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Heartbeat of the People': Music and Dance of the Northern Pow-Wow

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narratives dispel negative stereotypes and illuminate the historical, economic, and social causes of their current social position. Through the dialogic character of the material presented, the Roma find themselves narrating their own lives.

Another fundamental contribution of the book is the way it elucidates the complexity that characterizes both the social phenomena in, and the development of, the various Balkan societies. The theme that runs through the whole study of “layered identity,” as the contributors of the book call it, contradicts the notion of national homogeneity promoted by the Greek state. Music as the means, and musical events as the context, contribute to the construction of social reality in which different forms of belonging are simultaneously celebrated and various notions of identity articulated. Romani instrumentalists are the catalysts who facilitate this process.

The focus on festive social situations and practices challenges assertions of fixed, homogenous, and stable ethnic and national categories in Greece. Moreover, it helps us understand the kinds of cultural difference that have always been part of the social reality and of individual worldviews in Greek Macedonia. This is an important subject, on which current and future research in the Balkans should focus in a more sophisticated manner.

IOANNIS MANOS

Heartbeat of the People: Music and Dance of the Northern Pow-Wow, by Tara Browner. Music in American Life. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002. xii, 163 pp.

Writing American Indian Music: Historic Transcriptions, Notations, and Arrangements, edited by Victoria Lindsay Levine. Recent Researches in American Music 44; Music of the United States of America 11. Middleton, WI: Published for the American Musicological Society by A-R Editions, 2002. xxxviii, 304 pp.; 12 plates.

Native American studies were at the center of ethnomusicology in the early years of the discipline, then became less of a focus as other world areas took center stage. Quite a few monographs on aspects of American Indian culture have appeared in the last few years in the fields of folklore and anthropology. These are fairly evenly divided between newly thorough assemblages of specific tribes' traditional lore¹ and explorations of aspects of Native American

1. Solidly researched books in this category that have recently crossed my desk include Tom Mould, ed., *Choctaw Tales*, with a foreword by Philip Martin (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004); Bill Grantham, *Creation Myths and Legends of the Creek Indians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002); Anthony Wayne Wonderley, *Oneida Iroquois Folklore, Myth,*

identity in the modern world.² The two fine books under review here are at the center of a more modest but growing resurgence of interest in Native America by ethnomusicologists.

Browner begins *Heartbeat of the People: Music and Dance of the Northern Pow-Wow* with a short section entitled “Notes on Terminology and Capitalization.” She states that she has chosen to refer to the people whose cultural practices constitute her topic not with a single term, but rather as “Indian, American Indian, Native American, Native Canadian, Native North American, First Nations, and indigenous, because all are used by Native American Indians when writing about themselves” (p. xi). The reader can immediately sense that this book is thorough, eclectic in approach, and, while never doctrinaire, politically sensitive in a no-nonsense way. Browner is herself a cultural bridge. She is a Native American (Choctaw) with years of experience as a jingle dress dancer, and also an ethnomusicologist who has for years shepherded her students at UCLA to pow-wows. Her writing shifts seamlessly but transparently between insider and outsider expression, and offers a model both of economical prose and of refreshingly unpretentious yet rigorous scholarship. She offers the book both as a contribution to scholarship (and pedagogy—it is a solid introduction to the topic for world music or music appreciation classes) and, as a Native American, in the tradition of “sharing the culture,” since an important aspect of pow-wows is reaching out to all who attend (pp. 15–16). There are some modest differences between the Southern pow-wow (originating in Oklahoma and flourishing there and points south) and the Northern pow-wow cited in the book’s title, the type held in the Northern Great Plains and the Great Lakes area, but most of Browner’s discussion holds for the entire pow-wow complex.

This is the first book-length academic publication on the pow-wow, and so must contain as much description as analysis (just as must this review). The pow-wow has become a phenomenon blanketing North America, a small but healthy, public, inclusive subculture. While pow-wows generally slip below the radar of the mass media, there are enough of them that avid participants can attend one every weekend or so by driving part of a day, and a first-time

and History: New York Oral Narrative from the Notes of H. E. Allen and Others (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004); and Richard Green, *Te Ata: Chickasaw Storyteller, American Treasure* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

2. My personal favorites among these include Clyde Ellis, Luke Eric Lassiter, and Gary H. Dunham, eds., *Powwow* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds., *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001); and Patricia Barker Lerch, *Waccamaw Legacy: Contemporary Indians Fight for Survival* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004). Jason Baird Jackson’s splendid *Yuchi Ceremonial Life: Performance, Meaning, and Tradition in a Contemporary American Indian Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003) straddles these categories.

attendee can immediately plug into the pow-wow network through word of mouth and by collecting flyers for upcoming events. Browner defines the pow-wow as “an event where American Indians of all nations come together to celebrate their culture through the medium of music and dance” (p. 1). These are explicitly intertribal events in cultural content and in demography: while a given tribe (or campus or civic Indian society) organizes a given event, all Indians can participate fully. Indeed, in some parts of the United States, an organizing entity may well be so small that participation by lots of members of neighboring groups is required for an event to gather up a critical mass of energy. In any case, the point is to assemble lots of Indians—size does matter. Also, the pow-wow is the main diplomatic event sponsored by Native North Americans. Outsiders are encouraged to attend, often may take part in a measured way, and generally combine being entertained with learning a little or a lot about Native culture. The emcee serves the rotating contingents of visitors to the pow-wow world by supplementing his traffic directing (comments like: “We’ll now have a men’s traditional, with an intertribal coming up; Red Wolf, you’re on deck”) with routine explanations of pow-wow basics, including telling attendees when to stand, when to take off hats, when to not use cameras and recording devices, and so on.

Pow-wows, which last from an afternoon to a week, but generally a weekend, take place in an outdoor grassy area or, if indoors, in a gym or similar venue, in all cases on grounds temporarily consecrated for the purpose. On arrival, you first hear the insistent “heartbeat” of a Drum (Drum meaning an ensemble of a few to over a dozen men playing a very large horizontal drum while singing). Drawing into a parking area, one sees Indians circulating and socializing, and some donning their dance regalia. The pow-wow grounds proper center on an inner circle where the dancing takes place, the Indians dancing as individuals while proceeding slowly around the circle, with the general type of dance outfit coordinated with the general style of dance (the same music serving all dancers simultaneously, despite distinct differences in steps). A session, which lasts an afternoon or evening, starts with a grand entry, in which all dancers parade into the circle. They are grouped by regalia (and thus dance) type, and led by veterans carrying an eagle staff, U.S. flag, MIA-POW standard, and perhaps flags of specific armed services. (Natives join the armed services at a very high rate, both echoing the old warrior societies and evincing the enduring Indian value of sharing, of giving even their lives for their communities.) After a song honoring veterans and a flag song (Indian patriotic anthem), dancing commences again. There are intertribals (in which all Indians present may dance), numerous category- and perhaps age-specific dances (for example, jingle dress dancers under the age of sixteen), and other specific dances, a few of which may be tribe-specific. Browner explores the spatial arrangements of the pow-wow—basically an array of concentric circles—through reference to a pair of indigenous metaphors, the Sacred Hoop (among the Lakota, a surrounding protective spiritual force) and the

Sacred Fire. Circles of seats line the dance circle, with the inner row of benches or bales of hay reserved for the dancers. In the other rows and informal clumps of folding chairs (regular attendees know to bring their own), folks watch, snack, and especially chat. In the largest circle encompassing those of dancers, seated spectators, and pedestrians (some standing to watch, some circulating) are craft stands offering Indian wares (the owners generally must be Indian or approved for some other reason) and food booths offering burgers (sometimes of buffalo meat) and Indian fast foods such as “Indian tacos” (taco fixings on fry bread) and stews. Every pow-wow is simultaneously sacred and secular, traditional and commercial, social and educational, very relaxed on the surface but quietly bearing great spiritual significance.

Pow-wows can feature a few dozen to several hundred dancers, can be traditional or contest (much the same as traditional, but with dancers having numbers pinned to them, scores marked, and eventually prizes awarded), can be occasions for urban Indians to gather, or can be tribal homecomings (often celebrating veterans even more than usually). When Browner discusses the history of this widespread composite event, it’s fairly tough sledding, though carefully documented and meticulously reasoned—the facts are elusive and concepts complex. She analyzes early scholarly discussions of ancestral forms of the pow-wow to good effect—such narratives have unfortunately tended to displace native narratives in pow-wow programs—and then links aspects of the early history of the pow-wow with medicine shows and the “Wild West” entertainment complex. Nineteenth-century folk healers called pow-wow doctors and purveyors of patent medicines often cited Native sources for their nostrums, and sometimes advertised their wares in connection with Indian dancing, so that the word pow-wow (variously spelled) came to be associated with Indian dancing. Then, during eras when Indian dancing for Indian purposes was suppressed (the decades flanking the turn of the twentieth century), such dancing either went underground or entered venues sponsored by whites, such as county fairs and Wild West shows, which nurtured dramatic elements such as the grand entry and what would later be called fancy dancing. After World War II, intertribal pow-wows grew in the central United States in tandem with veterans’ homecoming celebrations. The Northern and Southern forms gradually crystallized (with the Southern adopting the element of competition first). Pow-wows have since been adopted and adapted by Indian populations throughout North America. The pow-wow complex has become shared culture, but Browner is careful to note that tribe-specific markers are also numerous and important.

Dance styles and associated regalia fall into a half-dozen or more categories at a given pow-wow. Each dancer’s regalia—one must not say costume, since costumes are in the service of pretense, while these dance outfits reveal important aspects of who those garbed really are—mixes homemade, inherited, donated, and purchased elements. The results can be a mixed bag in terms of aesthetic coherence, but are always colorful, and mean more and more to the

participants as the feathers, patches, arrays of beads, etc., accumulate, often inherited or received as heartfelt gifts from friends and family. The two meat-and-potatoes dance (and regalia) categories are the men's and women's traditional dances. These have the simplest steps. The women walk very elegantly, while the men mimic movements said to be characteristic of hunting and war. The male fancy dancers, with their acrobatic moves, extra bright and colorful regalia, and double bustle of feathers (the men's traditional dancers have a single bustle), have a less physically taxing parallel in the female shawl dancers. There are also male grass dancers (controversial origins, no feather bustle, lots of yarn hanging down, steps perhaps meant to mimic the flattening of grass) and female jingle dress dancers, with dresses adorned with lots of snuff-can lids (historically, anyway: now metal curls are made for the dancers), and with a genre-specific history involving a "healing prayer" (p. 53). Other types (straight dancers, etc.) are rarer. In addition, there are specialty dancers such as hoop dancers (soloists with an intricate gymnastic performance involving dozens of hoops manipulated to form an eagle, a butterfly, etc.) and so-called Aztec dances, flashy short shows put on by immigrants from Mexico who travel from pow-wow to pow-wow for this purpose.

Discussion of music per se occupies a brief chapter aimed explicitly at non-Indians, though Browner discusses styles and songs in both Western and Indian terminology as much as possible. She describes the general difference between northern and southern singing and song shapes (a matter of typical contours within the overarching scheme of incomplete repetition, plus general tessitura—northern style is higher overall—and characteristic placement of drum accents called honor beats). Her transcriptions, in Western notation without meter, seem good and certainly illustrate her general analyses. The book closes with an array of photographs and two sets of excellent interviews with longtime friends. Her main consultant summarizes what pow-wows mean to her as follows: "I don't care what is going on in my life, if I'm at a pow-wow I'm happy. . . . The people are there, the music is there, our words are there, our ways are strong, and they're powerful. Those ways are what gives us strength to continue on and to live a good life, and I think that's what pow-wows are all about . . . the veteran's songs, the honoring of the woman, the honoring of the man, the honoring of the children, all those songs are there. In those songs it talks about communities and being strong and staying together" (p. 104).

Levine's *Writing American Indian Music: Historic Transcriptions, Notations, and Arrangements* is a very original contribution to the Music of the United States of America series. Both the summarizing preface and all subsequent comments are cleanly written and radiate both a remarkable ability to treat representatives of various population groups, eras, and ideologies with unlabored fairness and a sense of control over a vast amount of information. The main part of the book consists of a series of artfully chosen samplings from (1) a wide historical span of attempts to represent Native music in

European music notation, stretching from the schematic attempts of early explorers to innovative and intricate transcriptions by modern ethnomusicologists, (2) Native notations, again covering a wide historic and geographic spread, (3) arrangements of Native tunes as popular music for a mass market from the late eighteenth to late twentieth centuries (a shorter group) and (4) a handful of composers' uses of Indian music, including a few in which the composers are themselves Native Americans. Most of these notations show (in one way or another) the encounter of orally transmitted Native American music with the European proclivity for and principles of writing music down. I'm not entirely convinced of the intellectual logic of having all of these kinds of things in one binding. However, Levine documents and discusses each example and each grouping precisely as deeply as seems appropriate, and a sort of practical logic works—the relatively slight third and fourth categories might not have justified this level of attention on their own, but fit snugly at the end of this volume.

Each of the total of 116 examples is given in facsimile, and descriptive information follows in a standard format including title of the musical selection, brief description, date of recording (or publication, or other milestone), bibliographic source, genre the facsimile reflects, process (of notation reaching paper), biographical information (of original transcriber and, if possible, of performer), the reason Levine selected the example for the book, comments, and critical remarks. For instance, example 59, "Chief Hogan Song No. 4" (pp. 113–16) includes two pages of music (a melody line in modern notation with text underlay). The description is simply "Navaho, Chief Hogan Song, Arizona." It was recorded in 1963, and published in 1967. The facsimile draws on a carefully cited book written by the scholar who recorded the song, Charlotte Frisbie. The photograph reproduces a transcription made by Frisbie from a recorded performance by Frank Mitchell. The biographical information is a meaty paragraph detailing in turn Frisbie's university career, Mitchell's life as Navajo "ceremonial practitioner and community leader," and their scholarly partnership. The song was selected to illustrate this major scholar's approach to transcription at this early point in her career. The comments (about a page long) quote Frisbie on this type of song and translate its text. The critical remarks describe the notation in a sentence.

The first and most substantial section of the anthology, "Explorations of American Indian Music," begins with five brief transcriptions by French explorers, the first a Micmac (Nova Scotian) song written down in solfège syllables in 1606–7. Levine considers that the simplicity of these efforts was in the service of presenting Native Americans as "primitive, heathen, and inferior to Europeans—a perspective that helped [the colonists] garner support for missionary and commercial ventures" (p. xxi). I'm not sure how we can distinguish a spare straightforwardness in the service of ideology from that mandated by limited technical fluency. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European and Euro-American explorers (exx. 6–15) may have evinced

evolving attitudes towards Indians in their incrementally more sophisticated efforts. Ethnologists working later in the nineteenth century furthered the trend toward detail because they could do so, and because they also were motivated by both academic precision and nationalism. Scholarship focused on the sound itself began with the 1882 publication of *Über die Musik der Nordamerikanischen Wilden*, by American Theodore Baker (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel). But Baker's point of view remained evolutionary. To him, this repertoire displayed the primitive nature of the ancient music that had eventually evolved into European art music, an attitude congruent with that of the seventeenth-century voyageurs (see ex. 29, p. 44).

Much of the rest of this section reflects changing attitudes toward and techniques of transcription characteristic of the field of ethnomusicology. In the decades flanking the turn of the twentieth century, the emphasis of many scholars was on using normal Western notation (in massive quantities) in the service of thorough documentation, in their collective view thus "preserving" the music. As waves of change in recording techniques obviated any need for notation as primary documentation of the sound of Native (or any other) musics, several interdependent trends in transcription ensued. Transcriptions typically became short samples illustrating ethnographic points made primarily in prose. The vast majority of new forays into notation continued to rely on Western notation as an admittedly culturally biased but inescapably convenient lingua franca, but with all sorts of marks added to illustrate refinements of pitch and rhythm, timbre, attack, and so on. However, Levine does not limit herself to the most complicated-looking examples available, some of which are as much illustrations of a given scholar's interest in notation as of Native culture. Instead, she interweaves the visually denser examples with a sample from a catholic range of major scholarship regardless of an author's approach to notation, thus making this section of the volume an indispensable doorway into the history of the study of Native American music.

The second section, "Native Notations and Transcriptions" (exx. 76–95), contains both a fascinating group of Indian pictographs (or pictographs supplemented with transcriptions, these examples having been published and analyzed by non-Indian scholars) and a set of uses-cum-modifications of Western notation by ethnomusicologists who are Indians. Several of the pictographs combine ceremonial function with mnemonic aid. For instance, example 77, "The Roll Call of the Iroquois Chiefs," includes both a photograph (front and back) of a richly engraved Iroquois ceremonial cane and drawings of the cane clarifying and explaining the symbolism of the many small engravings. The transcriptions made by Indian ethnomusicologists are on the average not visually intimidating, but are carefully nuanced and often refer in detail to a given cultural connection (by, for example, diagramming the course of a dance, or analyzing lyrics at length).

The third section, "Popular Arrangements" (exx. 96–108) is the least interesting in terms of notation, but nevertheless intriguing. Most of these

simple arrangements date from the twentieth century, and were made for children's use, often in the classroom. In these arrangements the Indian becomes exotic, perhaps doomed, perhaps attractively stoic, always somehow appealing . . . and useful in these digestible bits both for purposes of socialization and as a nonthreatening ingredient in American nationalism when the composite nature of the nation is to be admitted or even celebrated. Levine does not spell out this complex social use of Native America, but simply offers up this handful of telling illustrations. The final section of the book is similarly short and schematic, and overlaps with the third section. Early twentieth-century composers such as Arthur Farwell arranged as much as composed, and expressed heartfelt nationalist intent in their prose, however clumsy the music they made. This section begins with an arrangement by Sousa and ends with Mohican (but academically trained) composer Brent Michael Davids' *Mtukwekok Naxkomao* (*The Singing Woods*), commissioned for the Kronos Quartet, a work composed in 1994 but published for the first time in this volume.

The varied nature of the volume allows a bonus pedagogical use. It contains representations of enough different approaches to writing down music that it can serve as an anthology of alternatives to normative notation when one has just a class session or two for the topic. Here's a possible sampling: example 82, a Navaho pictograph serving as memory aid for song lyrics, perhaps contrasted with example 62, an ethnomusicologist's transcription relying largely on traditional notation but employed with Bartók-esque density; example 22, a hand-graphed innovative notation from the early twentieth century, juxtaposed with example 69, a machine transcription made with a Seeger melograph; example 88, which treats beats independently of meter, plus examples 67–68, in which notehead shapes vary to illustrate specific extended vocal techniques, compared as a group with ex. 116, the score by Native composer Brent Michael Davids, whose approach to notation bears similarities to that of George Crumb.

This volume consists of four arrays of judiciously chosen samples, not a comprehensive collection of anything. And although each of the constituent examples starts with a facsimile and overtly focuses on the music presented in transcription in those facsimiles, the thrust of the volume is clearly the series of overlapping ideologies that the notations illustrate. Thus, while the format suits the publication series, the book is as much about culture as is Browner's description and analysis of the Northern pow-wow.

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