Connections” page, Dr. Vicky Johnson stated that part of connecting is relating the knowledge and experience of music to personally create societal and cultural contexts. Because this is a personal objective, the following will be a personal recount of connections and meaning that I have derived from being part of a worldwide fan group.

In 2020, I was searching for musical connections. I had found groups from several countries whose music I appreciated and supported. One group that I began to listen to was BTS. In Spring of 2020, they had not released an all-English song. Listening to them began as appreciating the music itself, but to derive deeper meaning I had to look for lyrics. I was amazed at the organization of the fandom and how dedicated they were, providing lyrics to fans of every language and teaching fans the Korean language and culture. Because I had a social presence on Twitter, I made connections with other fans and became impressed with their emphasis on social stances, primarily supporting worthy charities. Because of this my interest and activity with this group increased and I made “friends” with persons from many countries, learning about their lives and cultures as we conversed. In fall of 2020, I was approached by a group of musicians who were fans of BTS who were creating a Discord channel for the purpose of making music together. During the pandemic we were able to use technology to create 3 virtual performances, assist each other with theory and other musical education questions, and give some light to each other in a very dark time. I have experienced the power of the connections that music can create.

http://www.vickyjohnson.altervista.org/TechnologyConnecting.htm

<https://youtu.be/N6INt3OcbYE>

<https://youtu.be/iaaGXgugRc8>

<https://youtu.be/ER7GSkpDPL4>