

# Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology

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## West Coast Women: A Jazz Genealogy

*by Sherrie Tucker*



## A Comparison of Human and Spirit Voices

*by Robert Reigle*



## Waving Hats and Stomping Boots

*by Helena Simonett*



## Emergent Qualities of Collectively Improvised Performance

*by David Borgo*

Ensembles at UCLA ♦ The 1995 Seeger Lecture ♦ Reviews

<http://www.arts.ucla.edu/Departments/Ethno/pacificr/PREhome.html>

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# PACIFIC REVIEW OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

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*Volume 8, Number 1*

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*A Publication of Graduate Students in Ethnomusicology at UCLA*

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This spirited performance illustrates the sound of the *kaapu simyang* voice-modifiers in a larger group context, including singers, *tereri* voice-modifiers and hourglass drums. Performers include Joseph Sawing, Nowing, Ungiauwang, Paul Yakal, Lukas Kutupau, Thomas Sanggau and Tomonggo Tarur. We also hear the voice of Michael Kuni Ruprup, who died two months after this recording.

These recordings are of the Neken people, and were recorded on the afternoon of January 14, 1989 by the author. The performances were commissioned. They were recorded onto TDK MA-X90 metal cassette tape using a Sony WM-D6C Professional Walkman.

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## From the Editors

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LIKE anything which grows, the *Pacific Review* is both very different, and substantially the same as it was years ago. It is still managed and edited entirely by graduate students at UCLA, and the editors still strive to give graduate students a forum for presenting original research. Submissions from non-students, or rather—since an honest scholar remains a student forever—from those not currently enrolled in degree-granting programs are still welcome. Faculty members are, as always encouraged to submit to the *Pacific Review* also, although the focus remains on graduate student work.

So what, you may ask, has changed? Looking at the outside of this journal, you would be inclined to say that quite a bit has changed. Except for the fact that it is still rectangular, made of paper, and in English, this issue of the *Pacific Review* should look completely different from its predecessors. The biggest physical change, the inclusion of an audio recording, isn't a change at all, but an addition, and one which the economics of technology have made well overdue. Actually, the fact that the journal is bigger, snazzier, and more typographically sophisticated are also due to the economics of technology. In electronic publishing terms, the publication of a document of this sort is simple on even a modest home computer with a few key software packages, so the reconception of the physical aspects of the *Pacific Review* had much more to do with overcoming institutional inertia than any practical concerns. Basically, because of a shift to an entirely electronic publishing process, the journal has become both better-looking, and faster and easier to produce.

You cannot, however, judge a journal by its cover, at least not with a reasonable amount of certainty. If the physical is the least important aspect of an organization's personality, what's really going on underneath? Has the philosophy of the *Pacific Review* changed?

Yes, but with a great deal more subtlety than the structural changes might indicate. There is no question that the *Pacific Review* is committed to publishing high-quality scholarship. Submissions still undergo a difficult selection and editorial process, and are still sent out to be refereed anonymously, as before. However, prompted possibly by the hipness of the reflexive trend in contemporary ethnomusicology, a reexamination of the goals of the *Pacific Review*, both as a publication dedicated to ethnomusicology, and as a publication run by students has led to certain philosophical changes and motivated some physical ones.

It is our feeling that the editorial board now sees "quality scholarship" somewhat differently than it did before, and also differently from the scholarly community at large. However voluminous the body of ethnomusicological literature becomes, ethnomusicology remains essentially a *human* practice, not a bookish or theoretical one. Quality of thought, and clarity of vision are therefore vastly more



important than lengthy bibliographies or token nods to fashionable theories. There is no excuse for deliberate ignorance of relevant materials, but neither is there any for artificially plumping a bibliography, or co-opting an irrelevant or poorly understood theory for the sake of academic fashion, which is really, after all, only a sort of intellectual fraud. A natural consequence of this is that to us graduate student contributions are not "training papers," deficient because of a lack of experience, but valuable contributions to ethnomusicological scholarship precisely because they provide the perspective of one who has not yet been absorbed into the ethnomusicological establishment. This is not the way students have been trained to write, but we will, as editors, strive to maintain this ideal.

This philosophical shift has produced at least one major structural change—the inclusion of what we call features. These are intended to be short papers on an ethnomusicological issue which are for one reason or another not "scholarly." They are intended to provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas outside the staid and confining medium of the scholarly paper, and anything which is relevant to the practice of ethnomusicology is appropriate.

A second physical change motivated by underlying concerns is the inclusion of a sound recording. When this was proposed, the editorial board was stunned. Why hadn't this been done before, especially considering how easy it is now? On reflection, the reaction of the board to the proposal is significant. We regard the study of sound phenomena (which laymen call music) as being absolutely central to the practice of ethnomusicology. It is, after all, what got us interested in this field and the one thing which can possibly unite the diverse interests of all ethnomusicologists. We will therefore be striving to include as much music as possible with each issue, so that when you are reading an article you can hear for yourself what all the fuss is about.

Hopefully these comments have made you more, and not less interested in reading the *Pacific Review*. We think that we have managed to put together a good issue, and set a good example for the future. We have no doubt that as the editorial board changes, the *Pacific Review* will continue to benefit rather than suffer from the diversity of views on the board.

Oh, one last thing. You should all be sure to check out our website at <http://www.arts.ucla.edu/Departments/Ethno/pacificr/PREhome.html>.

The Editors

# West Coast Women

## A Jazz Genealogy

SHERRIE TUCKER

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*In this article, the author discusses the musical careers of numerous African-American jazzwomen who performed on Central Avenue in Los Angeles during the 1940s. She highlights the importance of their participation in the development and performance of jazz music and calls for a new type of scholarly dialogue which would discuss women's and men's roles rather than simply focusing on the dominant histories regarding male jazz musicians.*

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THE designation "West Coast Jazz," rarely if ever refers to "all jazz played on the West Coast." The usage of the term in this article is no exception but for a couple of tactical twists. In the usual coinage, "West Coast Jazz" historically pertained only to certain kinds of jazz emanating out of a particular time and place: Los Angeles of the 1950s. Typically synonymous with the "cool school" projects of such artists as Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, Shorty Rogers, Bob Cooper, Howard Rumsey and Shelly Mann, the moniker "West Coast Jazz" conjures a soundscape of vibrato-free reeds, laid-back rhythm, an occasional oboe-sax-flute chamber jazz creation. The artists associated with this environment are a select group of alumni from the studios or Stan Kenton or both. And, like the studio orchestras of the 1950s, the "West Coast Jazz" fraternity of the 1950s was mostly white, mostly male, resulting in a decidedly raced and gendered spin to the term "West Coast Jazz." One imagines white guys with crew cuts. One is not likely, for instance, to picture African-American women playing trumpets, saxophones, basses, and drums.<sup>1</sup>

But, certainly, African-American women have participated, and continue to participate, in jazz production on the West Coast. So have African-American men, white women and black and white men and women in West Coast locations other than Los Angeles. While I feel that it is important to chip away at all of these omissions, in this paper I address one particular group of overlooked jazz musicians: African-American women who played on Central Avenue in the 1940s. My hope is that an engagement with narratives of West Coast jazzwomen, as a specific site of eclipsed knowledge about jazz practices, will effectively raise questions and point to possible methods of writing jazz histories which go beyond record surveys and hagiographies of internationally known artists. The "West Coast" of my title doesn't imagine the entire Pacific shore anymore than Shelly Manne had Sitka,

Alaska in mind when he recorded *The West Coast Sound* in 1953. For the purposes of this paper, "West Coast" refers not only to Los Angeles, but a different Los Angeles than the one inhabited by the "cool school." My focus is Central Avenue in its heyday in the 1940s when it thrived as a major hub of black cultural activity. And I employ the term "women" not to mean all women, but to mean African-American women, a reversal of the tendency of second wave feminist scholarship to "normalize" white Western middle-class women's experience under the term "women."<sup>2</sup> I harbor no grandiose expectations that these tactics shall overthrow dominant discourses, but rather hope that they shall serve as invocations of the kinds of questions of gender, race and power which I believe are necessary to engage in order to produce more complete versions of jazz history.

The interviews I shall draw from in this paper were collected within the context of a broader project on the "all-girl" jazz and swing bands of the 1940s. Having spent the last seven years interviewing alumni from these bands,<sup>3</sup> I am often struck by how memories of women jazz musicians are not only rich sites of little-known data about women's participation in jazz, but that the ways in which women musicians tell their stories may provide productive new frameworks for looking at jazz history. Recently, jazz scholars have called for new modes of historiography. The old methods, say these new scholars, fail to account for musical practices which were not recorded and not awarded national reputations.<sup>4</sup> This leaves out a broad spectrum of jazz practices and social meanings of jazz, including those which occurred at local levels and which, nonetheless, helped to develop the audiences who bought the records of nationally reputed artists.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, my goal in this paper is not to prove that women, black or white, are able to play jazz. Women musicians and the authors who write about them have proven this repeatedly.<sup>6</sup> Rather, I suggest that there are ways in which oral histories of women jazz musicians from particular locations and time periods might lead to new ways of uncovering important segments of jazz history which are obscured by dominant narratives. How might gender organization be explored in jazz historiography so that instead of trying to cram women into frameworks which omit them, we are finding new frameworks which account for both men and women? How might we explore how gender (which I take to be socially constructed) is reproduced, affirmed, contested, negotiated through jazz practices? What is the relationship between the gendering of certain jazz practices and the values placed on them by audiences, the music industry and historians (by gendering practices, I refer here to such traditions as the masculine "norm" associated with most band instruments and the creation of enclaves of feminized practices such as "all-girl" bands and "girl" singers)? How does "West Coast Jazz" come to mean jazz which is raced as white and gendered as male when African-American men and women have been playing jazz on the West Coast from as far south as San Diego and as far north as Vancouver as early on as the 1920s?<sup>7</sup>

Anyone who has tried to write about people and events omitted from dominant histories knows that the challenges of such projects are enormous. In the case of

women-in-jazz historians, if we rely on the same sources and standards that are used to write dominant ("universal"/men's) histories—recorded products, reviews, *downbeat* polls, the existing body of historical and archival jazz literature—we, too, tend to find few women. On the other hand, if we doggedly comb all available sources and cull only the information on women, we risk winding up with celebratory supplements to the dominant histories, rather than treatments which ask why such omissions occurred. Separate, or compensatory histories run the risk of intimating that historical women led hidden, secret or separate lives from their male colleagues; a possibility which may be true in some cases, but which seems unfathomable for women in traditionally male occupations. Writing "co-ed" histories about jazz musicianship, or other fields in which men have been seen as "normal" and women have been seen as "out of bounds," is a daunting proposition, and one which requires more than token inclusions of women's names.

One methodology which I am finding useful—not as a be-all, end-all solution to the problems I have just sketched, but as a way of negotiating some of the aforementioned pitfalls—is the genealogy as described by Michel Foucault in *Power and Knowledge*. My use of this methodology will involve positing the oral histories I have conducted with African-American women musicians who played on Central Avenue in the 1940s as a rich source of what Foucault described as "subjugated knowledges." This category includes hidden or repressed historical knowledge, as well as popular knowledge—all the types of knowledge which tend to get tossed out as being too "low," too "naive," or "too isolated" to count as "true" history. Some of the undervalued, under-recognized knowledges which women musicians have shared are 1) musical knowledge that was thought to be the domain of men; 2) social knowledge of what kinds of musical spheres, venues and performances styles women jazz musicians needed to occupy in order to secure employment; and 3) historical knowledge of women's performance and non-performance contributions to jazz cultural production.

Foucault claimed that a strategic link can be made between critical scholarly knowledge and disqualified popular knowledge based on the existence in both of a "historical knowledge of struggles." Together, critical historical inquiry and repressed disqualified knowledges may form what he called a "genealogy." A "genealogy" is different from other historical narratives in that it not only unburies hidden or forgotten knowledge, but it does so with a critical eye for why the burial has taken place. It then produces not only an addendum to an existing version of history, but an opposition to it (Foucault 1980: 78-92). Such a methodology would demand that the scholar combine her own critiques of secondary texts which have omitted women musicians (trade magazines, mainstream histories, recording practices, etc.) with women musicians' knowledge of their struggles to have their skills recognized by their male colleagues, the local and national gate-keepers of the music industry and by historians. The question then becomes not only "what did women do which has been omitted from historical memory and how might we add

it back in?" but "what struggles have taken place which have resulted in the disqualification of women's knowledge?"

When Patricia Hill Collins applied Foucault's notion of subjugated knowledge in her book, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, she stressed that the knowledges of African-American women have historically been made to look more "naive" and "isolated" than they actually are, through what she calls "controlling knowledge validation procedures" (Hill Collins 1991: 18). For Hill Collins, these procedures included a range of dominant discourses (not equally empowered) including the "masculinist bias" of certain African-American intellectual traditions, as well as the inability of some white feminists to seriously engage with the theoretical work of black feminists. Like the subjugated knowledges Hill Collins describes, the knowledges of the women musicians I have interviewed are neither naive to struggle, nor are they as isolated as one might think, though they have often been made to look that way by the "knowledge validation procedures" of record producers, trade magazine editors, agents, club owners, historians and racist and sexist institutional practices of the society at large.

Central Avenue, an important center for African-American cultural production, has, itself, been subject to many instances of minimization and erasure from jazz histories. Despite the fact that African-Americans had been playing jazz in Los Angeles since the 1920s, the use of the term "West Coast Jazz" as a marketing label to define a particular genre associated with white studio mentions of the 1950s, was uncritically accepted by many historians as well, resulting in the production of many dominant jazz histories which give the impression that jazz on the west coast begins and ends with white artists in the 1950s. Tom Reed, in his *Black Music History of Los Angeles*, has pointed out that due to the evaporation of war money from black communities, such as Central Avenue, the period of so-called "West Coast Jazz" was also a time when black musicians who had been playing jazz on the west coast for decades were forced to move to New York if they wanted to earn a living (Reed 1992: 16-45). Central Avenue is now undergoing considerable rediscovery by jazz historians. Whether these new projects will examine women's participation—let alone gender organization in jazz practice, commodification and historiography—remains to be seen. From oral accounts I have collected, Central Avenue would appear to be a rich source of information about how men and women learned jazz skills, how and where male and female musicians worked and how one jazz community was gendered.

The late jazz violinist Ginger Smock learned at an early age that dominant ideas about race and gender would play a determining role in her career. During our 1993 interview, she introduced the following story as integral to an understanding of the paths her career did and did not take.

I've always been afraid of rejection because back when I was twelve years old—and I hate to bring this up, but I have to tell you. Twentieth Century Fox heard of a child prodigy named Little Emma Smock.

My real name. I wasn't Ginger yet. And they called my teacher. They wanted a little girl violinist to play in a movie. And so my teacher came by the school and got me and everything. My violin tucked under my arm. And here we headed for the great Twentieth Century Fox. And all the school is so proud and "our little girl is going to really make it big," right? I walked in there and the studio moguls looked at me from head to toe, a twelve-year-old with the braids hanging down, like I was something from Mars. And I sensed something was wrong. They acted like they weren't glad to see me. I didn't receive any kind of welcome, "Come on in, take your violin out and play us something." And one of them said, "What are you?" And I didn't know how to answer that other than say, "I'm an American." I come from a mixed marriage, which is obvious ... And they said, "Well, my dear, I'm afraid we can't use you. You do not represent any particular group of people." And the tears, I remember, rolled down my cheeks, ran down my chest, and I said, "I'll never come back, even if you beg. I'll never come back. I will never see you again." And I walked out (Smock Shipp 1993).

Smock followed this story by telling about an incident in which a talent scout for RCA Victor heard her playing jazz violin at a club in San Francisco, made a demo record of her and tried and get her a recording contract.

He told the executives, "Sit down, I want you to hear something." So when he finished playing the two numbers, these guys were so impressed, they said, "Who on earth is playing the violin? We've never heard anything like this." And he says, "A colored girl up there in San Francisco." They said, "Aw, forget it. We've got Joe Venuti" (Smock Shipp 1993).

These stories demonstrate Smock's knowledge of the struggles she faced as a partly black (which, by dominant U.S. constructions of race, meant black<sup>8</sup>) woman musician in an industry controlled by white men. Her choice to preface her narration with these stories also suggests that it was important to her that I understood that she wanted to record and had been good enough, and that she knew the reasons why these doors were closed to her. She then went on to tell me with great enthusiasm about the doors which had been open to her in Central Avenue, where her all-female trio the Sepia Tones held forth in the Last Word from 1943-45, and her steady employment in numerous Los Angeles churches. She described how she would routinely work in jazz clubs Saturdays until 2:00 a.m. the following morning and then show up bright and early on Sundays to play church services, including sunrise services each Easter. A more complete picture of jazz history might encompass black women's knowledge of doors closed to them and their attempts to pry those doors open, rather than simply reproducing these dynamics by ignoring how gender and race affected admission to or exclusion from specific activities. It also might include a look at church jobs, where many African-American women jazz musicians found support and employment, even if the music they played there was not jazz.

The three female members of the Sepia Tones were not the only women jazz musicians to play on Central Avenue. Trumpet player Clora Bryant moved to Los

Angeles from Dennison, Texas in 1945 when her father got a defense industry job in the shipyards. Already a member of the Dallas musician's local, and a seasoned first trumpet from the all-female Prairie View Co-eds, 17-year-old Bryant put in a transfer at the union and began jamming on Central Avenue immediately. While the male musician who put me in touch with Bryant told me she was one of the few women to venture into the Central Avenue clubs to participate in celebrated jam sessions with Los Angeles jazz giants such as Wardell Gray, Sonny Criss, Teddy Edwards and Hampton Hawes, when Bryant talked to me, she populated her account of Central Avenue history with both women and men. "Most of the guys don't mention the women who were there," she explained. She then listed the women already playing when she arrived on the scene.

Ginger Smock [jazz violinist] was working, you know, and Vi [Redd, alto saxophonist]. [Trombonist] Melba Liston was working at the Alabam with Gerald Wilson and then at the Lincoln Theatre with Bardu Ali's band when I got there. Vi was still in school or college when I got here, but she was working gigs. She had played in her aunt's band. Her aunt had a children's band. A lot of the well-known players from L.A. played in her band....Hadda Brooks was another piano player that worked on the strip, and Dorothy Donegan worked on the Avenue. There were a lot of comedian ladies: Hattie McDaniels, you know, and Louise Beavers, they all worked on the Avenue. And I think Nellie [Lutcher, pianist/vocalist] was about the first one to play (Bryant 1990).

This portion of Bryant's narrative is interesting to me in the way that she chooses to foreground women in her Central Avenue jazz genealogy, and also because of her evocation of a jazz community which is not restricted to stars, or even to musicians. Sociologist Herman Gray has spoken of his suspicion of narratives in which individual musicians are isolated as if they have come up with their musical innovations in a vacuum rather than in association with other artists (Gray 1995).<sup>9</sup> Indeed the now-celebrated jam sessions on Central Avenue were made possible, in part, because other opportunities for paid employment for black musicians existed at that time and place, though, not all of these activities would make it into jazz history books.

In Bryant's narrative, the jazz community includes lesser known musicians along with known musicians, and she even weaves in non-musical entertainers who worked in the same venues as jazz musicians as well as a music teacher. Many Los Angeles musicians, male and female, mention the WPA children's band led by alto saxophonist Vi Redd's great aunt, Alma Hightower. In the division of musical labor, teaching has been an area in which women musicians have played an important role. If the frame of jazz history included influential music teachers, African-American women would be prominent.<sup>10</sup> Hightower was a drummer and a teacher, whose children's band, the Melodic Dots, played on the streets of South Central L.A., providing an important training ground for young musicians. Members included the now legendary tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon, trombonist Melba Liston, who went on to play and arrange for such prominent band leaders as Gerald Wil-



Ginger Smock, Las Vegas, Nevada October 28, 1993. *Photo by Sherrie Tucker.*



The now-famous jam sessions on Central Avenue were made possible by the availability of employment for jazz musicians in Los Angeles in the 1940s. A number of women jazz musicians played in Central Avenue clubs, including the Sepia Tones, shown here at their steady job at the Last Word, Los Angeles, 1944. (l-r) Mata Roy (piano); Ginger Smock (violin); Nina Russell (Hammond organ). *Photo courtesy of the late Ginger Smock Shipp.*





Ginger Smock, 1966. Publicity photo. *Courtesy of the late Ginger Smock Shipp.*



Clora Bryant, circa 1960. *Courtesy of Clora Bryant.*



Melba Liston (seated) and Clora Bryant (standing). Backstage at a tribute to Melba Liston, International Women's Brass Conference, May 28, 1993. *Photo by Sherrie Tucker.*



Trumpet player Clora Bryant gained valuable experience in the all-female band at Prairie View College, Prairie View, Texas. This photo shows members of the Prairie View Co-Eds in the late 1940s. *Courtesy Archives/Special Collections Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas.*



One of the all-female combos that played in Los Angeles in the 1940s was Frances Grey's Queens of Swing. Personnel at the time of this photo was (l-r) Thelma Lewis (trumpet); Dixie ?; ?; Frances Grey (drums); Willie Lee Terrell (guitar); Doris Jarrett (Meilleur) (bass); Elsie Smith (tenor sax). *Courtesy of Clora Bryant.*



Another view of Frances Grey's Queens of Swing. (l-r) Delcie ? (piano); Frances Grey (drums); Violet Wilson (bass); Minnie Hightower (alto sax); Peggy Becheers (tenor sax); Thelma Lewis (trumpet). *Courtesy of Clora Bryant.*



Violet Wilson, Los Angeles, June 12, 1994. *Photo by Sherrie Tucker.*



The Darlings of Rhythm on a trip to Hollywood, circa 1940s. Bassist Violet "Vi" Wilson traveled extensively with the Darlings of Rhythm during the late 1940s. *Courtesy of Violet Wilson.*



International Sweethearts of Rhythm playing an armory in Sacramento, August 1944. Numerous Los Angeles women musicians, including trumpet player Clora Bryant, had opportunities to sit in with the International Sweethearts of Rhythm during the band's West Coast tours. Others, including Doris Jarrett (Meilleur), Thelma Lewis and Martha Young went on the road with spin-off groups such as the California Sweethearts of Rhythm in the late 1940s. *Courtesy of Roz Cron.*

son and Dizzy Gillespie, bass player Violet Wilson, and saxophonists Minnie Hightower, Vi Redd, and Elsie Smith, a tenor player who later worked in Lionel Hampton's band.

My interest in Bryant's career stemmed from my understanding that she had participated in a number of all-woman big bands and combos. During her college days in Texas, she played with the all-female Prairie View Co-Eds—a big band which, although affiliated with Prairie View A & M, provided professional employment on weekends and summers for skilled female music students. Celebrated by the black press, the Co-Eds played major black theatres including New York's famed Apollo. After moving to L.A., Bryant had the opportunity to play with the renowned African-American all-female big band, the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, during one of their Los Angeles bookings. She also played in the Four Vees, an all-female vocal and jazz combo which originated in Floyd Ray's band, and a black all-woman big band called the Darlings of Rhythm. She played in various all-female groups called the Queens of Swing (some led by Frances Grey, while another was a co-op which included pianist Elyse Blye Henderson). The Queens of Swing groups played Central Avenue clubs, including the Last Word, the Alabam, and the Downbeat, and toured the western states. Bryant surprised me, however, in our first conversation, when it became clear that while she was happy to talk about her participation in all-woman bands, she was more invested in talking about her engagement with bebop.

The first [time I] heard bebop to know what it was, was just before Dizzy and them came out. I was up in Caldwell, Idaho, with [the Queens of Swing] and I had an old transoceanic radio, and I could get all the different stations everywhere. I could pick up stations down here in L.A. from up there in Idaho and they were playing Dizzy's record of 'Things to Come.' ... I couldn't find 'one'! They were going so fast and I'd never heard that kind of arrangement! But it sparked an interest in me! So when I got back to L.A., I quickly went to the one big record shop out there on Sunset and Vine... You could go in the booths and listen to the records all you want. You didn't have to buy them. They weren't wrapped in all this stuff, you know. I would go in the booth and listen.

. . . and in December, Dizzy and Charlie came to Billy Berg's and they were broadcasted every night ... And Dizzy was playing all these notes. But the trumpet! How did he play so many notes? There were three valves! I was aware of Roy Eldridge, and his excursion up in the stratosphere and stuff, but it wasn't like that. Dizzy was playing changes that I'd never heard before... I found out that they were playing songs built on changes of the standards, like 'How High the Moon' and 'Lady be Good,' and all those kinds of things. 'Lover Come Back to Me.' After I found out that they were playing their songs built on the changes, then it became clear to me! I could understand.... And I'd sit and play Dizzy's record. The first thing that I could play by him was a ballad, 'I Can't Get Started,' because before that, everybody was doing Bunny Berigan's version. Everybody imitated Bunny Berigan playing 'I Can't Get Started.' Then when I heard Dizzy play it, I said, wait a minute! I bought the record and I

learned it note for note. It was fun. Those were some fun times. I mean the guys, there was a camaraderie that we don't have now. You always knew where you could go and see the best musicians and your friends and hear the best music and get up there and try to play with those people. And you knew that you were gonna be bopped to death (Bryant 1990).

Bryant eventually played on the stand with many bop innovators of the day, including Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. She jammed on Central Avenue, "day and night," and has described the participation structure of such events as democratic. "You'd pick a number," she said. However, jam sessions did not pay the rent, even if you matched Ellington high note trumpeter, Al Killian, high note for high note, as Clara was reported to have done (Stokes 1990: 12). To make a living, Bryant often played with all-female groups, whose employers and audiences generally expected them to stick with a less challenging swing and novelty repertoire, a fact-of-life which frustrated many women jazz musicians. In this way, the musical, intellectual and emotional engagement with bebop described by Bryant (as well as by other West Coast jazzwomen) constitutes another instance of subjugated knowledge. Regardless of their musical abilities or interests, women's groups were frequently hired to fulfill different purposes than were men's groups. For one thing, regardless of musical ability, they were considered a visual, as well as auditory, medium.

"We had to wear some pretty exotic costumes," recalled bassist Doris Jarrett Meilleur, who worked with the Queens of Swing when she wasn't jamming on Central Avenue. Meilleur studied bass with the encouragement of her cousin, Ellington bassist, Jimmy Blanton, and learned hand placement for jazz from Charles Mingus. But neither Blanton nor Mingus could have prepared her for the costuming problems she encountered. "If you have on a strapless dress and try to play a bass..." she explained, "you would try to pin the dress to your bra and sometimes it would slip through. I was behind the bass trying to keep my chest covered" (Meilleur 1994).

Another bass player who worked with the Queens of Swing is Violet Wilson who found that despite the reputation of women's groups as gimmicks, she generally preferred playing in them than in men's groups, where the burden to prove she was a real musician, not a gimmick, was a nuisance each time she walked onto a job. Wilson, yet another of Alma Hightower's proteges, represented her high school in the Los Angeles All-City Orchestra, and soon found herself in high demand with such all-woman bands as the Darlings of Rhythm. But when she showed up for jobs with men, the skepticism of her fellow musicians had to be surmounted again and again.

We made them respect us, because we could blow our instruments. And that was a challenge to them at the same time. Now, with a women's band, it's just a matter you're all the same sex, and, you know, the best person plays. It doesn't matter. But with men, they always, they have that guard up. "Woman musician, she can't play," you know. Then when we play, that knocks them out. That sur-

prises them. That puts them back in history. Lets them know that women could play just as good as they can. Any time we walked in, even myself as a bass player, when I walked in on a set, eyes were raised. When I got through playing, I made a believer out of them. And it was that way with all the girls, just about (Wilson 1993).

It would appear that what was gendered about playing jazz was not necessarily so much a difference in the kinds of musical practice which attracted musicians, male and female, but rather a difference in the kinds of jobs which were available for men and women. The years during World War II saw more equity for women musicians than the years which directly followed but whenever possible, as in other industries, higher-paying jobs were reserved for men. With the exception of piano, most jazz instruments were considered "normal" in the hands of men, and a "gimmick" in the hands of women; recording dates for women who played instruments besides piano were scarce. Because recording opportunities paid well and potentially furthered the musicians' careers, those jobs—by the logic of a patriarchal economy—went to men. In fifty years as a Los Angeles jazz musician, Clara Bryant has made one album under her name (the 1957 Mode release, *Gal With A Horn*) on which a condition of her making the album was that she must sing, as well as play, on every tune. Although not the best format for convincing skeptical listeners of the seriousness of her lifelong exchange of ideas with other trumpet players, Bryant made the most of the rare opportunity for a female horn player. One can't help but notice the irony of Bryant's rendition of "Man With A Horn," in which she sings lyrics such as, "You'll always find me near the man with the horn," and "So listen while he takes his solo apart," and then launches into her own accomplished trumpet solo. Bryant's trumpet solos on *Gal With A Horn* reflect the kinds of musical knowledge not popularly associated with women. The player on *Gal With A Horn* is immersed in the same body of trumpet knowledge as were male trumpet greats of her generation: one hears years of faithful Louis Armstrong study and synthesis, transformed through active engagement with influences of Roy Eldridge and Dizzy Gillespie. Currently a great-grandmother living in Long Beach, Bryant is still trying to secure a second album deal as a leader.

In closing, I would just like to review a few of the subjugated knowledges which can be gleaned from these portions of oral histories of women jazz musicians, and reflect on how critical scholarly work might collaborate with these insights to produce new historical narratives which reveal the struggles which have repressed women's knowledge, as well as our knowledge of women. Gendered practices in the money-making end of the music business need to be interrogated as such, rather than accepted by historians as transparently documenting who were the important artists and who were the forgettable, sexy, cocktail entertainers. Women's stories help us to understand why serious musicians would disguise themselves as sexy, cocktail entertainers and play in venues where novelty repertoire was expected fare. Women instrumentalists might be asked not only what bands they played in, but to describe their own musical journeys, who they listened to, how they gained access to information, to what sounds/achievements/expressions



they aspired and whether or not these goals were actual possibilities for them. Historians may be surprised, as I was when I tried to talk to Clara Bryant about all-female combos and learned about her engagement with bebop in its formative years. And finally, how might looking at jazz practice as a community activity, encompassing local scenes, training bands, children's bands and family bands, rather than the expression of a lonely, misunderstood genius (what Sherley Ann Williams (1972: 141) has described as the "alienation and isolation of the picaro"), render visible a more complete picture of cultural production?

Who might be included in a jazz community? Musicians, certainly—both those whose products, images and stories have made it to the market and those whose creative moments were never captured and preserved for the future—music teachers who passed knowledge on to young musicians, non-musical entertainers who performed in the same venues and whose creative moments were juxtaposed with those of jazz musicians, audience members, relatives, friends. A historiography in which a jazz community was so framed would not only include women, but would provide an excellent vantage point from which to construct a gendered history of jazz. For not only would women fill the expected roles of wives and girlfriends, fans and teachers, but, like the women interviewed for this paper, they would fill the roles of jazz musicians, usually the ones who were not marketed, or marketed in ways which excluded them from the serious consideration of historians.

## Notes

Many thanks to the women quoted here, as well as the many other "West Coast" women musicians who shared their stories with me and whose knowledge shapes my analyses. I am also indebted to the generous critiques of panelists, respondents and attendees of two conferences where I presented earlier versions of this paper: The Western Association of Women Historians, June 4, 1995 and the Society for Ethnomusicology, Southern and Northern California Chapters Joint Meeting, U.C. Santa Barbara, California, February 25, 1995, where this paper received the Ki Mantle Hood Prize for most distinguished paper by a student presenter.

<sup>1</sup> For histories primarily focused on Los Angeles jazz in the 1950s, see Gioia's *West Coast Jazz* (1992) and Gordon's *Jazz West Coast* (1986).

<sup>2</sup> The practice of universalizing white women's experiences under the term "women" has been roundly critiqued by women of color feminists, as expressed in the title of the anthology, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some Of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Hull, Scott and Smith 1982).

<sup>3</sup> My manuscript on all-woman bands, tentatively entitled *On The Road With The "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940s*, will be published by Duke University Press.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, the articles contained in Buckner and Weiland's *Jazz in Mind: Essays on the History and Meanings of Jazz* (1991) and Gabbard's *Jazz Among the Discourses* (1995).

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to Kathy Ogren for this observation.

<sup>6</sup> See partial discography at the end of this article. For information on women jazz musicians, see D. Antoinette Handy's *Black Women in American Bands and Orchestras* (1981); Sally Placksin's *Jazzwomen: 1900 to the Present* (1982); Linda Dahl's *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a*

*Century of Jazzwomen* (1984) and Leslie Gourse's *Madame Jazz: Contemporary Women Instrumentalists* (1995).

<sup>7</sup> Recent works in regional and local jazz historiography have made great strides in broadening the scope of what counts as jazz history. For works which document early presence of black jazz musicians on the West Coast, see Reed's *The Black Music History of Los Angeles: Its Roots, A Pictorial History of Black Music in Los Angeles from the 1920s - 1970* (1992) and de Barros's *Jackson Street After Hours: The Roots of Jazz in Seattle* (1993). Also, look for the future publication of Mark Miller's manuscript on the early days of jazz in Canada which will provide valuable information on black musicians north of the border.

<sup>8</sup> See Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s* (1994).

<sup>9</sup> See also Ogren's "'Jazz Isn't Just Me': Jazz Autobiographies as Performance Personas" in *Jazz in Mind: Essays on the Histories and Meanings of Jazz* (1991).

<sup>10</sup> Influential black female music teachers often appear in the oral histories of black male musicians as well. In an oral history conducted by Dr. Billy Taylor for the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program, Milt Hinton proudly recalled the contributions of his mother as a prominent piano teacher, whose students included Nat Cole.

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- Liston, Melba. "My Reverie." On *Forty Years of Women in Jazz*. Jass CD-9/10.
- *Something Special*, by the Dexter Gordon All-Stars. Hall of Fame Jazz Greats JG 611.
- Lutcher, Nellie. *The Best of Nellie Lutcher*. Capital Jazz CDP 7243 8 35039 2 6.
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# Emergent Qualities of Collectively Improvised Performance

A Study of an Egalitarian Intercultural Improvising Trio

DAVID BORGIO

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*This article is based on ethnomusicological fieldwork with a trio of improvising musicians in Los Angeles and discusses the emergent qualities of collectively improvised musical performances. Related research from anthropology, performance studies, sociolinguistics, and most importantly the rapidly developing fields of chaos and complexity studies, supports the article's emphasis on qualitative and context sensitive analysis. Interview materials from the musicians and a transcription of a three minute excerpt from one of their performances illuminate the importance of musical interaction and emergent phenomena in collectively improvised performance.*

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You have improvised music where it's pretty clear what kinds of things can happen and why and when. And then you have improvised music where the fact that there's an understanding is clear, but quite how it works is moved to a level of mystery again.

—— Evan Parker (Corbett 1994: 204)

When the band begins to play... this energy ["the musical force"] proceeds to that area and it says, "All right, I'm here, I will direct you and guide you. You as an individual must realize that I am here. You cannot control me, you can't come up here and say 'well I'm gonna play this'... you can't go up there and intellectually realize that you're going to play certain things. You're not going to play what you practiced... Something else is going to happen... So the individual himself must make contact with that and get out of the way.

—— Cecil McBee (Monson 1991: 164-65)

Free music can be a musical form that is playing without pre-worked structure, without written music or chord changes. However, for free music to succeed, it must grow into free spiritual music which is not... a musical form; it should be based off of a life form. It is not about just picking up an instrument and playing guided by math principles or emotion. It is emptying oneself and being.

— William Parker (Such 1993: 131)

In the materials and techniques with which they constitute their provisional language, improvisers enjoy the constancy of their selfhood (that is their pleasure); in experimentation with new materials and in the encounter with other musicians, they seek its loss (that is their bliss).

— John Corbett (1995: 237)

THE paradox of developing an extensive repertoire of skills only to abandon them and oneself to intuition and risking the unknown plays a part in all forms of human improvisation, but is particularly pronounced in musical performances of collective improvisation. Although a single performer may introduce musical ideas or attempt to steer certain variables of a performance in a general direction, the details of collectively improvised music are at least equally determined by the immediate interactions between performers and the unplanned combination of musical expressions within the collective texture. The combining of musical elements and personalities through collectively journeying into uncharted musical territory provides a continual source of mystery and intrigue for performers and listeners alike. Unfortunately, these emergent qualities of improvised performance are the most difficult to discuss with the conventional tools of musical analysis and as a result have often been overlooked in the music academy.

Emergent phenomena are collective properties that may “spontaneously” develop in a collection of interacting components without being implicit in any way in the individual pieces. As Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart (1994: 232) write in *The Collapse of Chaos*, emergent phenomena are “regularities of behavior that somehow seem to transcend their own ingredients.” The study of emergent phenomena is an important component of the new sciences of chaos and complexity and has already substantially reoriented many of our common reductionist beliefs in the natural and social sciences. I believe a heightened awareness to emergent phenomena in musical and cultural studies could initiate a similar transition in the field of ethnomusicology.

Possibly the most readily apparent emergent phenomenon in music is harmony. When the tones C and E are played simultaneously the sonority of a major third “emerges” from their union, transcending the implicit qualities of the isolated pitches. Melody is also an emergent phenomenon that combines pitch and rhythm to produce a significantly different collective meaning. In fact, our conventional methodology of dissecting chords into their constituent pitches and performances into their respective individual parts and sections runs contrary to the very es-

sence of musical creation. While I do not wish to abandon this reductionist approach to musical analysis entirely—for it operates well within a certain perspective much like Newtonian physics performs adequately for the development of new technologies, etc.—the new scientific paradigm focuses instead on the dynamic relationships between interconnected agents of complex adaptive systems and investigates ideas such as irreducibility, uncertainty and paradox, far-from-equilibrium flux, self-organization, iteration or positive feedback, deterministic chaos and castastrophes, fractal organization and self-similarity, attractors, bifurcations, phase space and emergence.

Scientists are beginning to move beyond the search for fundamental simplicities and linear, deterministic models to describe the complex systems of our everyday experience and are now questioning how and why these complex systems evolve and become meaningful at the level of our normal perception. It is rather obvious how complex musical systems can be formed from the dynamic combination of simple elements, but far less obvious and far more interesting in my opinion is how those complex systems organize themselves into understandable and meaningful events for participants and listeners. Collective musical improvisation offers a virtual laboratory for these sorts of investigations; the system is overtly self-organizing, the complexity is readily apparent in the dynamic interplay of the performers, and the meaning and the perceptibility of the music are not questioned by its participants (although they are often fiercely questioned in the academy and the music industry). Since the meaning of the music is hardly reducible to its component parts it offers an exceptional challenge to this new paradigm of emergence. To their credit, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have become increasingly aware of the emergent aspects of ritual and musical performance. The now classic study by Victor Turner (1982) on liminality—an idea first investigated by Van Gennep (1960)—is an excellent example of anthropological work with this orientation.<sup>1</sup> A burgeoning field called performance studies, spearheaded by Richard Schechner (1988) from within the discipline of theater studies, also intends to follow a more context-sensitive approach to cultural performances of all types. Recent studies in sociolinguistics have focused on the pragmatic and metapragmatic qualities of human communication in which meaning resides not in the content of the information transferred (i.e. syntactics and semantics) but instead in the larger context of a conversation event. Writing around the same time as the early development of chaos theory, sociolinguist Richard Bauman (1977) spoke of the “emergent qualities of performance” in his important work *Verbal Art as Performance*.<sup>2</sup> For my own work (Borgo 1996) I have also investigated the idea of play and its relationship to emergence as expounded by scholars as diverse as Hans Georg Gadamer (1993), Gregory Bateson (1972) and Margaret Drewal (1992), to name only a few.

### The Trio

My fieldwork from January 1995 to May 1996 has involved a Los Angeles-based trio of musicians concerned with an intercultural form of collective improvi-

sation rooted in American jazz. The group includes Kevin Eubanks on guitars, Adam Rudolph on hand percussion and Ralph Jones on various woodwinds.<sup>3</sup> The trio is egalitarian in organization and is publicized only under the names of the musicians involved. They perform most every Sunday afternoon at a club called the Jazz Bakery in Culver City. At these performances, the trio members do not incorporate any prearranged or precomposed musical models on which to base their improvisations. Instead, they rely on their extensive musical backgrounds in jazz and various world musics and their ability to mediate their individual contributions within the collectively improvised ensemble texture in order to create a meaningful musical statement of the moment.

The Jazz Bakery is a non-profit space devoted to the presentation of live music on Venice Boulevard. The stage of the auditorium is elevated a few feet and houses a grand piano and ample room for a complete big band. On Sundays, Ralph Jones sets up with his arsenal of aerophones in front of the piano at stage right. His instruments for an average performance include a soprano and tenor saxophone, a bass clarinet, an alto flute, a Norwegian overtone flute, an Indonesian *suling* flute, a Japanese *hichiriki*, an Indian *shenai*, a Middle Eastern *ney*, an African recorder-type flute, and finger cymbals. Kevin Eubanks plays his hollow body electric guitar from center stage and Adam Rudolph fills the stage's left side with his percussion instruments.

Adam's collection includes all varieties of what he calls "things that make interesting sounds, sounds that are evocative and language-like." The heart of his drum sound is two conga drums and a *djembe* drum, a goblet-shaped hand drum used in various parts of West Africa. He also performs on an *udu* clay hand drum from Nigeria and various frame drums. Behind Adam on the stage is a rack of wind chimes and hanging gongs. On the floor space in front of him he keeps a set of temple gongs, wood blocks, a thumb piano, various wooden flutes, bird calls, an Australian *didgeridoo* and "toys from Chinatown."

From the perspective of a traditional small jazz ensemble, as described by both Ingrid Monson (1991) and Paul Berliner (1994), the instrumentation of this trio is extremely unusual. Although Ralph or Kevin have on occasion been known to play the piano—nothing is off limits for the musicians if it is on hand and can be used to produce musical sounds—regular contributions from the three primary jazz rhythm section instruments of piano, bass and drum set are noticeably absent. Lacking the traditional role-playing functions of these instruments, the trio's unique group configuration necessitates a markedly different approach to ensemble improvisation. The broad spectrum of musical experiences on which the trio members draw also adds to the unusual, syncretic aspects of their performances.

Adam has studied intensely the hand drumming styles of many African, Asian, and Afro-Caribbean musical traditions. He has also had many formative musical experiences with members of the Association for the Advancement of the Creative Musician, or AACM, an important Chicago-based collective of improvising artists since the mid-1960s. Ralph's early years were spent in Detroit and he has vast mu-

sical experiences ranging from work with popular Motown artists, Brazilian groups and jazz fusion ensembles. Kevin Eubanks has recorded and toured with many of the most respected jazz artists in both traditional and avant-garde performance contexts. He currently leads the house band on the *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* which performs a wide spectrum of popular American styles including rock and roll, rhythm and blues and contemporary jazz.

Despite this wide spectrum of musical experiences, the African American tradition of improvised jazz music is considered by all three performers to be the central factor in their musical direction. Adam bluntly stated that "jazz is the glue." According to him, "it has the ability to maintain an identity while freely absorbing all kinds of musical influences."

### **Metaphors Describing Performance Interaction**

The use of language and transportational metaphors to describe the process of musical improvisation is commonplace in both academic studies and vernacular interpretations of improvised music. Several of the most prevalent metaphors describing the musical intent, interaction, and intensification of improvising ensembles are storytelling, conversation and journey.

The metaphor of storytelling focuses on the individual musician's recounting of an often self-reflexive narrative through his/her acquired skills and experiences with improvisation. When evaluating a performance, Adam stressed to me that "if it tells of feelings and thoughts then it succeeds." Several scholars have championed an analytical approach focused on the individual performer and the narrative aspects of improvisation. The oral storytelling traditions of the Balkans, studied extensively by Milman Parry (1971) and Albert Lord (1960), have provided models for several scholars interested in jazz improvisation, most notably Lawrence Gushee (1977) and Gregory Smith (1991). While there are most certainly interesting emergent qualities associated with this format of oral storyteller/musician and audience, this paper is concerned instead with the emergent qualities of collectively improvised ensemble performance.

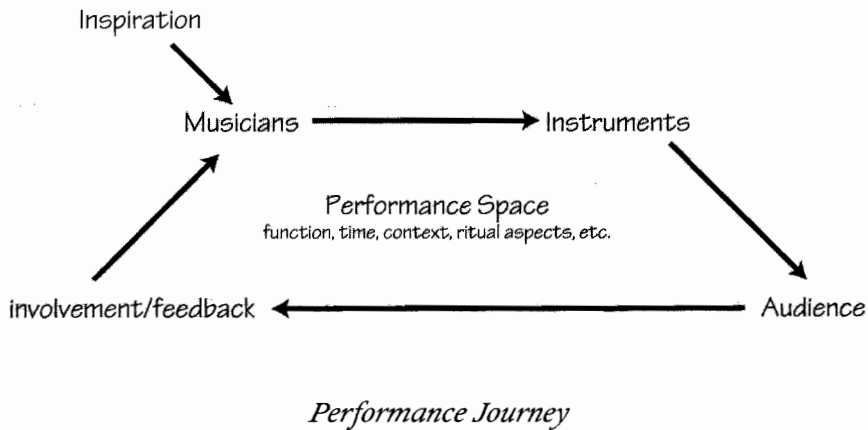
The metaphor of conversation pervades almost every aspect of our conventional analysis and interpretation of ensemble improvisation. Ingrid Monson's recent dissertation on "Musical Interaction in Modern Jazz" presents conversation and other language metaphors as "meta-metaphors... which comment upon the entire musical-social context and enable us to clarify the mutual influences between sound and culture within the context of the jazz ensemble" (1991: 176). Her work comes a long way in shifting the emphasis in studies on improvisation away from musical products and towards a holistic approach concerned with musical process, interpersonal interactions and performance context. However, a crucial element of much improvised music, namely the ability for performances to metaphorically transport the participants and listeners and subsequently transform their sense of individual, cultural, and spiritual identity is noticeably absent from her treatment.



The members of the trio under study used the transportational metaphor of a journey in two distinct ways. They invoked it to describe the life-cycle of an artist's personal growth and musical exploration, or as Adam stated, "as you go along your journey you begin to understand what your journey is all about." This sense of a journey centers on the individual and the long-term process of artistic and spiritual transformation.

Secondly, the metaphor was used to describe the more immediate performance journey that the musicians and audience embark on together ideally involving an ecstatic feedback process. Adam described the trio's performances as a "unique expression of the three performers and the audience at that time." For him, "the music exists only relative to what people are experiencing it as... It exists in the context of the relationship [between the player and the listener]." It is interesting to note Adam's emphasis on the context-sensitive and dynamic qualities of performance rather than the isolatable structural content of the music.

Each of the performers also emphasized to me the meta-conscious sources of inspiration in performance. Adam believes that "music comes from something else and it should express something else other than music." Ralph stated "it [the music] comes through you from, you know, a divine order." Kevin defined improvisation to me as "being active in the moment - nature will tell you what to do." Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the performance journey as described to me by these musicians. A similar ecstatic feedback model was devised by A. Jihad Racy (1991) regarding the *tarab* musical cultures of the Near East.



## The Musical Journey

Finished art works that we see and may love deeply are in a sense the relics or traces of a journey that has come and gone. What we reach through improvisation is the feel of the journey itself.

— Steven Nachmanovitch (1990: 6)

On Sundays, the music begins shortly after the performers walk on stage and continues uninterrupted by applause or substantial pause, often for up to an hour, until the musicians collectively sense an ending and conclude the performance set. A brief intermission follows and another uninterrupted set concludes the afternoon's performance.

During the course of a set many different musical textures and moods are explored by the trio, but in a rather seamless fashion which provides the sense of a musical journey through both time and space. The trio's syncretic musical approach—which draws on traditional musical practices from many diverse world cultures yet presents them in a transformed and personalized manner—gives the listener a sense of traveling through both familiar and yet strangely un-worldly locales. Their incorporation of sounds evocative of ancient civilizations juxtaposed with modern timbral and harmonic techniques also provides a sense of traveling through vast expanses of time within the course of an hour-long set. Their use of metered time (most often a meter of 6 which is popular in music cultures from Havana to Cairo, a meter of 4 common to most jazz music, or less frequently a meter of 10 based on the Near Eastern *sama'i*) and extended periods of a-meter in performances—at times even superimposing the two—gives the listener both an acute sense of the passage of time and a feeling of atemporality or timelessness.

The distinction in the philosophical literature drawn between chronometric time and experiential time is most appropriate here.<sup>4</sup> In an eloquent description of the spiritual qualities of Persian music which relates well to the trio's performance practice, Seyyed Hossein Nasr writes:

Persian music possesses extremely fast and regular rhythms, and moments in which there are no beats or any form of temporal determination. In the first instance man is united with the pulsation of cosmic life, which in the human individual is always present in the form of the beating of the heart. Man's life and the life of the cosmos become one, the microcosm is united to the macrocosm, and thus man's spirit undergoes expansion and participates in the joy and ecstasy which encompass the world and which man fails to perceive only because of his state of forgetfulness of God (*ghaflah*). In the second case, which transcends all rhythm and temporal distinction, man is suddenly cut off from the world of time; he feels himself situated face to face with Eternity and for a moment benefits from the joy of extinction (*fana'*) and permanence (*baqa'*) (Nasr 1987: 171).

Glen Velez, a fellow hand drum expert who, like Adam Rudolph, incorporates overtone singing in his performances states:

The long deep breathing used in overtone singing alters the mind's perception of time and place and turns one towards timelessness. The fast paced rhythm and hand movements of the various drum techniques activate the body and stimulate an acute awareness of the flow and movement of passing time. Overlapping these two experiences creates a feeling of upliftedness and a powerful inward and outward expansion of consciousness (Velez n.d.).

David Such, in his work with saxophonist Daniel Carter, discusses the "preperformance roles.. (e.g., parent, record store salesperson, band leader, and so forth) that musicians assume in their day-to-day social interactions" (1993: 139). According to Carter and Such, these roles may be dissolved in free-form, collectively improvised musical performances, leading to an undifferentiated state of mystical awareness, unity or selflessness.

Victor Turner incorporated in his work Csikszentmihalyi's idea of "flow" where action and awareness merge for the performer in a state of heightened concentration and focus (Csikszentmihalyi 1996). Turner writes that "A performance is a dialectic of 'flow,' that is, spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and 'reflexivity,' in which the central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen 'in action,' as they shape and explain behavior" (Schechner and Appel 1990: 1). His views are strikingly similar to ideas expressed to me by Adam concerning the cognitive processes of the improviser. Adam believes that the intellect and intuition become fused in the moment of improvising, and the mind, body and spirit of the performer ideally work in a harmonious unity. Adam also described an ongoing balancing act between the "player's mind," which is involved with the intuitive and immediate micro-decisions of improvisation, and the "composer's mind," which reflects on the long-term development and structure of an improvisation.

The improvisers I spoke with share a desire to take the listeners on a journey by embarking on one themselves; in other words by stepping out of their individual ego shell and collectively journeying into unknown musical territory. Adam believes that "artists are the shamans of today." According to him, musicians may embark on a spiritual journey in performance in order to guide their listeners and ultimately transform their perceptions of what it means to be meaningfully in this world. In Adam's view, only if an artist is aware of his/her role as shaman in society, is prepared to embark on a spiritual journey in performance, and is welcomed by an aware and receptive audience, then may the music exhibit emergent qualities that embody and impart this power of transformation. Richard Schechner (1988) differentiates between a temporary transportation in performance which simply returns the participant to the point of origin and the more pronounced transformation that may occur when the perceptions and identities of the listeners and performers are significantly reconfigured.

While Adam has often expressed to me his desire to bring about a communal transformation through musical performance, because of the rather restrained nature of concert-going behavior in American culture the effect of the trio's performances more often falls under the rubric of individual ecstasy as discussed by Gilbert Rouget (1985) and others. On a recent Sunday afternoon, the conclusion of the trio's performance was met by understandably sparse applause from the small audience in attendance. A middle-aged gentleman who had been seated alone and deeply involved during the entire performance decided to convey his deepest ap-

preciation to the performers. He stood and shouted out to the stage, "Thank you for this wonderful, rich, internal journey."

The metaphor of a journey describes both the episodic following of linear temporal events and the process of ego and time disassociation discussed by the performers above. For example, when attending to a conversation or story, a listener (or participant) may embark on a journey simply through the followability and inherent structuring of events provided by the tale or discussion. However, a rather different sense of a journey is involved in either grasping the story's meaning as a whole, or by a sudden bit of insight triggered by a turn in the narrative or conversation. In the same sense, a listener at a freely improvised performance may attend rather stoically and analytically to the sonic details presented by the performers, or instead may experience a temporal, spatial, and perceptual refiguring by allowing the improvised soundscape to transform and reorient his/her understandings and sense of identity. To adopt the vernacular, it is not enough to *listen* to this music, you must also *hear* it and allow it to *play* you.

In his important work *The Act of Creation* (1964), Arthur Koestler describes bisociation as the ability to perceive self-consistent but habitually incomparable frames of reference together. For Koestler, the flash of inspiration at the center of any creative act involves transcending habitual patterns of thought by coupling together often radically different frames of reference, a sort of chaotic mental attractor resulting from a far-from-equilibrium flux. Freely improvised music on the surface often seems to contradict the notions of musical coherence and linear design prominent in mainstream Western culture. However, recent scientific understandings of numerous and diverse natural and social phenomena support the idea that uncertainty, non-linearity, far-from-equilibrium states and dynamic evolution are the rule rather than the exception in the observable world. In this light, free improvisation not only embodies, but relies on, the essential tensions between intellectual and intuitive approaches for the individual, the balancing of individual and collective ideals for the performers and the juxtaposition or bisociation of traditional and innovative musical elements and chronometric and experiential temporal experiences in the structuring of the musical event.

### Kinetic Dialog: Transcription and Analysis

I have included a partial transcription of a three minute kinetic dialog, to borrow the performers' own terminology, from the first set of their performance on February 19, 1995 to elucidate a few moments of conversational interaction and emergence between the musicians and audience. The dialog at this point in the performance is between Kevin on hollow-body guitar, and Adam on *udu*, a Nigerian clay hand drum. The *udu* notes with stems facing upwards denote the finger strokes on the clay shell of the drum, while the notes with downward-facing stems symbolize the palm strokes on the open hole of the drum which produce a variable bass tone.

A

guitar

udu

audience noise- X X X X X

B

C

Letter A of the transcription shows how fluidly Adam adjusts to the rhythmic idea just initiated by Kevin, filling the unaccented spaces of Kevin's pedal point with a contrary, yet complementary rhythmic idea of his own. After this groove is established a noise can be heard in the audience which serves as a rhythmic impetus to Kevin to halt the current development and begin anew. In fact, Kevin borrows from the rhythmic pattern of two followed by three beats provided by the audience noise to begin his new exploration. This extreme openness to musical and non-musical stimuli of the moment is in perfect accord with the trio's worldview

The musical score consists of five systems of notation. The first system shows a treble and bass staff in 2/4 time. The second system includes a double bar line and a note 'D' above the treble staff. The third system continues the notation. The fourth and fifth systems show more complex rhythmic patterns with many 'x' marks in the bass staff, likely representing drum hits. The notation includes various musical symbols like notes, rests, and accidentals.

and illustrates the spontaneity of both the conversation metaphor and the concept of emergent phenomena.

Letter B of the transcription shows how Kevin develops this rhythmic idea by introducing syncopation in the fourth measure, and finally a cadential line that leads to a sustained chord in measure six. Adam produces a finger roll on the *udu* drum which heightens the cadential effect of Kevin's improvisation and the subsequent musical resting spot signifies to him an opportunity for a turn-taking transition of the solo voice. He immediately responds with three strong hits with his palm on the open hole of the drum, producing its characteristic bass sound. Adam's

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a piano (piano) staff and a percussion (percussion) staff. The piano staves are in treble clef, and the percussion staves are in a simplified notation using 'x' marks for hits. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes annotations such as "shut up" and "grunt". The percussion part features a complex rhythmic pattern of hits and rests, often indicated by 'x' marks. The piano part features melodic lines with various note values and rests. The score is written for a piano and a percussionist.

role as percussionist may at times relegate him to the status of accompanist, but he is always ready to assume the role of soloist, however briefly, when a lull in the musical conversation affords it. The three hits refer back to the rhythmic idea that Kevin was developing, all initiated by the unexpected, and probably unintentional, audience noise.

The two musicians then play a stop-time figure together—letter C of the transcription—with the intuitive finesse that only comes from familiarity and a deep trust in the other's musical instincts and sensitivity. The use of stop time has a long tradition in jazz dating to the early recordings of Louis Armstrong and others, and its presence here in a rather unorthodox configuration may be understood as signifyin' on the tradition of jazz.<sup>5</sup> The performers then launch into an intense,

The musical score is divided into five systems. The first system shows a guitar melody and piano accompaniment with a key signature change to F major. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with triplets. The third system features a guitar solo labeled 'unmetered' and piano accompaniment with triplets, followed by a section labeled 'aborted call and response' and 'accelerate and dissolve meter'. The fourth system shows a guitar solo labeled 'unmetered' and piano accompaniment. The fifth system shows a guitar solo labeled 'unmetered' and piano accompaniment, with a section labeled '21 seconds not transcribed' and '8 seconds'.

unmetered musical dialog (not transcribed) which effectively climaxes on an open-voiced guitar chord.

In the third measure of letter D, Kevin begins a repeated, off-beat pattern followed by syncopated hits—first four hits, then five hits, and then three hits—while Adam provides a steady accompaniment. Kevin plays the pattern leading to a sustained chord which Adam responds to again with uniform bass tones from the *udu* drum (measure 11). The groove is next interrupted by an exclamation from what sounds like a young girl or boy in the audience saying “shut up.” Kevin immediately locates the proper pitches to mimic this utterance on his guitar. This example may be compared, at least indirectly, to the participation frameworks of storytelling as described by Marjorie Goodman (1990: 239-257). In these storytelling frameworks, interjections from parties not initially involved in the discussion often



The image displays three staves of musical notation. The top two staves represent a piano accompaniment, featuring a consistent 4/4 time signature with a steady rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is designated for the 'bass clarinet (rubato)' and shows a more intricate, syncopated rhythmic motif. A text annotation 'develop into free meter' is placed on the right side of the bottom staff, indicating a shift in the piece's temporal structure.

significantly alter the telling of the story both in terms of actual syntax used and in terms of psychological and emotional alignment with the storytellers. The trio performers, while not consciously trying to cater to an audience, are continually aware of their presence and importance to the evolving musical framework.

After this exchange between audience member and performer which could not have gone unnoticed to attentive listeners, Kevin lets out a grunt as he works into the next stop-time section at letter E. Adam complements his punctuations again and a very sophisticated five against four rhythmic placement leads the two performers to another climax in the eighth measure after letter E. Adam responds at the climactic moment and Kevin tries to build on his final two note rhythmic motif three measures before letter F. However, this new development is quickly aborted, possibly because it does not feel comfortable to the performers or because in a sense it involves returning to previously explored musical territory (letter C of the transcription). Adam decides at this moment of musical uncertainty to affect a tempo change (letter F), slowing the pulse to the two against three feel that was only implied earlier. Kevin joins the new tempo but quickly attempts to accelerate it and the performers' shared metric pulse becomes precarious. Another brief call and response passage fails to create an agreed-upon sense of time so the two settle into a non-metric space for development.

Kevin incorporates the same pitches as his syncopated pattern shown at letter D but this time to initiate an unmetred call-and-response passage between the two musicians. After their initial telepathic rapport, they finally interrupt each others musical statements and Kevin launches into another extremely heated dialog (not

transcribed). At the end of this kinetic exchange, the two performers again land squarely together on a sustained chord, this time opting to simply let the chord ring for eight full seconds in order to dramatically emphasize the musical release (letter H). Adam finally enters and returns to his previous groove of nearly two minutes earlier in the performance. This time Kevin removes himself from the conversation and Ralph decides to enter on bass clarinet at a meditative pace, triggering Adam to halt the groove and begin a more ethereal accompaniment.

## Order out of Chaos

Chaos does not mean disorder. . . . It represents an abstract cosmic principle referring to the source of all creation.

—— Ralph H. Abraham (1994:2)

In the parlance of chaos theory and complex dynamical systems (CDS) theory, attractors are regions of phase space (the imaginary geometry of possibilities) that temporarily organize the long-term dynamic behavior of systems. Chaotic systems trace irregular yet elegant paths towards attractors which gently “fold” the phase space around them and then disappear or radically transform in an unpredictable instant. Bifurcation is the relevant term referring to the appearance, disappearance, and transformation of attractors in evolving systems. Rather than simply describing steady states (static or point attractors) or even closed-loop cycles (periodic attractors), the chaotic attractors (or strange attractors) of complex adaptive systems demonstrate fractal organization with fine structure on all scales (see Cohen and Stewart 1994:204-7). In other words, once a system has temporarily settled on an attractor it stills displays very complex and unpredictable behavior. Although this may on the surface appear to be a very poor analytical tool, chaotic attractors have been used with great success to explain diverse complex behaviors from the boiling of water and the random foraging strategies of ant colonies to the patterns of global economy and weather.

Attractors are emergent phenomena that, like other details of complex and chaotic dynamical systems, cannot be predicted mathematically without simply initiating the experiment and observing. In fact, many complexity researchers are currently intent on developing a meta-mathematical “proof” (much like Gödel’s celebrated theorem) that will demonstrate how emergent systems are inherently unpredictable and incalculable. This unpredictability should in no way discourage its use in musical and cultural research whose main goal has always been comprehension and explanation rather than prediction. Natural scientists are finally coming to terms with the reductionist nightmare that a model purporting to flawlessly explain the workings of the entire universe would necessarily be as large and as cumbersome.

From my own experiences with collective improvisation and from observing the trio’s performances for more than a year, I have found that attractors and bifurcation are a convenient and effective way of describing the musical “peaks” reached

in the dynamic spatial and temporal landscape of collective improvisation. By “peaks” I do not mean to convey only the sense of moments of greatest intensity, but rather moments where a musical idea space seems to coalesce. These performance peaks are often surprisingly reached, explored for variable amounts of time, and just as quickly discarded by the appearance of even a trifling divergence. Like the often mentioned Butterfly Effect of chaos theory, the slightest musical “flapping” may have profound effects on the future improvisatory climate of an ensemble performance. Hopefully my rather qualitative analysis of the transcribed example provided above and the aural evidence of the recording managed to convey some sense of the role of attractors and bifurcation in the process of collective improvisation. The growing evidence in these scientific fields that complex and chaotic systems often demonstrate extremely subtle qualities of ordering may also be the best argument for the ordering of collective improvisation.

Perhaps the reader is concerned that I am overindulging in rather poetic and tenuous metaphors? I, however, firmly believe that the meaning of collectively improvised performances lies at this level of associations with the natural, chaotic processes of the universe. Performers and listeners alike draw their enjoyment from being privy to this spontaneous and unpredictable source of creativity. The rigorous math, computer simulations and metaphysical ideas associated with these emerging sciences (forgive the pun) can also be put to good use in the social sciences—as they have begun to in economics and political science (see Kiel and Elliott 1996) and historiography (see Abraham 1994)—and the humanities in general (e.g., fractal music, computer graphic design, natural chaos in the visual arts, etc.). Artists have always intuitively learned about chaos—well before the term was adopted in the natural sciences—and I believe music scholarship will benefit from additional attention given to the dynamic, emergent phenomena of musical performance.

While several brave scholars have embarked on the study of performance-related and emergent phenomena, each author often favors a set of terms that either have little to do with the work of others or describe essentially the same perceptions and occurrences with markedly different words. Liminality, flow, play, journey, transition, transformation, transcendence and even intuition are all attempts to get an analytical hand-hold on these chaotic experiences. Even as I am now just beginning my investigations into this promising area, I feel strongly that the language, methods and insights of these new sciences will be of great benefit to future ethnomusicological study.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Turner adopts the term liminal (from the Latin *limen* or “threshold”) to describe any medial, transitional, or transformative stage similar to a rite of passage or initiation rite. He describes “communitas” of fellow liminals that may experience profound camaraderie in their shared transition from an ambiguous state of self-loss to one of self-redefinition or transformation.

<sup>2</sup> Bauman discusses three distinct types of emergent structures in performance, namely, text, event and social structure.

<sup>3</sup> The subsequent quotes offered from these musicians stem from formal interviews held at their homes or at the concert venue spanning the time period from January to December 1995. Many of the ideas in this article have also evolved from my experiences as an improvising saxophonist for the past eighteen years and more recently from my weekly experiences with an ensemble of improvisers at UCLA.

<sup>4</sup> These terms stem from my courses with Dr. Roger Savage at UCLA. This duality of temporal experience is also described by Suzanne Langer in *Feeling and Form* (1953:104-119) as clock time and virtual time. Jonathan Kramer, in his important work *The Time of Music* (1988) utilizes the terms absolute time and musical time to describe the listeners dual temporal perceptions. Philosopher Paul Ricoeur incorporates the idea of time of narrating and narrated time in his section on "Games with Time" in volume two of *Time and Narrative* (1985:77-81). Ruth Stone also presents the idea of inner time and outer time in her ethnographic work among the Kpelle of Liberia, *Let The Inside Be Sweet* (1982).

<sup>5</sup> Signifyin' is discussed in detail in Gates (1985) and has been adopted and expanded on by several leading jazz scholars.

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# Waving Hats and Stomping Boots

## A Transborder Music and Dance Phenomenon in Los Angeles' Mexican American Communities<sup>1</sup>

HELENA SIMONETT

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*Music is a key to understanding forces that shape notions of identity and other social and cultural processes. Social and political factors, on the other hand, shape cultural expressions. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the banda-quebradita-craze has popped up in the city of Los Angeles during the early 1990s, nor that it has become a major cultural phenomenon within the Mexican American communities. The music and especially the dance are creating a strong feeling of cultural identity among the audiences/participants. The interpretation of this music-and-dance phenomenon is based on current philosophical reflections.*

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RECENT studies in popular music indicate that music not only reflects social reality but is a constituent factor in the shaping of that reality (Waterman 1990). Waterman's work emphasizes that popular music can provide a system for publicly presenting and negotiating identity under conditions of pervasive demographic, political and economic change. His observations of musical practices in African cities are relevant for the exploration of a newly emerged musical style within Los Angeles' Mexican/Mexican American communities. *Tecnobanda* (technobanda), as this new style is called, has a profound impact on the development and expression of the cultural self-image of hundreds of thousands of young people in southern California.<sup>2</sup>

Historically, banda music dates back to the military bands of European colonists and to the brass music of German immigrants to Mexico's western coast in the mid-nineteenth century. The brass band style that developed in the state of Sinaloa, called *banda sinaloense*, has become the essence of the contemporary banda music, which has swept southern California in the early 1990s and since then has increased in popularity and importance among Mexicans, *Mexicanos* and Mexican Americans.<sup>3</sup> However, the music would probably not have been so successful without being danceable. In fact, dance seems to be the backbone of this craze.<sup>4</sup> The so-called *quebradita* is a mixture of various dance styles from different regions of Mexico coupled with gestures from *ballet folklórico*. Music and dance have under-

gone several transformations on their way northward—from the Mexican countryside to California's biggest city, they have become modernized and highly commercialized.

This paper is divided into two parts: I will first draw attention to the philosophical *concept of play* developed by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, a concept that illuminates another way of understanding dance/dancing. The second part is concerned with questions of how music and dance provide a temporal model for the Mexican American communities of *being meaningfully in this world*, drawing again from Gadamer's ideas. I call this recent craze a "phenomenon"<sup>5</sup> because it does not consist merely of elements that can be studied independently. Although I essentially agree with John Blacking (1974) that *musical* activity can serve as a key to understanding other aspects of a group's cultural and social behavior, I would like to expand this notion to the *whole* activity: music-making, song lyrics, dance, dance movements, visual items of culture such as clothing, and the interrelations between them. Furthermore, I would like to go beyond the analysis of others' cultural and social *behavior* expressed through music to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to them to be in this world as human beings. Since we all understand ourselves through the interpretation of our own works, the key to understanding other people lies in their cultural practices. Firstly, I will look at how banda events are creating cultural identity among the participants as well as focus on cultural imagination as a creative moment of cultural self-representation, using Ricoeur's notion of mimesis and representation.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, identity is grounded on the feelings of belonging to a tradition. Based on an hermeneutic understanding of tradition, I will discuss the creative processes (innovation) as rooted in the sedimentation of cultural values.

## Dance / Dancing

What is dance? How do we speak or write about dance? Reviewing the literature on dance, it became apparent to me that it was not my personal inability to talk about a nonverbal form of action, but rather a general problem with which different scholars have wrestled in individual ways. Among the many existing definitions of dance, I could only agree spontaneously on one: Dancing is more than knowing the steps (Cowan 1990). From the dancer's point of view, dancing is an intense—sensorially, socially and symbolically valued—experience. Moreover, *quebradita* dancers argue that the music itself can only be understood fully by dancing it. I do not want to propose here a new definition of dance, but I would like to link thoughts on dance and philosophy in a way I found especially intriguing. The narrative below will guide the subsequent discussion:

*SUNDAY EVENING. After passing the rigid control of several security guards, I enter the main hall of "El Lido," a Mexican American nightclub in Southgate, Los Angeles. A wave of loud, brassy music strikes me. I am looking down on a turbulent sea of moving hats and heads that belong to a hopping crowd illuminated from the top by*

*flashing lights in all colors. Behind this mass in motion I recognize the banda (band). I realize that, besides me, there are many other "observers" standing around the dance floor and behind the railing of the aisles which lead from the upper level down to the dance floor and the bar. Magnetized by the rhythm, the oscillating crowd and the flashing lights, I am pulled towards the dance floor. Before I even reach the lower level, a bronze-skinned cowboy with a black mustache asks me to dance. Swept away by the sound, we immerse in the waves—losing ourselves in the dance.*

As I have mentioned before, I am referring to the concept of play as developed by Gadamer in "Play as the Clue to Ontological Explanation."<sup>7</sup> Gadamer's original work is written in German. Since any translation into another language weakens the vigor of intellectual concepts which are constructed based upon words and their metaphorical use, it should be noted that the original meaning of the word *Spiel* (the German word for play) is in fact *Tanz* (dance) (Gadamer 1994: 103). For example, the medieval *Spießmann* (minstrel) was a dancer as well as a musician. Anthropologist Paul Spencer, editor of the book *Society and the Dance*, mentions that the Samburu of northern Kenya often use the term "play" (*enkiguran*) as a metaphor for dancing and singing (1985: 140); similarly, the Maasai use "play" (*aiguran*) for women's light-hearted, jocular dances. At first, I was excited about the conceptual coincidence, but I hesitated to believe that "play" was used as a *metaphor*. Kenyan ethnomusicologist Jean Kidula assured me that there is, in fact, a translation problem, because the Western and African concepts of dance do not correspond with each other (Kidula 1996). Although Spencer himself recognizes that (Western) definitions of dance usually "emphasize its patterned movement as an end in itself that transcends utility" (1985: 1), he fails to integrate playful dancing into his own understanding of dance. This shows, on the one hand, how limited the English notion of play is and, on the other hand, that the Western concept of dance is indeed an unsatisfactory category (Kaeppeler 1985: 93). However, this dilemma does not only affect scholars of non-Western cultures. Despite the fact that in Western conception *quebradita* is unquestionably considered "a dance," I felt urged to contemplate on another conceptual framework.

In the above narrative, I have described the dancing masses by evoking the image of a sea with hats floating on its waves. The *play of the waves*<sup>8</sup> is an important metaphor in understanding the concept of play. What is intended in play (and likewise in dance) is to-and-fro movement that is not tied to any goal that would bring it to an end. The movement of playing renews itself in constant repetition (Gadamer 1994: 103). Another crucial aspect of play is its primacy over the consciousness of the player. Analogously, we have to acknowledge the primacy of dancing over the consciousness of the dancer. I agree with Gadamer that (by interchanging the word play with dance) "dance fulfills its purpose only if the dancer loses himself [or herself] in dance" (1994: 102). Indeed, feelingful participation seems to be substantial in dance events such as the *quebradita*.

Based upon Gadamer's notion of play, dance is not "a thing" to be analyzed. Jane Cowan is, in my estimation, one of the few dance ethnographers acknowledg-



ing the necessity "to approach dancing not only as a 'spectacle' in which dancing bodies are 'read' as 'signs' but also as a process of intersubjectivity" (1990: 24). Thus, important in dancing is that there is something happening *in between*. Gadamer argues that "the to-and-fro movement that constitutes the game [dance event] is patterned in various ways" (1994: 107). Moreover, the particular nature of a game lies precisely in the rules and regulations that prescribe the way the game is played. Although Mexican American nightclubs resemble other nightclubs in Los Angeles and elsewhere, different rules and regulations reign in this particular *field of the game*, which became apparent to me immediately after entering a club. I remember I was extremely nervous during my first visits to such clubs because I was unfamiliar with the rules and regulations and therefore did not know how to behave. I began to realize that I was caught up in a very dynamic way in the powerful forces underlying this specific event of Mexican and Mexican American community life. In fact, the boundaries of the space (dance event in a club), with which I was familiar, did not help me to understand the rules of the game. In other words, I did not understand what was being played. It took me many nights of observing the scene and experiencing different situations to learn and understand some of these rules. Eventually, I became able to "lose myself in play," the ultimate goal of any play.

It is apparent from this discussion that "Play [dance] is structure—this means that despite its dependence on being played [danced] it is a meaningful whole which can be repeatedly presented as such and the significance of which can be understood" (Gadamer 1994: 117). Although the dance event is a temporally, spatially, and conceptually "bounded" sphere of interaction (Cowan 1990), it offers its participants space for creativity and self-representation. Thus the concept of play leads us directly to the notion of representation, on which the next part of this paper will focus. I am concerned with the question of how dance provides a temporal model of self-understanding for the Mexican/Mexican American communities.

## Representation

Roger Savage (1994) pointed out that "the reality of culture is itself nothing other than the unfolding of a cultural self-understanding in the life of a historical community and its enduring traditions." In other words, any cultural self-representation is based upon the self-understanding of a historical community in front of its own cultural works. The key to understanding how other people see themselves as being-in-the-world meaningfully lies in their cultural practices (one of which is dancing). On the basis of the comprehension of the dance event as "a whole which significance can be understood" (Gadamer) and as "the unfolding of a cultural self-understanding" (Savage), it is possible to give an interpretation of what the dance means to the practitioners. This rather philosophical reflection is backed up by ethnomusicological studies, like José Limón's notes on the symbolic process in Texas-Mexican popular music and dancing (1983) or Manuel Peña's article "Ritual Structure in a Chicano Dance" (1980). Peña noted that "the actions within the dance

communicated 'loaded' information between the members of the group; the historical and symbolic significance...served to reinforce the values, traditions, and attitudes that the group held as important" (1980: 48). For the Mexican American community Peña has been observing, cultural practice in the form of Saturday night dances is a fundamental way to enact its cultural identity. Besides mediating themselves to themselves through dancing, these people also mediate between their future and their past. Since their reality is "to live as Mexicans" north of the border, their past traditions continue into a present that is constrained by particular circumstances. Similarly constrained are the possibilities of their future. Dance events validate who they are in this world in relation to themselves and additionally, in relation to non-Mexican American communities. Thus, if a "displaced" group consciously engages in cultural practices to maintain its specific identity, it is also meant to define oneself as being different from others. Manuel Peña ascertained that the purpose of the dance events he observed over a period of ten years was to revitalize a deeply felt and threatened ethnic boundary. By analyzing particular dance events, Peña attempted to illuminate the complexity of conflicts of values and ideologies that marks the lives of Mexicans in the United States. He suggested that in "the ritualized structure of these musical occasions a microcosm of this conflict was symbolically played out and ultimately mediated" (1980: 48). Peña emphasized that the reinforcement achieved through dancing can be understood only within the framework of the dynamics of intercultural contact, conflict and ethnic boundary maintenance.

For all immigrants to the United States, mediation of reality is a complex process. However, mediating the future and the past to understand oneself meaningfully in the present time is intrinsic to everybody. There is no doubt that young second and third generation Mexican Americans and *Mexicanos* have strong needs for their own self-representation.<sup>9</sup> Although one could probably find manifold reasons for the rise in Mexican consciousness and the desire to identify with Mexican culture, we have to take into consideration that many young people have not grown up in the culture that they sense they belong to. Appropriation, as Ricoeur defined it—"to make one's own what was initially alien"—plays a key role in their process of interpreting this assumed tradition (Ricoeur 1984). To overcome the distance between the *alien* and the already familiar by appropriation embodies the use of symbols. The symbols these third generation Mexican Americans use to represent their identity are more visible than those of the ethnic cultures and organizations of the first and second generations. Probably because of this enormous gap between "who they are" and "who they are not, but sense a belonging to," they feel compelled to make their identity explicit. Cultural imagination offers them new ways of expressing themselves. Since human action is always already symbolically mediated, we have to "read" or interpret these symbols in order to understand the action. Cultural traits by which an ethnic group defines itself, of course, never comprise the totality of a culture. But there is a combination of some characteristics that the actors ascribe to themselves and consider relevant. Ricoeur defined sym-

bolism as “a meaning incorporated into action and decipherable from it by other actors in the social interplay” (1984: 57). Symbolic forms, then, are cultural processes that articulate experience and that have a mediating function. To describe the third generation’s pursuit of identity, Herbert Gans (1982) proposed the term *symbolic ethnicity*, which is characterized by a nostalgic loyalty to the culture of the immigrant generation, and a love and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated into everyday behavior. Symbols are “abstracted” from the culture and pulled out of their original context, yet they are clear in meaning to a large number of people. The most visible apparel of the *quebradita* event is certainly the hat, which is a Texas-style Stetson (though not all men and only a few women wear it). By evoking the image of rural Mexico, the *sombrero* brings to representation its wearer’s self-understanding.

Wearing a hat is tied to the concept of *lo ranchero*, which is a component of a larger ideology of romantic nationalism. According to Peña, “romantic nationalism in Mexico has exerted a unifying influence by appealing to the glory of the nation’s ‘unique’ heritage” (1985: 10). In this ideological view the ranch life is portrayed as idyllic: a representation that has been nourished by the Mexican music and movie industry since the 1930s. Although banda music has never been included into the Mexican cultural industry, it represents the feelings of Mexicanness, “momentary recreations of a simpler and romanticized folk heritage” (Peña 1980: 60). Banda music has historically been linked to rural people. Reclaiming this particular tradition through popular music represents Los Angeles’ Mexican American communities’ self-understanding. In this sense, their choice of banda music is not arbitrary.

This is equally true for the dance gestures. Visually, the concept of *lo ranchero* is also embodied in the dance. Gestures such as the *horse tail*, the *rope* or the basic *vaquero* (cowboy) step are drawn from what people believe is their tradition. The horse and the lasso symbolically represent the ranch life. Dressing up in cowboy style and dancing to a music that elicits images of rural Mexico is a way to put reality temporarily into suspense. The dance event, thus, has a mediating function. As a form of cultural self-representation, it renews the tradition into the present time. It is also a way to escape the reality of a life in an ugly suburb and to enjoy the illusion of the simple and idyllic rural life. I would advocate, then, that dance must be considered from the dancer’s point of view as both representation and experience, for it is an intense—sensorially, socially and symbolically valued—event. Feelingful participation seems to be substantial in dance events such as the *quebradita*.

### Tradition: Innovation and Sedimentation

The notion that there is a dialectic operating in a tradition—a dialectic between sedimentation and innovation—is crucial for an understanding of creative processes (Gadamer 1994). Tradition does not just preserve and prescribe: the reinterpretation of tradition is an innovative activity. Furthermore, traditional music does not just belong to the past: it overcomes the temporal distance by virtue of its

own meaningful presence. Being present for participants means to recognize oneself in the play. In this sense, the audience and the dancers belong as much to the performance as musicians do. If the sedimentation of cultural values holds the promise of the continuity of meaning and relevance of a way of life for its people as a distinctive group, then tradition is a living dialectic between the reality of culture and the forming of its identity. This hermeneutical understanding of tradition is also shared by Steve Loza who noticed that Chicano musicians in Los Angeles go through the process of reinterpretation—a process which is characterized by innovation but also by maintenance of particular musical styles (1985: 483). It is necessary to understand popular music not as something completely new, but as a continuum of a traditional genre. Hence, popular banda songs are not simply reinterpretations of traditional *rancheras* and other Mexican song genres with banda accompaniment; rather, they are, what I would call, *creative innovations*. Of course, imagination “is not born from nothing. It is bound in one way or another to the tradition’s paradigms” (Ricoeur 1984: 69). Yet tradition has to be understood not as “the inert transmission of some dead deposit but the living transmission of an innovation that is always capable of being reactivated through a return to the most creative moments of [music] making” (Valdés 1991: 147). Indeed, newly created songs that address particular themes to which Mexican Americans relate remind us that tradition is constantly being refigured. This continuity, which leads from the Mexican past into the American present, is the predominant issue of new creations of popular songs. “Rock y banda,” a novelty-song by Banda Vallarta Show, for example, not only addresses the successful integration of a Mexican man into American mainstream in its song text, but also reflects the culture-crossing musically by fusing banda and rock and roll.<sup>10</sup>

As Gadamer mentioned, a listener “is never simply swept away into a strange world of magic, of intoxication, of dream; rather, it is always his [her] own world, and he [she] comes to belong to it more fully by recognizing himself [herself] more profoundly in it.” Indeed, the reason why Mexican American audiences respond so strongly to songs of this type is that their “language” reaches them. Many listeners recognize themselves in the song lyrics because what they encounter is their own story. Moreover, “the elevation and strong emotion that seize the spectator [listener] in fact deepen his [her] *continuity with himself [herself]*” (Gadamer 1994: 133). This *continuity of meaning* in which Mexican Americans place themselves is their tradition: their past, their present and their future.

## Notes

1 Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the ICTM (International Council for Traditional Music) World Conference, Canberra, Australia (1995) and the SEM (Society for Ethnomusicology) Southern and Northern California Chapters Joint Meeting, Santa Barbara, California (1995).

2 In August 1992, KLAX-FM 97.9, a new Spanish language radio station was created to feature banda and other types of Mexican *ranchero* (country) music such as *norteño*. Only three months after they changed their format, KLAX became Los Angeles’ highest rated radio station among all stations—English- and Spanish-language—and it stayed number one for almost three years. The Arbitron

ratings for winter 1992-93 show a share of 7.2 %, which means that there were more than one million persons listening to the station at any given time (Boehlert 1993; Dupree 1993; Haro 1994; Viles 1993). KLAX's success is one indicator that the city is undergoing a fundamental transformation. More than 30% of the city's population is of Mexican heritage. Moreover, it also shows that popular music is inherently local: time, place, and circumstance are of prime importance in the shaping of social and cultural meanings of musical practice.

3 Following the definition of Chicano scholars, I am using the Spanish term *Mexicano* to refer to "ethnic and cultural identity as well as to a political consciousness that developed as the result of a historical process in a particular region" (Gómez-Quíñones 1990: 7). *Mexican American* refers to ethnic and cultural identity too, but instead of having political connotations, it refers to residency and citizenship. The English term *Mexican* is used for Mexican citizens.

4 Dancers consider themselves as important as the musicians. In fact, the dancers' demand for live-bandas created a whole new job situation for many musicians, most of whom did not play banda-style before.

5 Others, among them Rubén Martínez, an activist of the Chicano Movement, have called it a cultural *movement* and a cultural *revolution*. I agree that the music and the dance have the potential to become a cultural "movement" in the political sense. But at this point of time, it is merely a popular dance craze. However, as my analysis shows, it turns out to be a complex phenomenon that is affected by social, political, economic and cultural forces.

6 See especially the chapters on "Mimesis and Representation" (1991: 137-155) and "Time and Narrative: Threefold Mimesis" (1984: 52-87). My theoretical background in hermeneutics has been shaped by stimulating seminars offered by Roger Savage at UCLA.

7 Gadamer (1994): The concept of play refers to the mode of being of *the work of art* itself; that is, its playful character.

8 Note that in German language *Spiel der Wellen* (play of the waves) and *Tanz der Wellen* (dance of the waves) are equivalent.

9 "Ethnic identity" has to do with one's self-understanding and self-representation. According to Bernal and Knight (1993: 106), it is a construct or set of self-ideas about one's own ethnic group membership and it is correlated with knowledge, understanding, values, behaviors and feelings.

10 The song tells the story of a banda dancer who enters an American nightclub dressed in his Mexican outfit—boots and hat. He feels ashamed, specially when a girl invites him to dance rock and roll, a dance style he does not know. By dancing they discover a new style, "rock y banda," which eventually becomes the hit of this disco. According to the song's narrator, he is not only accepted as who he is, but he is actively contributing to the American culture. His story might reflect Banda Vallarta Show's own hope of having a direct impact on American mainstream.

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## Discography

### BANDA SINALOENSE

Banda El Chante. *Un amor como el mío*. Fonovisa FRCD-2070.

Banda El Recodo. *15 éxitos*. Bertelsmann BMG. RCA 3195-2-RL.

———. *En homenaje a Don Cruz Lizárraga*. Sierra Records LSR-045.

Banda La Costeña. *De puro arranque*. Musivisa TUL-1606.

Banda Pelillos. *A mover el Guayín*. Fonovisa FCCD-4012.

### TECHNOBANDA

Banda Arkángel R-15. *La quebradita*. Luna Music, Jupiter Records JUCD-9085.

Banda Machos. *Pacas de a kilo y mucho más*. Fonovisa FPCD-9097.

———. *Sangre de indio*. Fonovisa FPCD-9069.

Banda Móvil. *Cuando los hombres lloran*. Fonovisa FPCD-9353.

Banda Vallarta Show. *Provócame*. Fonovisa FPCD-9087.

Vaquero's Musical. *A ritmo Vaquero's*. Discos Musart 1142.

# A Comparison of Human and Spirit Voices

ROBERT REIGLE

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*Nekeni men of Papua New Guinea create spirit voices by singing through eight-feet-long bamboos. The author compares a Nekeni human voice with human voices transformed into spirit voices. He presents the results of analyses comparing spectra during a particular moment in time, and showing the relative changes in harmonics over the course of a note. The bamboos filter out non-harmonic partials and steady the changes in the harmonic partials, producing a non-human sound.*

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I LIVED in Pateng village, Madang province, Papua New Guinea, from May, 1988, to January, 1990, and returned for several subsequent visits. Pateng is one of seven villages speaking Nekeni, which Wurm and Hittori (1981) call both Nekgini and Neko. Everyone in the village also speaks Tok Pisin, the lingua franca I used to conduct my work.

Pateng is within a large male-cult area wherein instruments are sacred and kept hidden from women and small children. In this region, men sing through three different types of voice-modifiers: *kaapu naing* ("mother of the spirits") consists of two or three sections of elongated gourds glued together with sap; *kaapu simang* ("child of the spirits") are ten-foot pieces of bamboo with the nodes removed; and *tereri* ("tereri") are one-foot pieces of bamboo with cracked sides. I cannot publish photographs of these instruments because women and small children from the Nekeni area are strictly forbidden from seeing them.

"Traditionally, music functioned as the embodiment, symbol, and reminder of *tambaran*, a system of spiritual beliefs, involving male dominance based on men's control of spirit-voices. The Tok Pisin word "*tambaran*" has several possible glosses: spiritual belief-system, musical instrument used in the system, sacred song, spirit-voice, a spirit. In the Rai Coast, spirits cause sickness, restore health, ensure good crops, and help with love-magic; according to one story, a spirit caused a branch to break off a tree. Performances of sacred music usually accomplish these acts, or set them in motion." (Reigle in press)

This study will analyze *kaapu simang* long-bamboo voice-modifiers. Though equally sacred, *kaapu simang* hold a slightly less important place than *kaapu naing* in the traditional<sup>1</sup> Nekeni sacred world. Men use *kaapu simang* during *mulung*



initiations. Boys live in a camp away from the village and the sight of women for a week to six months, observing several taboos. During this time elders and village leaders circumcise them and teach them morals, practical things, and music.

In performance, a man places his lips around one end of a *kaapu simang* and sings in a high falsetto. The bamboo is too big for the singer to place it between his teeth; the end rests against the teeth and gums. Holding the instrument to the mouth, the man makes an airtight connection using one or both hands. The sound produced can be heard for a great distance. When people in the village hear the sound coming from the initiation camp, they say that the *tambaran* is speaking or crying out.

Men use voice-modifiers to perform specific *tambarans*, which are owned by specific clans. The words to the songs appear relatively unimportant. Performers may not know the meaning of some words, where the song originated in a distant place or time. Vowels form a substantial part of the performance, though more as elongations of the few words than as a metalanguage.

Thomas Sanggau, head of the Simowi clan, owns several *tambarans*/songs. He told me the story about one of them, "Ambingyasing":

In the rainy season, the tide washed up a dead *siu (tsiu)* bird. The ancestors dreamed. The bird said to them, "you must break a dry coconut and bring me back to life. My voice will be like this:

*Ambingyasing nate yete yayung temang*  
Ambingyasing, I tell you  
*Nari patangawi, na Ambingyasing*  
You bring me to life, me Ambingyasing  
*Wawaning ingau wakang yara.*  
My name, you hear. (Reigle 1989:55)

Men mouth the Neken words into the voice-modifier when they perform this *tambaran*. The recording analyzed below is of a demonstration of "Ambingyasing."

## The Study of Timbre

Western music educators and scholars tended to ignore timbre until scientists made enough information available to develop a vocabulary for discourse on the subject. Composers, both pan-global and Euro-classical,<sup>2</sup> however, developed complex systems of timbral manipulation far in advance of the theoretical order of the day. In European music one thinks of Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration, Debussy's "Nuages," Schoenberg's *klangfarbenmelodie*, Crawford's "Quartet," Carter's "Eight Etudes and a Fantasy," Scelsi, the recent French spectral school, etc.. Outstanding examples of pan-global musics with sophisticated timbre manipulation include shakuhachi music, West New Britain sacred orchestra, Chinese ch'in, Buddhist chant, Inuit throat-song, Korean P'ansori, and Indian chordophones. In jazz, leading tone-colorists include Duke Ellington, Dewey Redman, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Albert Ayler, Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders, and Steve Lacy.

In addition to the Neken, other music-makers from pan-global, Euro-classical, and jazz traditions have utilized tubes as instruments in conjunction with the voice. Though buzzed lips rather than the voice provides most of the sound in didjeridu playing, Australian aborigines add the voice to manipulate timbre. Don Niles also found references to singing through a hollowed-out log by the Aranda of Central Australia (Niles n.d.:13). Composer Brenda Hutchinson has worked with a timbre-modification instrument nearly identical to the one analyzed here (Hutchinson n.d.; 1993). Jazz saxophonist Evan Parker used a "voice tube" in one of his recordings from the early 1970's (Parker & Lytton 1995).

Although Helmholtz laid the groundwork for timbre studies in the 19th century, significant progress was not forthcoming until composers began working with electronic and computer music in the early 1960's. Charles Seeger's valiant efforts to encourage the use of melographs came to little because of limitations with the technology and the demands of a new field (ethnomusicology) which first had to find out what musics exist in our world.

Pioneers in the 1960's included Max Matthews, James Tenney, Jean-Claude Risset, Pierre Schaeffer (*Traite des objets musicaux*), and Lejaren Hiller; in the 1970's, John Chowning, Cogan and Escot (*Sonic Design*), and Robert Erickson (*Sound Structure in Music*). Robert Cogan's 1984 study, *New Images of Musical Sound*, used spectral analysis to understand examples from Tibet, jazz, European classical, and European computer musics. Wayne Slawson's *Sound Color* (1985) posits a theory of sound color stemming from physics, acoustics, and linguistics, supported with evidence from auditory physiology, psychoacoustics, speech and cognitive science, and composition. Dodge and Jerse give a synopsis of timbre studies in their 1985 book, *Computer Music: Synthesis, Composition, and Performance*.

The most in-depth research on how to analyze timbre comes from the scientific community, and from composers. Some of the most valuable advances came from composers working to replicate the sounds of acoustic instruments via computers (Risset, et al.).

Some ethnomusicologists have applied this knowledge where timbre obviously played a significant role in the music they studied. Steven Feld (Papua New Guinean music), Ola Kai Ledang (Norway), Andreas Gutzwiller and Gerald Bennett (shakuhachi), Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan (Papua New Guinea), Theodore Charles Grove (Papua New Guinea), and many others have written about their analyses. In his article on Papua New Guinea voice-modifiers, Don Niles presented a preliminary acoustic explanation of their functioning, and pointed out that no laboratory work had been done on the instruments (Niles 1991:238-39).

## Purpose and Method

I have observed complex acoustical phenomena in the voice-modified music of Pateng village. As a man sings through a modifier, his voice undergoes amplification, spectral modification, and reinforcement of certain partials. I attempt here to shed some light on the modifications that occur when a singer sings through the

voice-modifier. I mention formants in the singer's mouth and in the voice-modifier, but defer their study to future research.

I recorded the unmodified voice of one of the best Nekeni singers. He sang exactly what he would sing if singing through the voice-modifier. I will compare this recording with that of modified voices. The recordings used for this analysis were made on January 14, 1989, using a SONY Professional Walkman (Model WM-D6C), SONY stereo microphone, and TDK MA-X90 Metal cassette. The recordings have Dolby C noise reduction.

The most difficult task is to select a meaningful scale (Cogan 1984:14-15, 141-142). Each variation in the duration of the window, or material viewed, gives a different representation (Piccialli 1991:4). My analysis requires two window sizes:

1) the amplitudes of the partials must be looked at in short enough slices that they don't contain conscious performer modification, but long enough to be perceived—at least five waves (Cogan 1984:141). Kronland-Martinet and Grossmann have used a window of 0.016009 second duration to analyze a voice and cymbal sound (Kronland-Martinet and Grossmann 1991:51); while a much longer window of 0.16 second has been effective in shakuhachi analysis (Gutzwiller and Bennett 1991:45).

2) the relative amplitudes of the partials as they change over time require a longer window. Gutzwiller and Bennett (1991:49-50) have used windows ranging from 3.2 to 8 seconds in duration.

### Formants

"A formant is a peak in the spectrum that, for traditional instruments, usually corresponds to resonances in the instrument" (Risset 1991:26). Formants depend on bandwidth, central frequency, amplitude, and shape (Polli and Piccialli 1991: 209, 211). In this case, both the mouth cavity and the voice-modifier may shape the sound. The voice-modifier may have resonances that amplify certain partials. Unfortunately, I don't have exact measurements of the instruments analyzed here. However, I measured instruments in four villages spread across some 40 miles and traversing seven languages:

Pateng	100.25" long	1.75" and 2" end diameters
Gabumi	99.75" long	2" and 2" end diameters
Marakum	99.50" long	2.38" and 2" end diameters
Gorion	99.00" long	2.38" and 2.38" end diameters

The lengths are remarkably similar, possibly because the fundamental associated with those dimensions fits well with the top of the male falsetto range, the range used in performance.

Sound travels 1100 feet per second (Howe 1975:3). Tubes should emphasize odd harmonics based on a wave four times the length of the tube (Slawson 1985:36-37). Taking the 99.5" tube as an example, one would expect resonances of 34, 101,

170, 238, 306, and 372 hertz. Though unable to pursue this line of analysis further, I raise the issue here as important for future investigation. Analysis was carried out in the University of Washington's computer music lab, using the *NeXT digital signal processing*, by Robert Ling (1991).

## Analysis

I recorded Thomas Sanggau singing a phrase from the spirit song *Ambingyasing*, both without and with the sacred voice modifier. As the voice modifiers are never used solo, Lukas Kutupau joined Thomas during the modified recordings. I isolated parts of the performance where each man sang through the modifier alone.

### *I. Comparison of Spectra at a Moment in Time*

Figure 1 shows the amplitudes of the components of a tone sung by Thomas without the voice-modifier. The extract is from a recording of Thomas singing the entire melody. Note the presence of a very strong sub-harmonic at 155 hertz, an octave below the fundamental of 310 hertz. We could call the lower partial the fundamental, but that is not what we hear as the main pitch. However, its effect on the tone-color is great; it produces the second loudest partial (465 hertz), even louder than the fundamental's first overtone. The total sound is rich with harmonics, including the odd-numbered partials based on 155 hertz and therefore *not* whole-number multiples of the fundamental.

A look at the components of the tone sung through the modifier (extracted from a performance of the same song) reveals a much cleaner picture (Fig. 2). Any partials not resulting from the fundamental are virtually eliminated, giving a purer tone. The amplitudes of the fundamental, though, remain in proportions very similar to those in the unmodified tone.

The duration of these analyses is 8192 points, or .19 of a second.

### *II. Spectral Changes Over Time*

Figures 3 and 4 provide two different views of the same 1.2 second sample of Thomas singing a tone. Amplitudes of partials are constantly in flux, which is the norm for such sounds. I interpret the two peaks shown clearly in Figure 3 as a change in pitch from 307 hz to 312 hz. The partials of the fundamental may be more clearly followed individually, in Figures 5-7. The top graph in Figure 5 shows the fundamental (307), the pitch shifted to (312), the first harmonic (614), and a non-harmonic partial (1244). The scale of magnitude (roughly equivalent to loudness) is 0 to 400. Figure 6 zooms in with a scale of 0 to 35, to give a closeup of the first (seen second from the bottom in Figure 5) and third overtones. Figure 7 zooms in even further, with a scale of 0 to 8, to focus on the second through fourth overtones. The frequencies and their times of greatest loudness are:

Fundamental	307 hertz	Second quadrant
First overtone	614 hertz	First quadrant
Second overtone	921 hertz	First quadrant
Third overtone	1227 hertz	Second quadrant
Fourth overtone	1534 hertz	First quadrant.

In a different excerpt from the same piece, Thomas very clearly sings tones with a divided spectrum. Again, the subharmonic an octave below the fundamental is audible. It is much easier to hear when listening to the whole phrase than by just hearing one note. Figure 8 illustrates the effect this has on the harmonic spectrum, while Figure 9 shows how individual harmonics change over time.

Figure 10 shows the modified tone sung through the instrument by the first singer, Lukas. Note a similar dual-tone phenomenon in the loudest range. Figure 11 provides a closeup of the upper partials, lost in the magnitude of the other two graphs. Figures 12-14 give the amplitude lives of the first five partials (n.b.: each figure has a different magnitude in order to show the detail):

Fundamental	371 hertz	Fourth quadrant peak
First overtone	743 hertz	Fourth quadrant peak
Second overtone	1114 hertz	Fourth quadrant peak
Third overtone	1486 hertz	Fourth quadrant peak
Fourth overtone	1852 hertz	Second quadrant peak.

The graphs for Thomas singing through the modifier appear similar to those for Lukas, but without the strong dual-tone (Figures 15-16). Analysis of partials (Figures 17-18) reveals:

Fundamental	= 371 hertz	Third quadrant peak
First overtone	= 743 hertz	Third quadrant peak
Second overtone	= 1114 hertz	Fourth quadrant peak
Third overtone	= 1486 hertz	Fourth quadrant peak
Fourth overtone	= 1852 hertz	Second quadrant peak.

## Conclusion

Comparing the unmodified voice with the modified, it appears that the modifiers smooth out the sound, filtering out non-harmonic partials and steadying the changes in the harmonic partials. In performance, one can hear “bumps” in the sound as singers move to different pitches through the instruments. These result from the cancellation of pure harmonics as the singer passes over them. However, when the singer comes very near the exact frequency of a harmonic partial, a rough, beating sound is produced. The instruments, through their clarification of tone and effects on pitches at or near the frequencies of harmonic partials, may give the singer something to hang on to, making it easier to produce a steady sound with

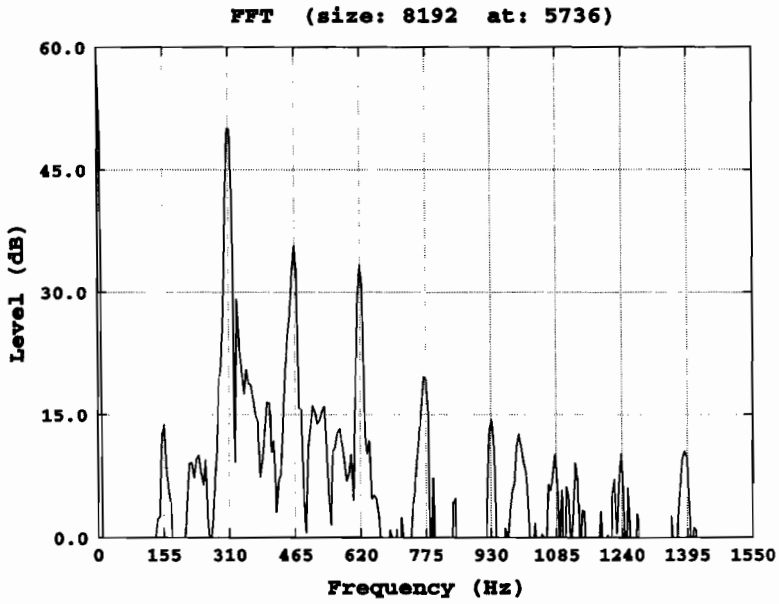


Figure 1

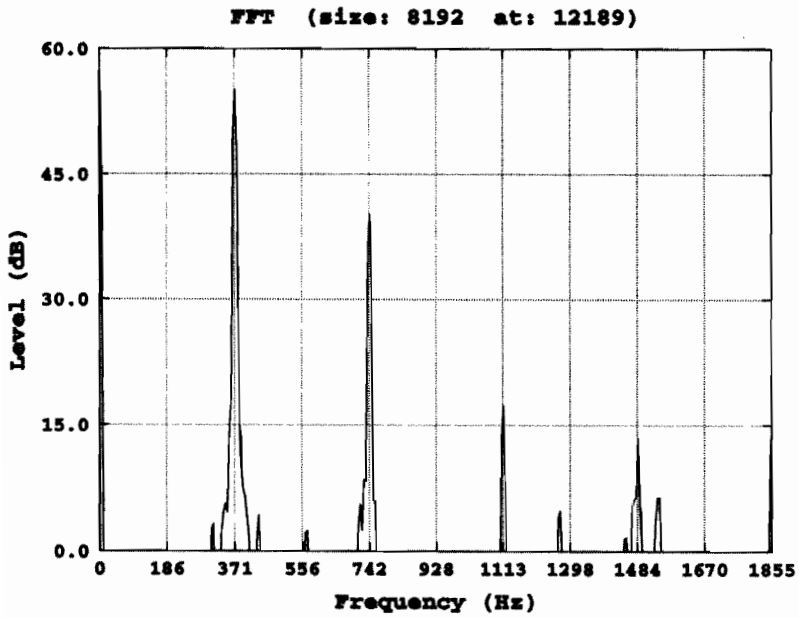


Figure 2

FV [1024:83889-138381] (decim: 8 nfft: 14)

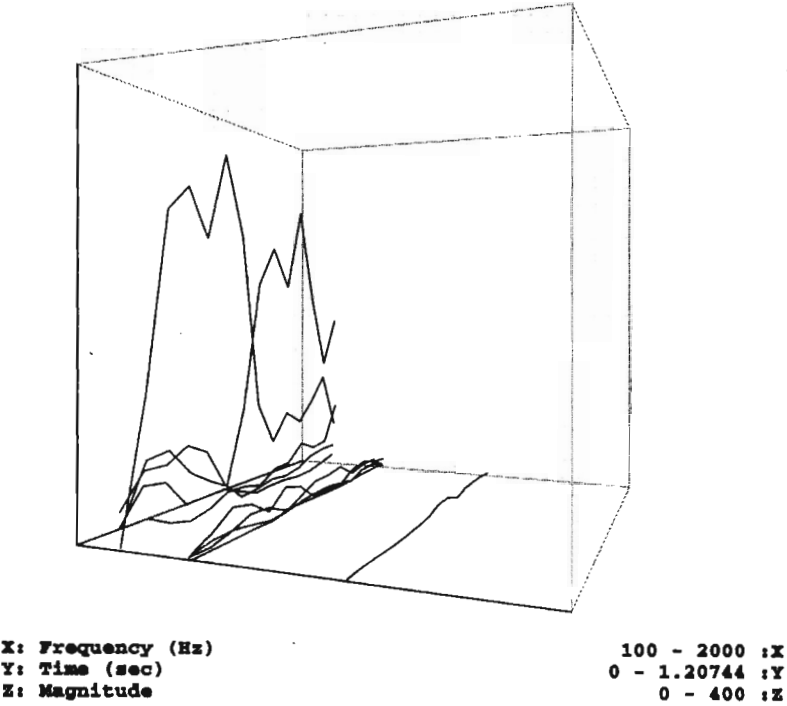


Figure 3

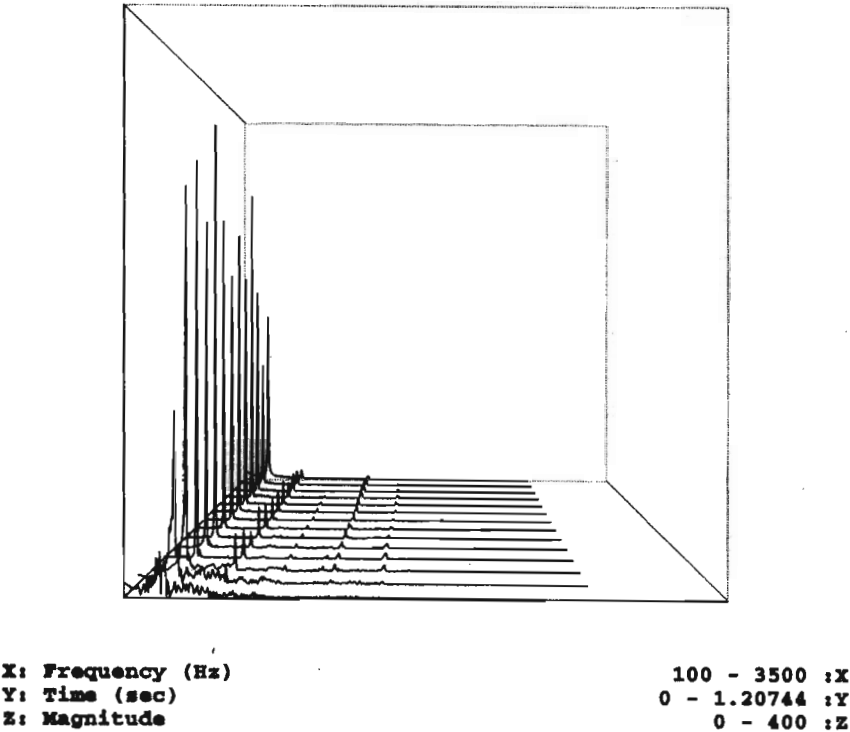


Figure 4

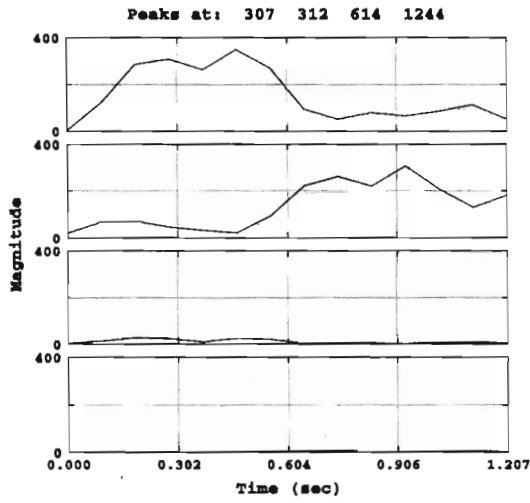


Figure 5

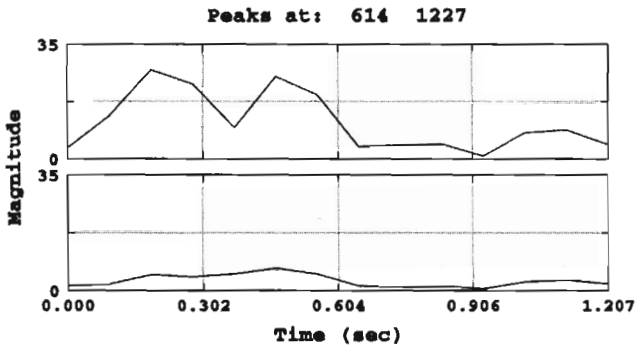


Figure 6

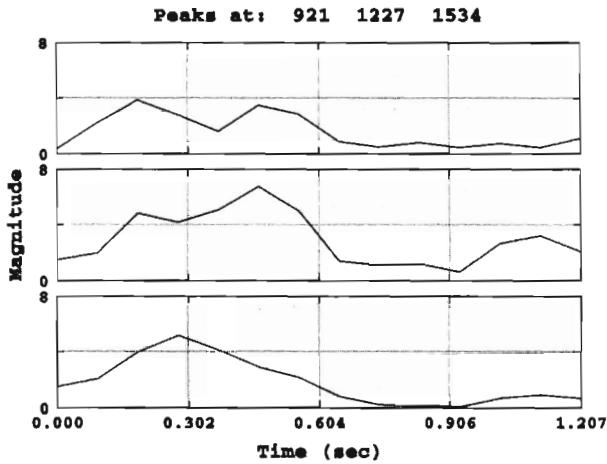


Figure 7



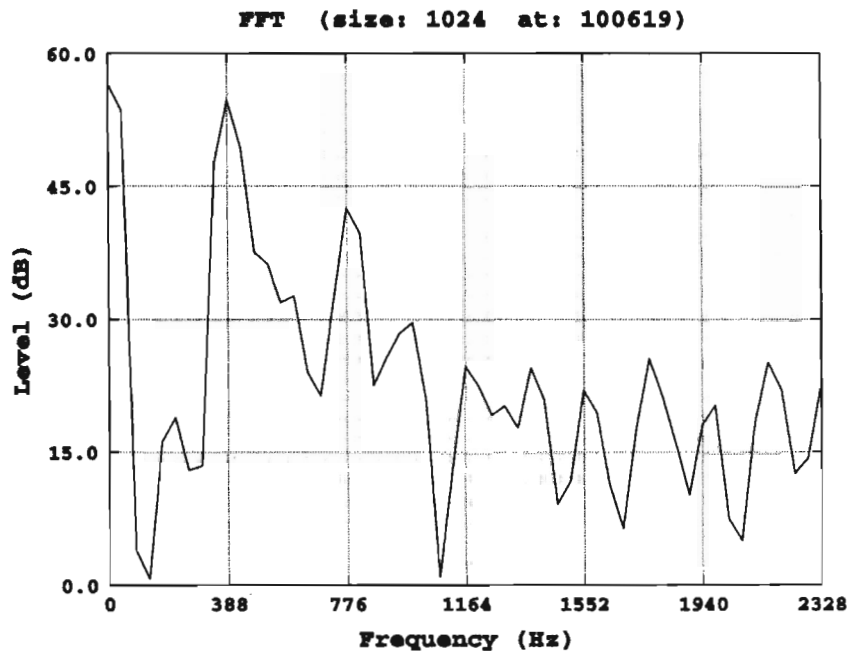
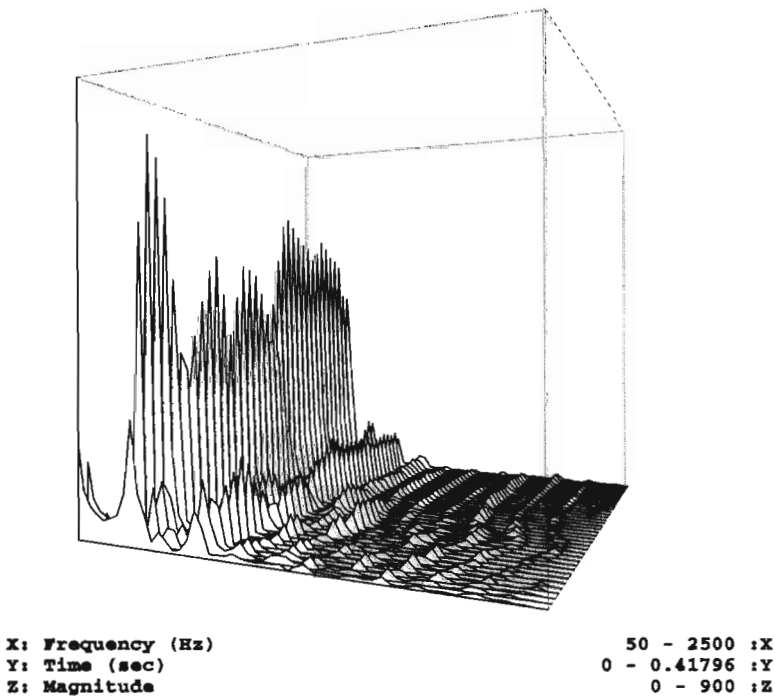


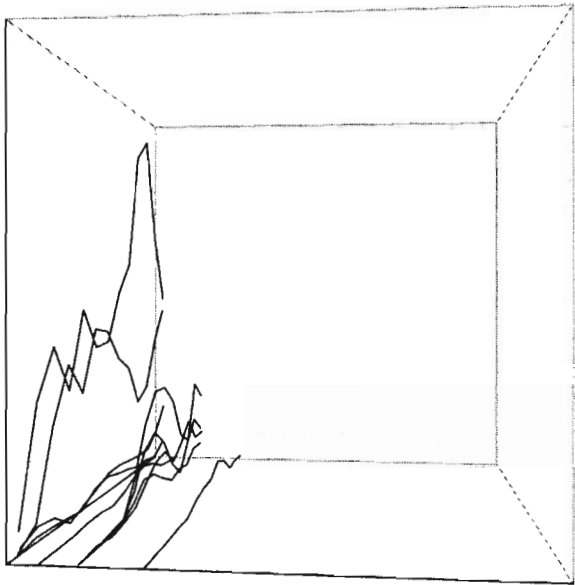
Figure 8, above

Figure 9, below

PV [128:100619-119500] (decim: 8 nfft: 37)



PV [1024:149614-200521] (decim: 8 nfft: 13)



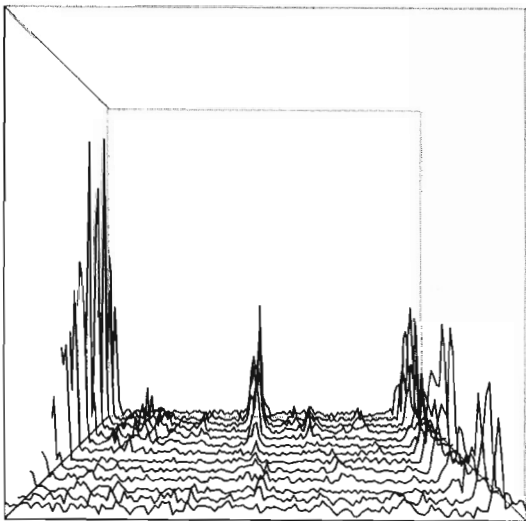
X: Frequency (Hz)  
Y: Time (sec)  
Z: Magnitude

300 - 3500 :X  
0 - 1.11456 :Y  
0 - 500 :Z

Figure 10, above

Figure 11, below

PV [1024:149614-200521] (decim: 8 nfft: 13)



X: Frequency (Hz)  
Y: Time (sec)  
Z: Magnitude

1100 - 1900 :X  
0 - 1.11456 :Y  
0 - 35 :Z

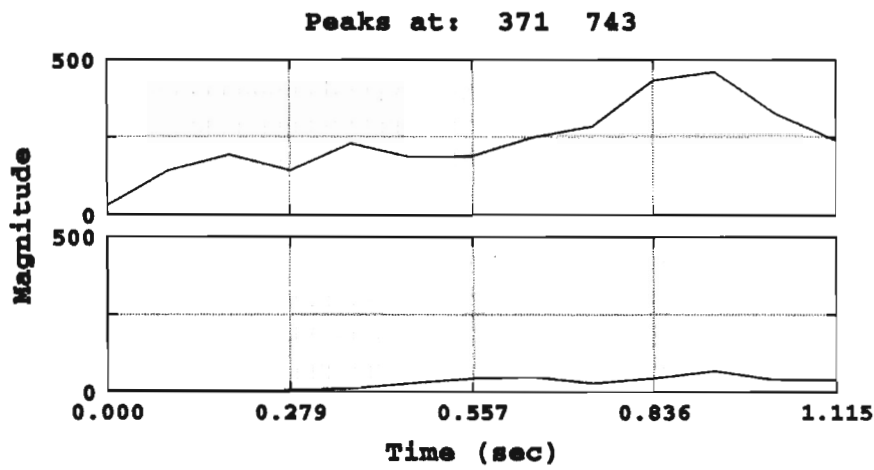


Figure 12

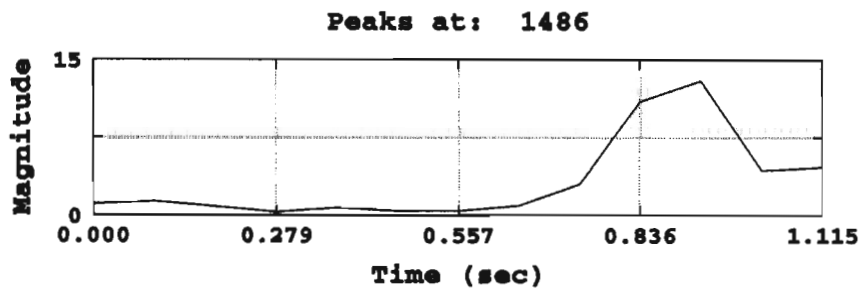


Figure 13

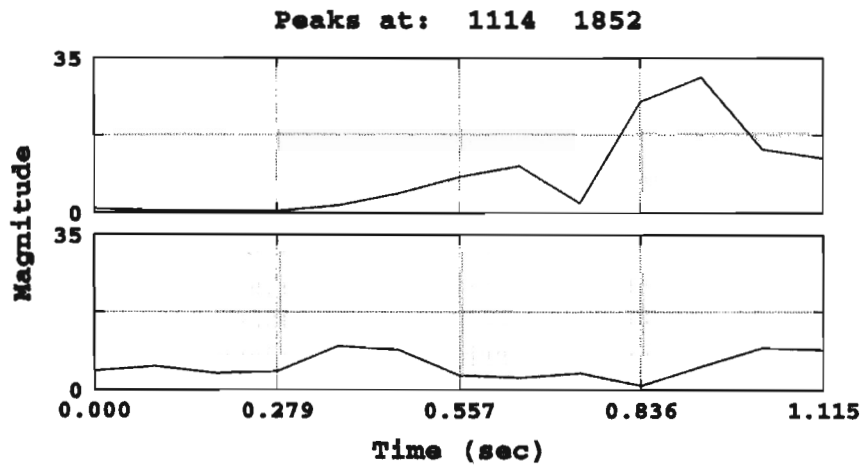
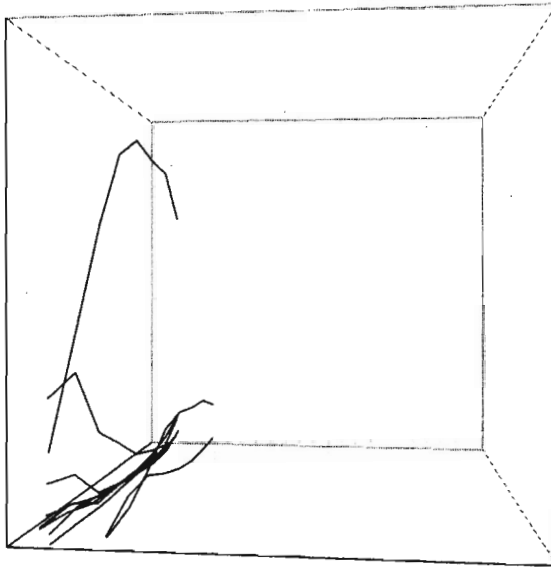


Figure 14

FV [1024:335078-367821] (decn: 8 nfft: 8)



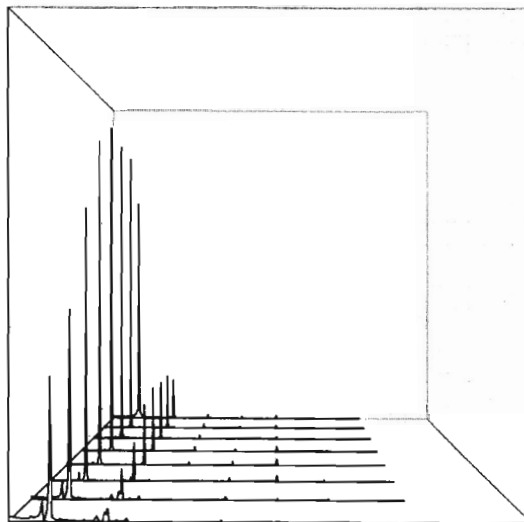
X: Frequency (Hz)  
Y: Time (sec)  
Z: Magnitude

100 - 3500 :X  
0 - 0.65016 :Y  
0 - 1000 :Z

Figure 15, above

Figure 16, below

FV [1024:335078-367821] (decn: 8 nfft: 8)



X: Frequency (Hz)  
Y: Time (sec)  
Z: Magnitude

100 - 3500 :X  
0 - 0.65016 :Y  
0 - 1000 :Z

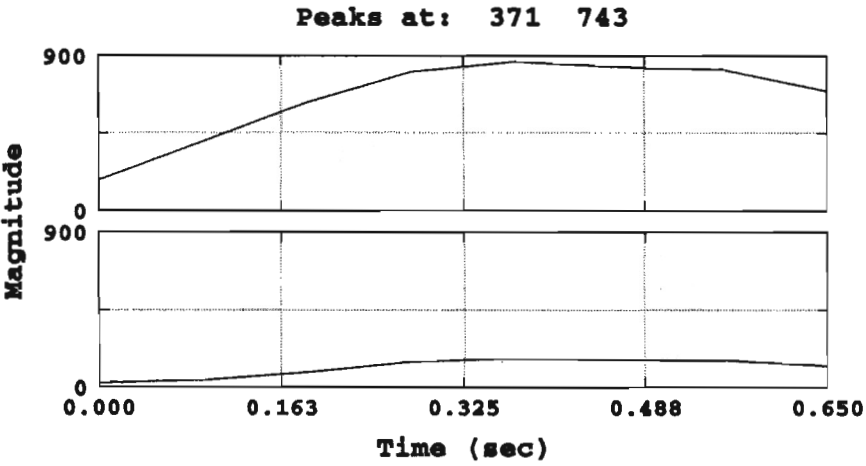


Figure 17

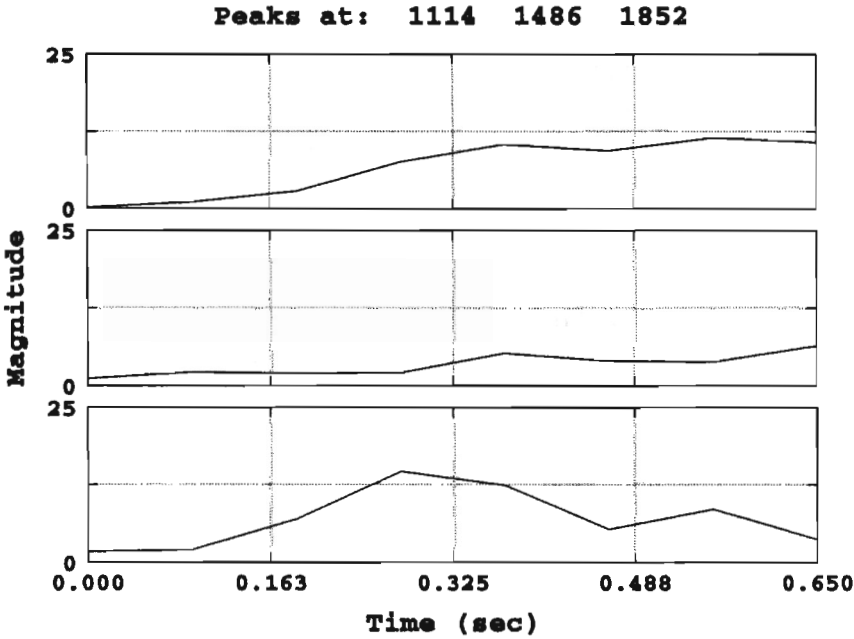


Figure 18

the modifier than without, in the strenuous upper limit of the falsetto range. Understanding the full acoustical functioning of the *kaapu simang* voice-modifiers will require a study of the role of formants, including effects caused by the difference between instrument and throat diameters. Such a study might reveal physical factors that shape performance technique.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Thomas Sanggau and Lukas Kutupau, whose performances I analyzed for this paper, and the people of Serieng who were my gracious hosts for two years. Back in the U.S.A., I was overwhelmed by the generosity of many friends who helped me with the computer analysis. I wish to thank Ron Averill, Ken Morrison, Elizabeth Hoffman, Michael Park, and Matthew Bennett for their generous assistance.

## Notes

1 The Neken joined the Catholic faith around 1960, giving up some of their traditions, but keeping those that did not conflict with the new religion.

2 To overturn the value-laden "Western" / "non-Western" adjectives, I use the term "pan-global" to refer to European folk, African, American, Asian, and Oceanic traditions, and "Euro-classical" to refer to the European classical traditions and their offshoots wherever they may occur. Aware of the inadequacies of this substitute terminology, I nonetheless feel a need to take a step away from Eurocentrism.

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# From the Inside Out(er): Issues in Ethnomusicology

The 1995 Seeger Lecture

NAZIR ALI JAIRAZBHOY

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*The original lecture presented by Professor Emeritus Jairazbhoy was a multimedia experience. What is presented here does its best to capture the spirit of the original, and may well have virtues of its own, but cannot truly represent what was heard at UCLA. The original biographical video was created by Amy Catlin Jairazbhoy. Visual images from the video represented in the text are marked with the symbol at right. Hopefully you should be able to follow the text, the video narrative and the stories.*

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SOME of you may remember that I was president of this society twenty years ago. Whether or not I was the worst president we have ever had may be debatable, but there is no question that with my curious background and my unusual academic experience, of all our presidents I was the least prepared for the task. Without hesitation I can say that those were the most traumatic two years of my life, when our Executive Board disagreed with me on virtually every issue culminating in the 1976 annual conference in Philadelphia when the membership put me on the spot in a heated open meeting and I finally felt lucky to be spirited away without being lynched. The issue was one of discrimination and a resolution was unanimously approved by the membership that the Society reject advertisements from South Africa on the grounds that they practised segregation and racial discrimination. I felt then, as I still do, that since our society states that we do not discriminate against anyone and accept as members "all persons, regardless of race, creed, color or national origin," we could not refuse to give equal service to our South African members because of their beliefs or practices. The only way I could reconcile my beliefs with those of the membership was to terminate all advertisements, which we did, at least during the remainder of my term.

Not a conventional opening to a Seeger lecture, but then the committee that nominated me can only have done so in the knowledge that I have in recent years been exploring the world of invention and non-convention and would expect nothing less of me even on this hallowed occasion.



For many years now I have felt that one cannot understand the real significance of any statement without knowing a great deal about the person making that statement. If, for instance, it was made by an advertiser trying to promote a product, we would know better than to take it at its face value. The same goes for anyone who has a personal involvement because of nationality, race, color or creed in the subject of his research—and that, I think, includes most of us—not, by any means, excluding myself. On a rather simplistic level we recognize the different attitudes and approaches of insiders and outsiders, but it is a matter of some concern when one reads in a recent anthropological publication, “it is now generally accepted that only the members of each ethnic group can most effectively study, teach about, discuss and generally speak for their fellow group members,”<sup>1</sup> as though mere birth into an ethnic group necessarily bestows knowledge and understanding of that group. On the contrary, I would be tempted to argue the opposite, that membership in an ethnic group will very likely incline an individual to present a biased view not unlike that of an advertiser, were it not for the fact that this too would be an oversimplification. No two members of an ethnic group share quite the same background or life experiences and it should be obvious that they will not share exactly the same views.

Since I have been variously described as an insider, outsider and most recently, as an inside-outer, I feel it beholden upon me to give you a brief resumé of my formative years so that you will be aware of the origins of my perspective. I leave it to you to decide which elements and views on scholarship derive from Nature and which from Nurture, or which from culture and which from individual personality and accident.

My ancestors came from Kutch in Western India where many generations ago they had been converted from Hinduism to the Khoja sect of Islam. The menfolk were traders and merchants and accumulated a considerable fortune in the timber trade with China.

Since they had made lucrative investments in properties in Bombay, they decided to migrate there before the turn of this century. They were also philanthropists and were held in high regard by the community in Kutch as well as Bombay, as was my father who inherited inordinate wealth and devoted much of his life to propagating Islam, writing religious books and practicing philanthropy. He was one of the founders of the Mosque in Woking, England



My Grandfather



and also donated large sums towards the establishment and support of educational institutions in India for both sexes.

My mother who was also of Kutchi origin, was brought up in Rangoon, and like her mother was a powerful woman with religious as well as artistic inclinations. Kutch is famous for its embroidery and they both inherited this skill, creating representational pieces as well abstract patchworks.

My parents travelled widely in the Middle East and went on the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina in 1932. My mother being quite progressive, was the first lady to film the event, while my maternal grandmother created a series of embroideries depicting her own memories of the Haj. My father did much of his proselytizing in Europe, USA and Canada where the film received critical acclaim in 1933, but unfortunately, this historical document has since been lost.



The Family Daimler

My father also had another side to his character: he was quite a sportsman, he loved cars and occasionally adopted the attire of an impeccable English gentleman.

He also loved to entertain on a lavish scale and I can remember grand occasions with dinner for as many as 500 guests. There were also receptions when, for instance, a European family adopted Islam. Unfortunately, I had little opportunity to get to know my father as he died when I was ten, soon after hosting a major international conference on Islam in our palatial family home.

What on earth happened here?

I guess I blew it.

I can't believe that you'd let me down on such an important occasion.

It's all those rehearsals and looking at your face endlessly.

I can sympathize—but with all those rehearsals you ought to be more efficient.

I got mesmerized and must have dozed off.

I suppose its understandable, but what a time you picked!

I promise to make up for it. While I cue up to the next part, why don't you do something you're really good at: **Tell them a story!**

Alright, I suppose I have no alternative. Well I just happen to have one which might amuse you. This story is in the vein of my book, *Hi-Tech Shiva and Other*

*Apochryphal Stories*, but much shorter (Jairazbhoy 1992). For those of you who are not familiar with it, I offer a few words of explanation. Stories told by Indian storytellers frequently depict the Hindu Gods as having human fallibilities and have no qualms about drawing these to the attention of their listeners, as I do in my Shiva stories. In these the setting is Mount Kailash, abode of the Hindu Gods, which is not unlike some of the elite residential areas in this city and others in the world. The Gods finally have acknowledged that their creation, the human world, has once again failed and must be destroyed. But Shiva, the King of Gods, is convinced that before he destroys the earthworld, the Gods must carry out fieldwork in order to understand why their creation failed, and in the process they face problems and issues, both on heaven and earth, that many of us have encountered in our university environments and in the field. This is a kind of “serious fun” which I hope you can enjoy with me.

Now the story, entitled,

### **Who Owns Music?**

As Shiva's term of King of the Gods was approaching its end, the CNN—that is, the Celestial News Network—organized a debate involving the leading candidates: the incumbent Shiva, Vishnu, leader of the opposition and an unlikely-looking independent candidate with big ears—very like an opossum from Okefenokee swamp—by the name of Peroswami.

Mount Kailash, the home of the Gods, which has more than a superficial resemblance to the Hills and Aires of Beverly and Bel, was agog with excitement. They knew that Vishnu was out to get Shiva and prove that he was not worthy of being at the helm of the Gods. During the course of the debate, Vishnu, so to speak, ‘steered’ Shiva into a confrontation on ethics and violating something of the code of debating behavior; he addressed Shiva directly:

“Ever since the threat of the universal cataclysm, you have been carrying out fieldwork on earth and documenting human traditions with your Hi and Super fancy video and audio recorders, not to mention their digital mutants. We all know that you have a lofty purpose in mind—namely your concern that the designers of the universe don't make the same mistakes they made last time. But what about the fact that you are also recording mankind's best songs and dances and exposing them to everyone on Mount Kailash. How do you justify that?”

This question didn't bother Shiva and he replied confidently:

“Well, I'm not exactly a commercial recording company, you know. Anyone will tell you that I am not out to make money and I think you'll agree that I don't need to be more famous, right? But seriously, my main concern is to find why we've failed again and human music and dance traditions are only incidental. I can't say that I don't enjoy them—and I wish we Gods could come up with such a fascinating variety of traditions, but we evidently don't have either the artistic genius or the patience of mankind.”

“That's all very well,” Vishnu said, “but you can't deny that many of the Gods and Goddesses only attend your soirées for the music and dance and not to play pingpong or to discuss intellectual issues. And now some of us have actually begun to play exotic instruments, like that long string instrument from India and a gong-playing group has just started up on Skyline Drive. Who owns the music, anyway? And what right do the Gods have to appropriate mankind's cultural traditions?”

Shiva was thoroughly riled by this and responded with some heat. "Now wait a minute. We created humans, so everything they create really belongs to us. Just like when we conquer demons, we loot and pillage and take whatever we want. What's wrong with colonialism? In any case, how can they stop us? Let Mount Kailash ring with alien gongs and bells—if that's what our Godlings want."

"I happen to be concerned about ethics," Vishnu replied sternly, "and I'm very concerned about the ethics of what you're doing under the pretext of advancing knowledge about this creation. Maybe you don't charge admission for your video and audio shows, but you can't deny that you don't exactly discourage voluntary contributions to support your next campaign. It's common knowledge that you're using the shows to advance your personal popularity and pick up some of the swing votes. All good scholars follow the guideline that their first obligation is to their subjects and not to advance their own ends. The least you could do is to pay the performers royalties for each vote you pick up."

Peroswamy was feeling left out and finally broke in, in his thin, reedy voice. "Let's talk about taxes or social security or the national debt, instead of trying to pin each other down on a matter of ethics. Even the OJ non-conviction is more interesting than all this 'holier than thou' stuff about ethics. Now we all know that there is going to be no next creation if we don't get rid of our massive entropy deficit. Why don't we talk about that? And Shiva should stop coming up with zany ideas, like Hi-Definition TV for his White House research projects as we keep going deeper and deeper in debt. So let's tackle the real issues."

Shiva didn't hear a word Peroswamy said. He was too busy trying to think up a response to Vishnu's comment about royalties and spoke out almost before Peroswamy had ended:

"Now why in heaven should I have to pay royalties? I have classified all earth creations as folklore, and as such, they all fall in the public domain. Copyrights only apply to individuals living in superior societies, like ours, so there is no question of royalties to be paid to humans. If anything, they should pay me for making their traditions known on Kailash. Perhaps my son Ganesh who's always talking about starting a new business will invite the best of them here to give live performances so that they can add the initials KR after their names—you know, 'Kailash Returned.' That will give their careers a big boost. And all because I took the trouble to record them in the first place."

"Maybe," Vishnu replied, quite unconvinced. "But you're avoiding the main issue. Your primary purpose is to enhance your own goals, whether in the interests of creating a perfect future universe or picking up swing votes. You are not concerned, in the first place, with the well-being of your subjects as our Ancestral Astrological Association has laid down."

"With all due respect," responded Shiva with exaggerated humility. "You have the wrong end of the stick, if I say so myself. Even though I knew I was doing them a favor—not the reverse—I paid them all and they were happy to sign release forms giving me full rights over the recordings. So you see, I have no further obligations to them."

"But did they really understand what rights they were conferring on you?" Vishnu responded heatedly. "And you say you paid them but by whose standards? Theirs or ours? If you're showing the tapes here on Kailash, don't you think they deserve to be paid at our union rates?"

Peroswamy was obviously getting exasperated and broke in with a voice that was nearly cracking. "Stop! Stop! This is going nowhere, and besides, you're only trying to jack up our deficit, Vishnu. We have to stop paying out so much and cut down on the fat, I keep saying, and yet no one wants to look at the real issues. Focus on the real issues, or I'm OUT."

But there was no restraining Shiva. "You forget one thing, my friend Vishnu," he said, ignoring Peroswamy again. "We don't have unions on Mount Kailash. If we did, Gods forbid, their rates would no doubt be high, at least by earth standards. Paying musicians at that level would ruin the economies of their countries. Before long inflation would set in, currency devalued and everyone would blame the musicians. Soon they'd be back at the bottom of the totem pole. No, my friend, our standards are not for developing earth worlds."

Vishnu was not about to concede and Peroswamy like a terrier was not about to relinquish his monopoly on the issue of issues. And so the debate coiled on into the night with the Gods and Goddesses nodding off one by one and blankening their screens.

Which reminds me, hoping that our trusty assistant has cued up the display by now, we can turn on our screen.

It was on one of their travels to England that I was born, but a few weeks later we boarded an ocean liner for India in time for a seafaring Christmas party. Our family home in Bombay was a wondrous mansion situated on about six acres of fabulous garden overlooking the ocean. Being the youngest of four boys and five half siblings, I was naturally doted upon and thoroughly spoiled. I thought that I could get away with virtually anything and took great pride in feigning innocence while pulling off my pranks. Growing up was a lot of fun—one of the advantages of a large family, always games to play, lots of kids to play with and mischief to get into. And we had the greatest toys brought back from Europe by my parents. I always liked games more than school and avoided kindergarten for about six months by hiding in the garden when the chauffeur came to take me in the mornings.



The Family Home

True to Bombay's multiculturalism, I attended a Catholic kindergarten and then a Protestant School where one of my best friends was a Jewish boy.

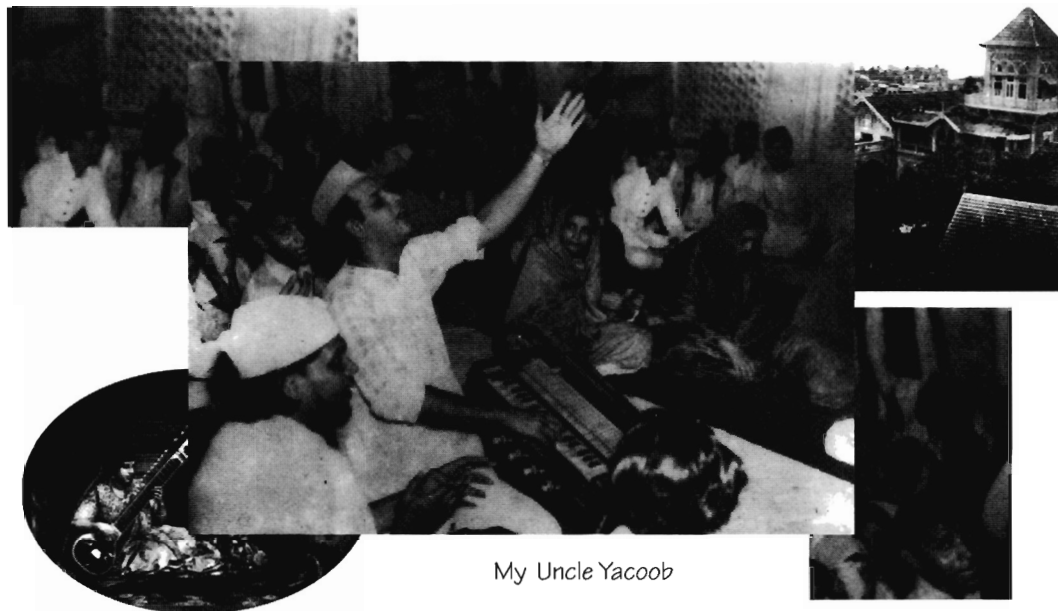
Among my fondest childhood memories was the trip with my parents to our ancestral lands in Kutch, where we visited the first school in the area established by my grandfather. My brothers were away in boarding school and missed out on the fun bullock cart rides and being entertained by nobility in nearby Saurashtra. In those days, we too were regarded as such, and were even included in the *Who's Who of Indian Nobles*.

Ever since I can remember, music was a major part of our life, both Indian and Western. We all took Western violin lessons, but I was much more attracted to the sitar which my mother played and frequently sat by her side while she practiced. Her sitar teacher, Madhav Lal of Mathura, lived on our premises and played or taught us whenever we wished. I found the instrument irresistible and began lessons with him when I was only 7 or 8. Over the years I developed a deep relationship with Madhav Lal who was an extraordinary teacher and still have some of the notations he prepared for us. When next I returned to India more than five years later, he had evidently dis-



My Parents

appeared in the turmoil of India's independence and the split of the country to create Pakistan.



My Uncle Yacoub

We also had all-night Muslim religious qawwali sessions in our home, but when my mother's younger brother, Yacoub, decided to become a professional qawwal, it caused no little consternation in our family—music could be tolerated as a hobby in our community, but not professionalism. He persisted, however and I recall playing occasionally with his group when I must have been only ten or eleven.

My parents were influenced by what we might call Occidentalism as were other wealthy Indians so we were sent serially to boarding school in England. My turn came in 1939, but after just three months there, war broke out and terminated my English school days. I and two of my brothers were then packed off to the nearest thing in India, the newly established Doon school with its Rose Bowl amphitheater in Dehra Dun based on the English public school system. I did not exactly cover myself with glory in the academic sphere and was far more interested in sports and music than anything else. But the kind of egalitarian conditions imposed in boarding schools must have had a major impact on me.

I travelled in one of the early American troop ships converted for civilian passengers in 1946—an amazing transformation of realities—cabins for fifty and more on stacked bunks and no privacy but plenty of companionship.

The USA wasn't quite what I expected, although I was fascinated by the dramatic countryside and motored frequently throughout the western states. But I had a great deal of trouble adjusting to the life of a student far from home in such a radically different environment. At the University of Washington I continued to be more interested in sports than studies and my academic scores were far from brilliant. I also discovered that I didn't have a very high I.Q. I found that I did not have the intellect for Aeronautics, gave up and switched to Architecture then moved to Art and would perhaps have kept going down the academic alphabet list, except that I was constantly in financial difficulties and was obliged to stir myself from indolence to find employment—



Me

anything from busboy to manual labor. Being on a student visa, I was not permitted to work off campus and was eventually caught and given 6 months to leave the country. With my existing coursework I found I could complete a B.A. only in Geography in that period and did so. Even though I had married an American woman, my visa could not be changed while I was still in the US.

So we went to India and I tried to find employment, but there were no openings in geography. I resumed my sitar training with a young man who claimed to be Madhav Lal's son, but he soon absconded with all my instruments. I also worked as an unpaid draftsman in an architect's office with no real prospects without a degree.

After a year I was informed that I could get a green card and decided to return to Seattle to study architecture once again. But having no scholarship I accepted a drafting job in an engineering firm, where I was continually demoted until I was doing heavy physical labor in their structural steel shop. I finally quit after 6 months and decided I was going to be a painter and resumed practice on the simple sitar which I had just received from India.

In the next year or two, I actually had a fair amount of success and exhibited my paintings in numerous galleries, earning almost as much as I had done as a steel worker. One event had a major impact on my future. Dr. Richard Waterman was then teaching a course called "Primitive Music" at U. of W. He heard me in an art gallery attempting to interpret paintings on my sitar, and invited me to give some talks in his course. I agreed and decided to do some library research to help me organize my talk. I couldn't believe it—little of what I read related to my knowledge of the subject and the lectures and my demonstrations, I am sorry to say, were not very good. Two years later these lectures were released as an LP by Ethnic Folkways and, distressingly, it has recently been re-released as a CD.

Painting had become a major obsession in my life and I could think of nothing else day and night. What made it so serious was the fact that my wife had just given birth to a child—and I was so lost in my own world that I gave her little physical or moral support. She left, and I found myself the sole caretaker of our year-old daughter. I could no longer paint and following my mother's urgings, we journeyed to Pakistan to give her a stable home and for me to resume my study of Indian music.

I was due to study with Ustad Bundu Khan, the legendary sarangi maestro, but unfortunately, he was ill when I arrived and passed away shortly after. So I studied for more than six months with his son, Ustad Umrao Bundu Khan, a vocalist and sarangi player, learning new rags, and with Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, a surbahar player concentrating on technique and improvisation.

Then unexpectedly, I heard from my brother advising me to come to England to study with "the greatest scholar of Indian music, Arnold Bake." and of course I went.

I want to draw your attention briefly to the highlights of some of my experiences in SOAS.

1. Arnold taught only one course, one hour per week on Indian music.
2. There was no pressure either on him or myself to recruit students and most of our teaching was to classes that seldom exceeded 10 students.
3. We were not faced with student evaluations.
4. Department meetings were usually not more than once a year for one hour.
5. I was seldom asked to write letters of recommendation for either students or colleagues.



6. I was appointed Lecturer, which is the equivalent of Assistant Professor in this country with only a B.A. in Geography.

7. I was given tenure in 1967 without any review of my work, to the best of my knowledge.

8. When I approached my Chair about the possibility of my proceeding to a Ph.D., his response was very negative. "Why do you need a Ph.D., you already have tenure?"

9. Nevertheless I proceeded to register for a Ph.D. and all requirements were waived on the grounds that I was already a tenured Lecturer. M.A. was deemed unnecessary. No coursework required. No languages were required. No qualifying examination was required. I was merely asked to submit my dissertation.

10. I met with my dissertation supervisor just once, for ten minutes.

11. For my dissertation I submitted my book on rags which had just been published. The oral was tough, but my book was approved and I received the Ph.D. from the University of London in 1971.

Had it not been for this soft academic structure, I would not be standing before you today. I am quite sure that I would not be able to pass the Ph.D. qualifying examinations required of our students in UCLA. In fact, I do not think that I would even have passed the entrance requirements for our graduate program, and I am sure that if I had been accepted, I would have found the course requirements so tedious that I would have given up and moved to the next letter in the academic alphabet.

From my perspective the academic world in the US is far from what I had expected. In my naive view a University was a place to make discoveries, not only about the external world, but also one's own self. It is the challenge and excitement of discovery that I find lacking, at least in the humanities. What we have instead is a very practical approach to education, which, surprisingly to me, carries over on to the graduate level. Students are being trained to have the kind of well-rounded background that professors think will not show up the university in a negative light. A Ph.D. from a particular highly-regarded university will be expected to know x, y and z, therefore we must ensure that all our students know these subjects well. So we make required courses, prepare elaborate syllabi, give plenty of readings and extensive bibliographies, give assignments and often tests, if not for each specific course, at the end of the students' training, in the form of qualifying exams.

In the first place, syllabi are restrictive and take away from the element of spontaneity. They leave no space or time for the Professor or students to explore new directions. I sat through six years of Arnold Bake's lectures on Indian music and one of his greatest delights was to surprise me by coming up with something new. Of course, he gave no assignments, no required readings and no tests. To me, these are all forms of indoctrination which force students into particular molds, and although they are based on traditional concepts of scholarship that we have inherited from Europe, we in this country have chiselled them into stone. We may talk

about being egalitarian, but, in fact, we are imposing these views on students, regardless of their cultural or racial backgrounds. Perhaps the most detrimental notion is that ethnomusicology is a Western invention, with the implication that it will always remain so. No doubt, the West has contributed significantly not only to the creation of our field, but to civilization in general, but the recognition of the contributions of other cultures is now long overdue, especially in this multicultural society. I mean the contributions of Bharata and Bhatkhande, of Lao Tse and Confucious, of Al-Farabi and Safi-ul-Din, of Pythagoras and Plato, to name just a few of the most prominent pre-ethnomusicologists.

One thing I have learned from storytellers in India. Don't belabor a point. Once it is made, move on. The best anecdote for the potential intellectual logjam created by controversial ideas is humor. And what better than to make fun of ourselves. So here goes.

The word ethnomusicology, as we are told, was originated by Jaap Kunst in the 1950s, but the perspective I am about to unfold may bring even this into question. The first comes from classical Greece. (Track 2)

#### **Etiology of Ethnomusicology — take 1**

When Greek civilization was at its height and there was an outpouring of monuments and sculptures that reflected its glories, Athens became the tourist capital of the world. Many came from Scythia and Phrygia, Lydia and Phoenicia, they came, they saw and were conquered by its beauty and magnificence and many stayed to enjoy the fruits of this spectacular civilization. A generation or so later, there was growing concern that the kind of classical education being provided to the multicultural youths of Athens was ethnocentric and was not reflecting the growing diversity of its population. Soon panels and committees throughout Athens were considering modifications to their courses on civilization and culture to include a broader base which would not exclude the backgrounds of their recent immigrants. After a great deal of deliberation it was finally agreed that the parties concerned could not possibly reach a consensus view. They then took the matter up to a higher level and turned to the great God Apollo to seek his advice in the matter.

Seated in his cavernous sanctuary in Delphi surrounded by the mists of prophecy, they approached him with their dilemma. As usual, when invoked in such instances, Apollo, in turn, invoked the oracle of Delphi and after much music and incantation, the oracle struck again. The priestess, Pythia, inspired by Apollo's lyre, fell into a trance and swaying crazily from side to side, she began mumbling in a language that once had been but now could only be understood by priests. Slowly, as the priests translated her jumbled words and Apollo made sense of them, hope and anticipation turned into certainty: the dilemma would soon be resolved. The solution was startling in its simplicity. What was needed was to add a tenth Muse to the existing nine, one well versed in the music and arts of the non-Western world. And so was born the Ethno Muse.

It is never easy to convince the establishment of the validity of any radical departure from accepted customs and practices, yet, the oracle had spoken, so it was implemented. The Ethno Muse was born and perhaps because she was the youngest, was doted upon, or because what she had to offer was so startlingly new, she made the Grammys almost immediately and amassed a huge following. Naturally, this was not without its complications and it became obvious that this new element was disrupting the ecological balance of Athenian society. The poor Ethno Muse found herself facing discrimination of all kinds and had it not been for Hesiod who took it in his mind to champion her cause and give her a divine origin she might well have been driven underground and upset conditions there as well. But some

scholars delight in just such issues and made her the subject of their study and her impact on the environment, introducing, for the first time, a new subject, Ethno Muse Ecology.

My second scenario is set from the cavern of Delphi to a remote cave in the Himalaya mountains where an intrepid reporter finally beards his prey after weeks of harassing adventure and personal hardship. His prey is, of course, the phenomenal svami, the one and lonely transcendental guru, Sri Spaced Out. Notwithstanding the remoteness of his lair, his reputation had spread far and wide even without the help of Bell, AT&T, Sprint and MCI. How? we might well ask, and indeed should. But to understand such nebulous cosmic waves, one would also need to be spaced out. This did not at all deter our intrepid seeker of truth.

### **Etiology of Ethnomusicology — take 2**

"Svami" he proclaimed breathlessly at their first meeting, reflecting and exaggerating the physical demands of his search. After a second breathless "Svami" he put it all in a single nutshell: "How do you do it?" Then feeling that he needed to fill his readers in, he continued. "I mean how do you know what's going on in our world, since you've been living in isolation in your cave for more than twenty years, without the benefit of BBC, CNN and all the other dedicated news stations?"

"Have you not heard of cyberspace?" asked Swamiji. "If you haven't, you soon will. But I don't go in for all those new-fangled human innovations. I just look within myself and there lies the answer."

"But Swamiji, I've come all the way up to your mountainous lair, because word reached us in the plains that you are finally going to reveal it all."

"That is true, but it is also false."

The reporter, thinking "Oh! Oh! not another enigmatic swami!" replied with an exaggerated air of patience, "Perhaps you would be kind enough to elaborate." To this Swamiji responded:

"It all depends on what sense you use, common or non. You see most of us have been getting by using commonsense, because it seems to work. But it really doesn't—it just seems that way. The universe actually functions in a non-sense way. By that I mean our senses are at complete variance with universal functions."

Swamiji sensing the reporter's instinct to pin down his interviewee, continued, "Don't be impatient. Time is on the side of the patient patient. What I am saying is for you to hear, digesting it may be difficult. You see our scientists tell us that we are spinning around our axes and also orbiting elliptically around other bodies and all at furious rates. Is this really true? Do you feel it? What this hides is my reality and your reality. I feel no spinning or ellipticisms, only a gentle swaying—the swings and arrows of outrageous fortune—as one of our bards has expressed it."

The reporter, delighted at finding a flaw in Swamiji's statements says, with exaggerated humility, "Pardon me sir, with all due respect, but I think he said 'slings' not 'swings.'"

"Now that you mention it," Swamiji responds, "I must accede to your scholarly bent. But it is the swing that I see—not the sling. In any case, slings are a bit passé, don't you think? Perhaps the copyist slipped when copying the bard's manuscript. I see that your patience is beginning to run thin. I suggest

that this is due to too much aspirin in your system. Go easy on it and life will take on a more poignant hue and you will be more responsive to the swings and arrows. And you may well ask: what are these swings and what the arrows? You see, common sense tells us that scientists must be right. Spinning and ellipticizing we may be and at furious rates. But no sense makes sense of this. What the scientists don't emphasize is that we are also swinging, like pendulums, back and forth, back and forth. And when the Lord said, "Go forth," we did, but we also came back. Of course, He knew. But that was his way of starting the swing of the pendulum.

Now we take a break for our very special brew of tea, caffeinated Ayurved Mountain Blend."

The Reporter could not help but wonder, "Coffee and tea breaks here? But why now?"

Swamiji anticipating the Reporter's question, responded, "I know that you are wondering why I called for a tea break just then. The pendulum swings, but at the end of every swing there is a moment of stillness and that is the pause that refreshes—the tea break—and it occurs again and again. Thus our special brew—to prepare you for the accelerating down swing where truth lies—and then as deceleration begins we see that truth lies and lies and lies. Then up again on the other side to another cup of our special brew, to prepare us for another accelerating swing of truth."

The Reporter then broke in with, "But where do the arrows come in to the picture?" To which Swamiji responded:

"Arrows have sharp points that make their targets resonate when they strike. So, too, at particular points of the pendulum swing our bodies and minds suddenly resonate with convictions, just as though we had been struck with the arrow of the most important reality. It could be an issue, like racial discrimination, political correctness, or affirmative action. But these are just points in the swing of the pendulum and no matter how violently we resonate at that moment, they will be gone. And after another break for tea, we will see the other side of the picture and have new resonances."

After the break that refreshes, the Reporter continued his questioning: "Swamiji, I don't understand how you could possibly know what is happening in our world below while you sit in your remote and isolated cave."

"Well, you see, I think a great deal," responded Swamiji.

"But how can thinking on this remote glacial peak help you to know what's going on in our plains world?"

To this Swamiji expounded: "It's really an understanding of swings. If today the diffusion of ideas is Out as a scholarly approach, then it is easy to predict that it will again become In when the pendulum swings back. If today we discriminate against any group or groups, the pendulum reversal will ensure that it will be reversed. Affirmative action becomes affirmative discrimination. Top dogs will be bogged down into bottom dogs. If the new toppers understood the pendulum, they wouldn't celebrate too much, their heyday will soon become their naydays. Back and forthism is our only non-sense reality, not the spinning or the ellipticisms."

The Reporter, finding this beyond his comprehension, then changed the subject: "I think I'm beginning to see, but why did you retreat into the mountains and become a swami? Weren't you once a famous professor of musicology in the USA?"

"Well there you have it. It wasn't musicology. It was ethnomusicology," responded the Swami.

Not unnaturally, the Reporter was taken aback by this strange term, "I've never heard of that. What's ethnomusicology?"

Swamiji now responded, a bit defensively, "That's always been our big problem. No one knows what ethnomusicology is about—not even ethnomusicologists. And that in itself is enough to drive one into the mountains."

"But Swamiji, someone must have known, otherwise they would not have appointed you as a Professor of Ethnomusicology."

"Well, people who call themselves ethnomusicologists have certainly tried to define the field and even tried to convince others that it was a discipline. But I was never convinced, and so I was glad to escape to my retreat."

"That is quite unbelievable. Would university administration—which is always strapped for money—create professorships in a field that nobody understands?"

Swamiji responded, "That is a small nothing. University administrators have created whole Institutes and Departments in fields that don't exist!"

Not unexpectedly the Reporter was confused. "I must be missing something. Could you please try to tell me something about ethnomusicology?"

"Well, I guess," Swamiji responded, "it is really what ethnomusicologists do, and they do a great variety of things. They write books and articles about strange music and play strange instruments. But mostly they say that they study music in the broad perspective of society and culture."

"Does that mean they don't study music for its own sake—I mean as an art form?"

Swamiji then made a definitive statement, "Some people would call that musicology and ethnomusicologists don't like to be branded as musicologists. That's why they came up with the name *eth - No Musicology*. And even that '*eth*' was really a lisper's ellipsis of '*yes*,' so that it was originally intended to be, '*Yes, No Musicology*'."

The Reporter, trying to make sense of all this, "I find this fascinating. I've never heard of a discipline with such a strange name. As long as it is not musicology, is every other approach to music acceptable? I mean, what if an ethnomusicologist decides to relate music practices to the occult sciences or to obscure mandalas of perceived cognates? Or for that matter to the sounds of nature, or even the rhythms of outer space?"

"I guess it's been done. The ancient Greek philosophers, Pythagoras and Plato, talked about the harmony of the spheres more than two thousand years ago. Good music was thought to be a representation of this universal harmony, while bad music, enjoyable as it may have been, leads to muggings and gang wars. So, the Greeks thought, control music and one controls mankind, but, you see, there is no way to control music or mankind. Lechers and politicians will use music to further their own ends, just as ethnomusicologists do when they seek the puritan values in music cultures. They all have their own axes to grind and no one cares for the impact of the resonance of grinding axes in the universe. But here, in the remote of the wilds, the interference caused by the grinding axes of pressure groups af-

fects us not one bit and leaves us room to gloat and emote on our freedom to experience the clarity of visions of the past and the future."

Swamiji, with his usual perspicacity has hit upon what is one of the most contentious issues in ethnomusicology, namely its definition and its content. It is still fashionable to include the word culture in definitions of ethnomusicology, even though the word culture is now being questioned by many scholars. Music in Culture or Music as Culture both seem to exclude the study of music as music.

Incidentally, I too, have been guilty of using culture in my definition of ethnomusicology. My definition was, the study of culture in music. By that I meant that if music is an expression of culture, we should be able to find elements of culture in the music. This would involve, perhaps in the first place, the study of the music itself and then what was unique in it. That, in my opinion, was the contribution of the culture. Here I envisaged culture as the totality of group beliefs, institutions, arts, etc., as well as those of individuals, so that in one instance the music might be seen as illuminating the aesthetic values of a group or an individual, and in another, how the creators perceived their relationship to their environment, deities, etc..

But now I think that we must begin to look at our field in a different light. Musics of various world areas are becoming international commodities, or perhaps have always been so. And where does culture fit into this? Not at all. Culture is discarded as though it were unnecessary baggage, proving to me at least that the culture that created a specific form of music does not remain its owner forever. Music is much easier to appropriate and comprehend than the cultural package in which it is wrapped, and once the wrappings are removed the music takes on new meanings and becomes accessible to new audiences. Potentially this is disastrous for those ethnomusicologists who regard culture as an inseparable part of music. The handwriting has been on the wall since the early sixties when performance groups, especially Indonesian gamelans at UCLA composed mostly of American students, began making passable imitations of Indonesian music. Maybe those early efforts did not sound quite authentic, but since then, there has been plenty of proof that outsiders can make music that even insiders find convincing. The most prominent example I can quote is that of the late Jon Higgins who excelled in singing Carnatic music with such feeling that it brought tears to the eyes of South Indian listeners. And that is by no means an isolated occurrence. Twenty or more of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's American students have achieved soloist status here and in India—and there are many others from the US and other countries who have achieved the same credibility.

As ethnomusicologists I feel we must recognize and accept this phenomenon of music isolated from its cultural element, or we shall find ourselves becoming the archeologists of music, living in the memories of the past when music was functional and was a reflection of culture. We should be cognizant of the fact that many, if not all, types of music have the potential of leaving the community which invented it behind and establishing themselves on an international scale, as Western

art music, jazz, pop, Indian music, Latin American rhythms and others forms have already done. These know no cultural bounds and in the final analysis, it is often music that persists, even when the culture of its origin dissipates or degenerates. Dynasties rise and fall, but the music survives, perhaps in a slightly modified form, but it is basically resistant to political and economic storms.

No musicology! Such a denial seems to me to undermine our whole existence. I feel, as Charles Seeger did, that we are musicologists in the first place, and if culture is a factor in order to understand a form of music, or at least its beginnings, we naturally study it. But to limit ourselves to the cultural elements seems to me like a losing cause, especially as new culturally independent musics are constantly being created through fusions, which I see as reflecting the unconscious desire of humans of different backgrounds to communicate with each other.

I believe that we must keep in mind the fact that things are continually changing, sometimes drastically, but always also consistently, just as we do in the process of aging. Evolution, and I mean this in the general sense of change, not in the biological sense, is inescapable, even though we may temporarily retard its progress through rigorous training, as in the case of Indian classical music, or by musical notations in Western music. In spite of these attempts to resist change, music continues to evolve, if only imperceptibly. We may know the notes of a particular composition in Western art music, but the interpretation of those notes changes from one generation to another. It seems as though every element in nature has potential energy which prevents it from ever achieving a completely stable or perfect state. In music, the obvious example is the *diabolus in musica*, the tritone, the inescapable imperfect interval which has been the driving force behind much of mankind's musical creations.

In my book, *The Rags of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution*, which has recently been republished with an additional chapter, after being out of print for about twenty years, I have given evidence to substantiate gradual evolution in Indian music and to explain it in a systematic manner (Jairazbhoy 1971). I have also attempted to suggest how this gradual change can take place without it seeming like change. This is analogous to the human life process where individuals change from day to day as they age imperceptibly, and still maintain their identity, as I hope came through in our video.

Evolution of music is not unlike evolution in other areas, proceeding, in general, from the simpler to the more complex. In the arts this can be described as the growth of human cognition, that is, the consonances we accept today will tomorrow become mundane and boring and some of the dissonances of today will become the new consonances of tomorrow. In my book on rags, I draw attention to the underpinnings of Indian music, the perception of tetrachordal symmetries which provide a grammatical structure to the music. This is in some ways analogous to the grammar of Western music's Common Practice Harmony which was also derived after the fact. Just as in the West the grammar of CPH has been far exceeded and

even superseded by atonality, so in Indian music the grammatical base of simple tetrachordal symmetries has been expanded by the cognition of complex symmetries and perhaps even asymmetry.

Everything is changing and growing, and although we all comprehend this, many of us unwittingly attempt to mold others in our image. Instead, it might be more rewarding if we were more receptive to being molded by our students, especially as they come from so many diverse backgrounds. We should, I feel, encourage difference, introduce true multiculturalism in our thinking and not attempt to indoctrinate others to our ways of thought about scholarship which will undoubtedly be challenged tomorrow, when the pendulum reverses its swing.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Cerroni-Long, E. L. 1995. "Introduction: Insider or Native Anthropology?" *NAPA Bulletin* 16: 7.

## References

- Jairazbhoy, Nazir Ali. 1971. *The Rags of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press. [Reprinted with new introduction by Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1995. Additional cassette examples by Ustad Vilayat Khan and Ustad Umrao Bundu Khan can be obtained from Apsara Media, 13659 Victory Blvd., Suite 577, Van Nuys, CA, 91401.]
- . 1991. *Hi-Tech Shiva and Other Apocryphal Stories: An Academic Allegory*. Van Nuys, CA: Apsara Media.





# Ensembles at UCLA

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*One of the remarkable things about ethnomusicological study at UCLA is the range of experience a student can have in the many performing ensembles. We will be presenting a series of brief essays and recordings featuring some of UCLA's ensembles.*

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## Music of Mexico

THE Music of Mexico Ensemble has been a vital part of the cultural life of the community and an important practical dimension of the study of ethnomusicology at UCLA since the early years of the Institute. The continued vitality of the ensemble is in large part due to the hard work of several talented graduate students throughout the years. Don Borchardt, James Koetting, Mark Fogelquist and Daniel Sheehy made noteworthy contributions to the ensemble during their student tenure during the 1960s and 1970s as performers, researchers, musical directors, and instrument collectors. Although in the early years the ensemble explored mariachi music and the *son jalisciense* along with other regional musics such as the *son huasteco* and *son jarocho*, during the 1980s and 1990s the ensemble has focused on mariachi. Recently, students' interests have begun to return to other regions; in April of 1996 under my direction mariachi students performed a *huasteco* set at the Wadsworth Theatre which included the *nahuatl* song entitled "*Xochipitzahuac*."

This recording is excerpted from a performance of the Music of Mexico Ensemble and the Grupo Folklórico de UCLA which took place in Schoenberg Hall on February 25th, 1996. Professor Nati Cano is assisted by Jesus Guzman and Juan Morales, two of the members of his mariachi, Los Camperos de Nati Cano. Approximately 30 students participated in this performance.

Track 5 "*La Negra*," a *son jalisciense*, is known as the signature tune of the mariachi, though its non-strophic formal structure is actually atypical of the genre. In this example the *zapateado* footwork of the Folklórico dancers can be heard elaborating the *sesquialtera* rhythmic pattern provided by the guitarrón, vihuela and guitar.

Track 6 "*Señora Bonita*" is an example of a *bolero*, the romantic song that makes use of jazz harmonies and a steady 4/4 rhythm. This Mexican form was made popular by Javier Solis and other singing greats of the 50s and 60s. *Boleros* are still very popular; most mariachis today have several in their repertoire. Juan Ojeda is the soloist.

**Track 7** “Y Ándale,” a *ranchera*, is performed in this example by two female vocalists, Arwen Lawrence and myself, and Mariachi UCLA. Ruben Fuentes’ arrangement features a “banda” section highlighting the trumpets and minimizing the harmonic role of the strings in a style that emulates the horn and percussion ensembles of Sinaloa. Even if you don’t know Spanish you may have guessed that this is a drinking song.

**Track 8** “Jesusita en Chihuahua,” though usually played by the mariachi ensemble as an instrumental *polka*, it actually has a text that ties the piece to Mexico’s revolutionary period. In this performance the dancers’ footwork can be heard accenting the song’s up-tempo 2/4 rhythm. The prominent brass sound and the *polka* choreography and costumes reveal the Germanic influence on the music and dance of the *Norte* region of Mexico.

**Track 9** “Jarabe Tapatio” is perhaps the most well-known piece of Mexican music. According to Mark Fogelquist this piece is actually composed of a number of different *sones* strung together. The dance movements and colorful costumes worn by the dancers are said to derive from the mating ritual of rooster and hen.

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## Old-Time American Ensemble

THE UCLA Old-Time American Music Ensemble, formed during the 1989-90 academic year under the direction of Kathryn Vaughn and the faculty supervision of James Porter, has served to allow participants to learn, to perform and to understand the cultural implications of those vernacular American musics derived from Western European and British Isles folk music traditions. In 1991, the directorship was passed to Michael Harshberger under whose direction the group continued to perform at numerous community and university events. Notable among these performances was the inclusion of the ensemble at the 1994 UCLA 75th Anniversary Convocation Celebration, addressed by President Bill Clinton. I took on the directorship of the ensemble during the two years beginning in the fall of 1994. In 1995, guided by department co-chair and faculty supervisor Professor Timothy Rice, we performed for the 40th annual Society for Ethnomusicology conference hosted by UCLA in Los Angeles.

Since its inception, the ensemble has undergone a number of changes. First named the "Findy Sickle String Band" (an Americanization of the French *fin de siècle*), it was later renamed in order to allow broadening of the scope of genres included in its repertoire. In addition to Appalachian string-band music, the ensemble performs selections that include traditional ballads, lyric songs, early commercial hillbilly music, gospel songs (both traditional and contemporary commercial examples), bluegrass standards and music from America's "folk revival." The ensemble has always utilized the talents of both students and community members, providing an important link between university and community while allowing students to benefit from the expertise of those actively involved in regular performance of these traditions.

**Track 10** "Banks of the Ohio" is an ancient murder ballad performed here by the entire 21 member ensemble. With the inclusion of an extended refrain, or chorus, this combination of text and tune has now become a standard in the folk revival repertoire.

**Track 11** "Old Joe Clark" is also performed by the entire ensemble—this is a frolic, or dance song. It includes numerous verses of often nonsensical text which provide humor and variation to the repetitive musical form. This particular arrangement features 3 board zithers called Appalachian dulcimers. Probably brought into the mountain regions by German or British settlers, this instrument embodies a rather ancient ethos but has in fact only become widely popular since the folk revival of the 1950s.

**Track 12** "'Tis a Gift" is a 17th century Shaker hymn. This arrangement is performed vocally by a trio of women: Jennifer Del Villar, Alissa Simon, and Amy Wooley, and again features the Appalachian dulcimer. Here we introduce an an-

cient idiophone called the "limberjack." Limberjacks are jointed, wooden, puppet-like dolls (fashioned in both human and animal forms) manipulated by a single stick inserted into its back. The percussive sound is produced as the doll is caused to "dance" against a wooden board held by the limberjack player. Limberjacks have been found in Egyptian tombs dating back at least 3000 years.

**Track 13 "DO-RE-MI"** is a folk revival tune known as a "dust bowl ballad." It is one of the numerous songs created to relate experiences from the 1920s Oklahoma dust bowl migration to California. Written by Woody Guthrie and performed here by a more traditional small ensemble, this selection is an example of a husband and wife vocal duo—very popular in early commercial hillbilly music. The duo of singers is Jay Keister and Lindsay Clare, and guitar accompaniment is provided by Amy Wooley.

**Track 14 "Fireball Mail"** is a selection from the standard bluegrass repertoire performed by Reggie Gaylord. It demonstrates the fast finger picking technique, and syncopated rhythms often employed by bluegrass banjoists.

**Track 15 "Lover's Return"** is a song from commercial hillbilly recordings, and is performed here by a trio of female voices: myself, Elizabeth Miles and Jennifer Del Villar. This and the following selection were made popular by the famous family group known as the Carter Family. It is an example of a lyric song which predominantly expresses emotion. However, it also retains a link to the ballad tradition within the story it relates. The syncretism of these two song types, apparent in a number of hillbilly recordings, illustrates a development that now predominates in contemporary commercial country songs. Featured here are solos by both fiddle and mandolin played by Brandon Miles and Roger Hyde, respectively.

**Track 16 "Are You Tired of Me My Darling?"** is also a hillbilly song made famous by the Carter Family. It is sung by Jay Keister and Lindsay Clare.

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## Book Review

AFRICAN BANJO ECHOES IN APPALACHIA: A STUDY OF FOLK TRADITIONS. Cecelia Conway. 1995. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press. xxviii, 394 pp., transcriptions, photos, diagrams, song texts, appendix, selected bibliography, index.

Cecelia Conway's *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia* is a valuable and detailed examination of the complex genealogy of American folk banjo styles. The banjo, she says, has a rich mythology in the United States as a uniquely American folk instrument. Its repertory is customarily associated in popular thought with white musical traditions in Appalachia, and with the practice of minstrelsy in the American south. The very invention of the modern five-string banjo is traditionally credited to Joel Sweeney, a southern minstrel. The actual history of the banjo, Conway argues is much more subtle, and reveals much about the intersection of African and European musical traditions in the south: "Behind the myth," she says, "is a history that reaches far back to Africa." Conway's book strives to disentangle the complex genealogy of banjo traditions in the United States while developing the history of the banjo as being ultimately an expression of the intersection of African and African-American culture.

The sources on which Conway's *African Banjo Echoes* depends can be divided into three broad types, and the way in which she presents the information gathered from each is worthy of note. The first source, and the most ethnomusicologically "typical," is her trio of musical mentors—Dink Roberts, John Snipes and Odell Thompson—who are or were black musicians from North Carolina. Her affection for her teachers is clear, and she never fails to be respectful of their accomplishments as people and musicians. However, they do not come to dominate the book, which is, after all, about the banjo, and not about any particular banjo player.

Conway's second major source of information, previous studies in ethnomusicology and folklore, is also common to ethnomusicological scholarship. She is to be particularly commended for her skillful integration of information from previous scholarly studies. References to earlier work compliment Conway's own research without dominating it, making her book readable and easily accessible to readers who may be intimidated by careless assumptions about their background knowledge. She has successfully guarded against the tendency to allow a survey of a particular musical genre to become a celebration of the accomplishments of a specific artist or artists, and she has also managed to be both erudite and readable by not clogging her writing with jargon. These are not common features in academic literature.

I would particularly like to commend Conway for her thorough and well reasoned use of historic-geographic methods in conjunction with the living history provided by Roberts, Odell and Thompson—her third major information source. Conway's chapters are richly illustrated by pictures, posters, paintings and pro-

grams, as well as textual examples from contemporary literature to support her conclusions about the history of this sparsely documented tradition. The failure to use available historical documentation and to properly integrate it with oral histories and geographical data is one of the most unfortunate trends in ethnomusicology. Conway's organological topic is especially amenable to the historic-geographic method, and she uses it very persuasively. The appendix, which indexes published accounts containing a reference to banjos prior to 1860 is especially interesting as it provides some insight into the raw materials of historical investigation. All of these combine to form a tightly organized and well defined topic of discourse, and the wealth of direct evidence presented in this book keeps it grounded in demonstrable fact—Conway rarely advances an hypothesis without a strong argument based on historical evidence.

The first chapter after the lengthy introduction, which I will discuss later, is brief, and outlines the African-American traditions of folk banjo playing. Conway emphasizes not only early reports of the banjo, but the continuity of these early reports with current tradition. It is unfortunately brief, probably because much of the material which might have been included here had already been presented in the introduction.

The second chapter is longer, and investigates the place of the banjo in the development of minstrelsy in the United States. In this chapter we move to a topic which has a much wider range of historical material from which to draw than early African-American banjo traditions. Of particular interest is Conway's extensive use of contemporary firsthand accounts, rather than secondary scholarly sources. The third chapter, "Mountain Echoes of the African Banjo," discusses the development of Appalachian banjo styles in much the same way. Conway uses historical evidence to document possible avenues by which African-American banjo traditions could have crossed over into contemporary white folk usage. She documents the exchange of musical traditions in an increasingly urban society, and the spread of African-American culture which followed the upheavals of the Civil War. Conway also documents what she calls the "mountain crossroads" by which African-American banjo traditions spread in rural contexts.

Chapters four and five deal with the history of the instrument itself, and the historical development and geographical distribution of variants of the instrument, its tuning methods and its playing techniques. Conway successfully integrates her observations on the physical development of the instrument with her concern for the cultural history of the banjo as it passed from one cultural context to another. Except for in a very few places, she does not yield to the temptation to become overly concerned with organological minutiae unrelated to her larger theme. The fifth chapter, dealing with tunings and playing methods, contains some helpful illustrative transcriptions, sometimes with tablature, as well as tables of tunings. It is here that I feel she occasionally drifts into discussions which become excessively detail-oriented, and which anyone but a banjo player would probably skip over. A historically-minded banjo player might, however, find this section invaluable.

The two final chapters, six and seven, delve into an analysis of the songs of the African-American banjo tradition as sung by Conway's teachers. Her selections of songs seem well chosen, and are not excessively lengthy. She also avoids excessive analysis of each example, making these chapters much more readable than much folklore scholarship. Her training as a folklorist shows in her highly formalistic analysis of the song texts and her division of some of Dink Roberts' songs into motif-based categories.

The conclusion does an excellent job of summarizing the conclusions which Conway has made regarding the history of African-American based folk banjo traditions, and which she has supported with extensive historical documentation through the preceding chapters. Conway includes an epilogue in which she returns in a highly personal way to a discussion of the people who contributed to her understanding of banjo music. She touchingly recollects the deaths of her three mentors, reminding us that, though she has relied in large part on the mute evidence of historical documents, her history is about the understanding of fundamentally human events.

The book is on the whole superbly organized, and preserves its thematic integrity much better than many academic books by never wandering too far from its central theme. One of the techniques by which Conway ensures that the book will be tightly organized is to clearly define the scope of the chapters, and to subdivide the chapters into sections with clear headings whose relationships to the central theme of the chapter are also clear. Unfortunately, the least organized section is, in my opinion, the introduction—it is certainly unusual to have one which is longer than any other section of the book. The introduction is written in a highly conversational tone, and Conway makes no attempt to remove herself from the chapter, making it very readable. In it she not only discusses the topic, method and scope of her book, but introduces many of the people and themes she will be discussing in greater detail later on. I believe that the technique of using an easy to read and enjoyable narrative to introduce the main people and themes which will be the core of the book can be a very useful one. However, this introduction is simply too long, and much of the information it contains could be more effectively integrated into other sections of the book. The first chapter, for example, is only twenty-seven pages long, and much of the material presented in the introduction, especially that related to the African-American folk banjo performers, could have been neatly integrated into it.

In conclusion, Cecelia Conway's *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia* is very readable, but Conway does not achieve this clarity of style at the expense of scholarship. Her writing style compliments the historic-geographic method of investigation which she uses here very effectively, and the book is richly illustrated with relevant examples. Conway's use of contemporary accounts and historical scholarship to support her hypotheses and conclusions gives this book a solidity and grounding which much modern ethnomusicological literature lacks. Her organological and musicological analysis of the history of the banjo is detailed without



being excessively mired in detail, and is always relevant to the main theme of the book. The only significant problem I have found with this book is the comparatively poor integration of the introduction with the otherwise well-organized body of the book. Hopefully a second edition of this book will show a restructuring of the introduction, perhaps into a short introduction and a new chapter. As it stands, however, it is readable and informative. The appendix is very interesting, providing an index to published accounts containing a reference to banjos prior to 1860, and I would welcome an expanded section of appendices describing more of the historical data on which Conway has based her book in future editions.

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