

# BOOK NOTES

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**Crowdy, Denis.** *Hearing the Future: The Music and Magic of the Sanguma Band.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016. xiii, 183 pp., chronology, photos, music transcriptions, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-0-8248-5156-9.

Denis Crowdy's *Hearing the Future* is the story of the Sanguma band, a jazz-rock fusion group that formed in late 1970s Papua New Guinea. At once a history of the band and a detailed commentary on that history, the book considers Sanguma's music as an expression of the political idealism that characterized the Papua New Guinean independence era. Drawing on Crowdy's own creative fusion of historical sources—including journalism, interviews, photos, advertisements, and recorded musical performances—*Hearing the Future* sets out to answer a provocative question: “What can we learn about postcolonial history, culture, and processes of change by analyzing the differences between how people have imagined their nation might sound and how it actually comes to sound?” (p. 1).

The book begins with an introduction to some of the thinkers whose political philosophies animated the independence era: those like Barnard Narokobi, whose concept of a “Melanesian Way” envisioned a Papua New Guinea that would honour local Indigenous and ancestral practices, even as it sought to establish itself as a united and modern independent nation (pp. 16–17). Figures like Narokobi, Crowdy shows, shaped the institutions (and, indeed, the constitution) of the young state, and their ideas, in turn, inspired many local cultural producers to begin exploring concepts of tradition and modernity in their work. Formed in 1977, during precisely this time of intellectual and constitutional creativity, Crowdy argues that the Sanguma band's careful juxtaposition of traditional and modern influences can be heard as a deliberate expression of Narokobi's political ideals—as a “Musical Melanesian Way” (ibid.).

Crowdy writes of Sanguma's early days at the state-sponsored Creative Arts Center (CAC), where members began playing together in a student rock ensemble. Concerned with a perceived “cultural grey-out” taking place in Papua New Guinea, and unsatisfied with creating simple, second-rate imitations of western forms, music faculty at the CAC actively encouraged students to experiment with traditional instruments and musical concepts to create a unique, home-grown style. The result was a hard-grooving fusion of jazz, rock, and traditional music that became known as PNG Contemporary,

and before long the ensemble—now known as the Sanguma band—began to perform the new genre for domestic and international audiences.

Sanguma enjoyed significant local and international success over the next decade, but by the late 1980s it was clear that “PNG music was heading elsewhere, as were the taste preferences of most young Papua New Guineans” (p. 61). Audiences at home were more interested in *lokal rok* and stringband music, and touring was difficult without the extensive commercial and industrial machinery that would later come to support world music acts. Unable to balance the growing demands of “international success ... and the band’s need to remain grounded musically in PNG tradition” (p. 63), Sanguma folded in 1988.

Crowdy analyses many of Sanguma’s recorded performances from this period, helping readers and listeners to connect the band’s “ethos” to its musical “style” (p. 94). In a detailed assessment that includes numerous transcriptions, the author identifies several techniques that characterize Sanguma’s compositional approach and examines their relationships to traditional PNG and jazz-rock musical concepts. Drawing on the scholarship of Kevin Fellezs (2011) and Isobel Armstrong (2000), Crowdy argues that Sanguma’s use of textural and timbral juxtaposition and layering creates a sound that, despite being labelled “fusion,” is perhaps best heard as “musical dialectic, with genres in tension and discussion rather than the blending implied by the term” (p. 105). It is largely this dialectical relationship between the various modern and traditional elements in Sanguma’s music that Crowdy says *sounds* the ideals of the independence era.

Sanguma re-formed for a time in the mid-1990s, and Crowdy describes the band’s experiences of exploitation and appropriation in the “world music era” (p. 113), linking them to the increasing influence of neoliberal capitalism in PNG. As state institutions shifted to prioritize economic interests, the local music industry likewise became principally a commercial domain, and musicians lost creative and financial control of their music. Today, “it is clear,” Crowdy writes, “that commerce has played a forthright role in sounding the nation” (p. 145). While PNG popular music is “infused with subtler expressions and features of Melanesian-ness” (p. 140), Crowdy makes a strong argument “to situate the nature of commodification in PNG as constraining the potential for human flourishing through music” (p. 156).

*Hearing the Future* extends critical discourses on the world music industry and the role of music in nation-making, and it is an excellent example of musicological analysis used in support of a complex argument. The book will be of interest to anyone who studies Melanesian music, and its lessons there are also quite timely: as the movement for West Papuan independence gains momentum in the region and around the world, supportive Melanesian musicians like Ronny Kareni and Airileke Ingram are once again drawing

on traditional music to help consolidate a concept of regional identity. It is interesting to reflect on Sanguma's history as another group of young Melanesian musicians gathers, this time to sound an idea of the future for West Papua.

AARON PETTIGREW

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**León, Javier F. and Helena Simonett, eds.** *A Latin American Music Reader: Views from the South*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016. xi, 449 pp., contributors, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-0-252-08167-5. ISBN 978-0-252-09843-7 (ebook).

This ambitious selection of seventeen translated works by local Latin American and Caribbean scholars sets out to represent native “views from the south.” Editors Javier F. León and Helena Simonett seek to challenge condescending attitudes in Anglo-American academia towards scholars based in Latin America and the Caribbean. The book has three sections: (1) Academic Lineages, Disciplinary Canons, and Historiographies; (2) Popular Music, Style, and the Social Construction of Genre; and (3) Alternate Genealogies, Marginal Ontologies, and Applied Ethnomusicology. Helena Simonett and Michael Marcuzzi contextualize the tome with one of the book's greatest contributions: an exhaustive overview of music scholarship in the region. They identify multiple influences, commonalities, and differences throughout the early and mid-twentieth century: from initial nationalistic academic reactions to colonial oppression to a more contemporary approach to music research.

Part One continues the introductory examination. Contributors tackle common issues in Latin American academia from different perspectives. They discuss dialogue and coexistence between diverse forms of knowledge in a region where some knowledge has been ignored owing to colonial influence (Romero); the potential of academic music disciplines to affect people's perception of their own music (Miñana Blasco); and awareness of local terminology as a means of preventing neglect or misrepresentation of local forms of music making (González). Mendívil explores “truth” as a combination of collective memory and theory, while respecting and including the different

positionalities and beliefs that construct this “truth”; Vera analyses music history as a biased political construct; and Santamaría-Delgado examines the use of hybrid methodologies to make music research more inclusive of diverse knowledge.

Reflections on interactions between music disciplines weave through this section and reveal a rather categorical approach to the study of music. Some authors also consciously exclude works by foreign scholars on Latin American topics. For example, Romero considers that foreign scholars reflect the academic interests of their countries, but references South American scholars working abroad. It would be interesting to identify differences between the scholarly obligations and agendas of researchers of different origins and affiliations with an interest in Latin America. Are they so different?

Part Two examines genre, an early fascination in Latin American scholarship. The space dedicated to these reflections demonstrates a lingering preoccupation with enquiries about music’s origins, historical development, influences, and local particularities. Contributions here showcase some of the changes in approaches to genre in contemporary music studies. They discuss the need to look beyond linear histories and origins, focusing on the possibilities recording technology affords music research (López-Cano); the limitations of technology, as recordings omit some aspects of music and generate academic challenges (Carlos Sandroni); the role of genre in changing national imaginaries and contemporary music practices (Torres Alvarado); and the building of a new sense of tradition and musical/historical continuity along with a new idea of “nation” (Díaz). The issue of appropriation when constructing a music genre (Sánchez Fuarros), and the interaction of genre and social constructions, such as gender (Savelli Gomes and Cruz Mello), are also examined.

All of the contributors agree that a more reflexive and contextualized study of genre is needed, particularly considering the ways that music can contribute to debunking myths of authenticity. Still, even here, historical and factual accounts predominate instead of interpretative and analytical examinations of contemporary music life, an indication, perhaps, of an enduring preference for writing about origins, recording the past, and categorizing music knowledge within fixed research frameworks.

León introduces Part Three with a discussion about how elites have enshrined certain traditional practices as “of the nation” while marginalizing indigenous others. This enshrinement of colonial values is proving very difficult to eradicate from public discourse, national imaginaries, and even scholarship. This section exemplifies tensions between the desire to challenge imposed elitist and colonial cultural hierarchies and the struggle to avoid academic tropes informed by these same paradigms and assumptions. Contributors here focus on relationships between indigenous actors and the broader Latin American population. They discuss how indigenous perspectives in music can contribute

to challenging cultural hierarchies (Camacho Díaz); the tensions between romantic notions of musical purity and current indigenous political needs (Martínez Ulloa); the possibilities of “translating” culture and thereby forging equal partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous music actors (Lühning); the influence of public institutions and applied ethnomusicology on flawed representations of indigeneity (Alonso Bolaños); and, finally, the role of the white cultural elite in creating ideas of nation, and the inequalities between musical appropriation by elites and marginalized populations (Carvalho). The focus on indigenous perspectives by non-indigenous scholars is curious, as is the reluctance to study beyond indigeneity. There is a need in contemporary Latin American scholarship to examine the perspectives of the marginalized, but also of the middle and upper classes if we are to understand the whole contemporary social spectrum. Moreover, restricting theoretical frameworks to categorizations, definitions, and rules, does not mark a departure from music studies that establish hierarchies in academic work.

There is much excellent material known only to Spanish and Portuguese-speaking scholars, and this book attempts to bridge the linguistic divide and challenges the dismissal of native Latin American scholarship. It is exciting to see contributors drawing on a bibliography of mixed-language local and international publications, going beyond sources known and re-circulated in the region, and incorporating interstitial perspectives. This also differentiates it from a similar title published the same year: *Made in Latin America. Studies in Popular Music*. Edited by C. Spencer and J. Mendívil, this collection of new essays uses “music scenes” to frame examinations of class, gender, social imaginaries, and identity in Latin America, generating theory from the South.

Overall, this is a good resource for academic and non-specialized readers interested in discussions of Latin American topics previously only available in Spanish or Portuguese. However, it is surprising that only four out of seventeen essays are by women, a misrepresentation of contemporary Latin American scholarship. I am confident that this book will spark discussion among foreign and local scholars interested in Latin America about the urgency to expand scholarly bibliographies beyond a single academic school, as well as the need to break away from postcolonial models of scholarship by expanding the research topics and discourses inherited from them.

FIORELLA MONTERO-DIAZ

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**Sharp, Daniel B. *Between Nostalgia and Apocalypse: Popular Music and the Staging of Brazil*.** Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2014. xxiii, 159 pp., lyrics, photographs, website. ISBN 9780819575029.

When I picked up *Between Nostalgia and Apocalypse: Popular Music and the Staging of Brazil* by Daniel Sharp, I did not expect that it would uncover the long-term consequences of folklore and ethnomusicology on communities that have been the repeated objects of study over the last century. Yet, as I read through Sharp's account of Samba de Coco Raízes and Cordel do Fogo Encantado, two groups with different approaches to tradition from the interior town of Arcoverde in the northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco, what emerged was a revealing picture of the lasting effects of studying traditional, vernacular music as intangible heritage. This book manages to address the problem of nearly eighty years of ethnographic over-saturation, as it were, resulting in a compelling account of how we, as scholars, negotiate our relationships to the communities we study.

The book provides a meta-critique of folklore and ethnomusicology. Of all of ethnomusicology's sister disciplines, folklore has significant populist appeal and the potential to reach outwards to shape the communities we study. Some of our field's most treasured public resources provide communities a framework for attaching institutional value to musical traditions that do not fit neatly into notions of modernity. However, the fact remains that some communities have received outsized attention (e.g., New Orleans, Havana, the Brazilian Northeast) by folklorists, often due to their contributions to national vernacular music traditions and imaginaries. This book shows how too much attention from well-meaning ethnomusicologists, folklorists, museum curators, and documentary filmmakers can result in self-consciousness on the part of musicians who take up the mantle of continuing a musical tradition deemed important by folklorists.

The scholarly overcrowding of a region rich in traditional culture is palpable in Sharp's text. From the first pages, he introduces Dona Senhorina Freire Barbosa, a musician who appeared in Brazilian musicologist Mário de Andrade's 1938 field recordings as part of the Estado Novo's project to define Getúlio Vargas's populist vision of Brazil. The scene Sharp paints includes contemporary ethnomusicologists (Carlos Sandroni and Christina Barbosa) as well as a literary scholar invested in the region (Micheline Verunschek). Sandroni sought to retrace Andrade's mission to record regional musics, and was so pleased to find one of Andrade's original subjects that he filmed Dona Senhorina listening to her 1938 recording for the first time. By expanding the book's field of vision to include the scholars, both past and present, who form a fundamental part of how communities define themselves, Sharp does something innovative that carries throughout the rest of the book. As he describes the conflicts and victories of the musicians in his study, he remains focused on the role that interested outsiders play in the continuation of these traditions. This includes actions by

the municipal government, television networks, concert promoters, and, of course, the other scholars invested in the region. While many ethnomusicologists have the experience of meeting other scholars during the course of fieldwork, it is rare for other scholars to animate the pages of an ethnography as social actors themselves, situating the music within a social milieu of preservation and research. It is much more typical to see these overlapping scholarly projects in citation and in the acknowledgements. In the first printing of the text, Sharp does not include an Acknowledgements section; however, it is evident that his ethnographic engagement with other scholars was a crucial part of his process.

Sharp did not seek out musical instruction from the master musicians in the community. He explains that they were used to receiving fans and journalists for a week or two, and they were unsure as to whether or not those who learned their music would take advantage of them. Since the bulk of his research occurred over the course of a year, he adapted to an environment where claims of ethnography and folklore regularly circulated. Thus, he “chose to adopt a posture closer to that of a tourist or a long-form journalist than to that of an apprenticing musician, because the complications of musical apprenticeships were part and parcel of [his] object of study” (p. xviii). Since he was but one ethnographer among many in Arcoverde, his posture gave him more access and trust among the musicians in his study. It is a compelling argument for adjusting ethnomusicological methods and loosening the strictures of how scholars view the intellectual contributions gained from long-form journalism.

Sharp organizes his text into two main parts divided roughly between chapters concerned with the past and those that have a more present orientation. Time is also hailed in the title of the text, with nostalgia being an important organizing idea for Sharp’s analysis. Even when he writes about the more recent experiences of the musicians in his study, the self-consciousness around nostalgia, time, and the past weigh heavily on their words. One of the *samba de coco* musicians claims that she does not want to talk about the past, then waxes poetically about “the good old days” (p. 47). Towards the end of the book, Lirinha, the lead singer for the rock group Cordel do Fogo Encantado, explains his ambivalent relationship to the notion of *resgate*, or cultural rescue and revival, declaring, “The topic of *resgate*, for us, was the principal point to be argued, to be reinvented, to be thought about ... *Resgate* is a theme that has to be touched upon, I believe, because when you touch upon it, you end up branching out beyond music and Arcoverde to the entire region” (pp. 128–9).

In addition to nostalgia, Sharp also dedicates considerable space to a secondary performative impulse—the apocalyptic avant-garde rock aesthetic performed by Cordel do Fogo Encantado. The group’s music and concerts were often informed by Antonin Artaud’s “theatre of cruelty,” while also being cast against the thriving *mangue beat* scene from Recife, Pernambuco’s capital city. In contrast to the iconic mangroves in Recife, Arcoverde is in the arid backlands

of the state. As Sharp argues, Cordel's approach was often grouped in with the "new beats" scene coming from Recife even as the musical approach differed considerably. Towards the end of the book, Sharp explains how he joined Cordel's tour of the Northeast and details the lived reality of a once revolutionary group at the end of its run, just before it broke up.

Amidst the wealth of ethnographic data are some compelling readings of performances and recordings of the groups at the centre of this study. The book features detailed translations of lyrics as well as photographs from live performances and festivals. There is also an accompanying website ([www.stagingbrazil.com](http://www.stagingbrazil.com)) with footage from performances discussed in the book. It is surprising that the website is not advertised more clearly in the text of the book itself, considering the richness of materials available. This is a minor quibble with an otherwise excellent text. *Between Nostalgia and Apocalypse* is impressive and should resonate among regional specialists as well as anyone interested in the consequences of ethnomusicology in the arenas of public investment and intangible heritage. It is a deeply engaging account of how traditional music takes part in defining a region and country.

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**Spiller, Henry.** *Javaphilia: American Love Affairs with Javanese Music and Dance*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. vii, 267 pp., appendixes, notes, references, index. ISBN 978-0-8248-4094-5.

Henry Spiller's *Javaphilia* is an account of four North Americans who were involved with Javanese arts during the twentieth century. However, Spiller goes beyond providing biographies; he attempts to explain each person's connections to Java and digs deep to find possible reasons for them being drawn to this particular island. He also analyses the ways in which they represented (or in many cases, he argues, misrepresented) Java to their audiences.

In Chapter One, Spiller sets the scene by describing Javanese cultural representations at two world expositions: the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and Expo '86 in Vancouver. He explains how the orientalist depictions of exoticism and the emphasis on gamelan and dance performed by "gentle childlike creatures" (p. 6) in an idyllic village setting at the earlier expo became central images of Java in the minds of Americans. Such imagery was later harnessed and utilized by his four main characters. The following four chapters are each devoted to one of these "Javaphiles." Canadian-born Éva Gauthier (1885–1958), a singer and dancer, alleged that she studied gamelan, dance, and costumery as the Sultan's guest during a visit to Solo, Central Java. However, Spiller points out many inaccuracies in both accounts



of her time in Indonesia and in her performances in the United States. He notes that she rarely acknowledged the assistance she had received from Javanese and from other foreigners in Java.

Hubert Stowitts (1892–1953), the second Javaphile, was a dancer, painter, and choreographer who studied dance in Yogya and Solo. He also painted portraits of princes and dancers there. Spiller links Stowitts' homosexuality to his attraction to male prowess in Javanese culture, where a man is respected rather than mocked for being a dancer, but points out that Stowitts' own ideas about the male body held strong. Spiller suggests that Stowitts was drawn to the exoticism of Java "as a strategy for coping with [his] own sense of otherness" (p. 122), since living as a homosexual in the United States during his era would have put him in a social position of nonconformity. Stowitts found parallels between his own values and those he perceived in Javanese dance, thus linking himself to the exotic and using his work on Java, which later consisted of lecture-demonstrations, to promote his own version of masculinity.

The next Javaphile, Mantle Hood (1918–2005), is well known to ethnomusicologists. However, Spiller provides information in Hood's biography that goes beyond his contributions to the field of ethnomusicology by focusing on Hood as a person and a Javaphile. He describes the varied jobs that Hood held before he became interested in Java, and suggests that his keen interest in spirituality may have originally drawn him there. For many readers, Hood will be the most significant of the Javaphiles described here, as he pioneered practices that have become common today, such as teaching gamelan in universities.

The composer Lou Harrison (1917–2003) is Spiller's final Javaphile. Unlike the previous figures, Harrison visited Java late in his career, after he had spent years composing for gamelan in the United States and studying with American-based Indonesian teachers. According to Spiller, Harrison was drawn to gamelan music as "a maverick stance against the convention of mainstream composition and society" (p. 153). Spiller analyses several of Harrison's compositions and suggests that Harrison tended to see what he liked in gamelan music and to ignore or adapt elements that didn't fit with his ideas. For example, he retuned sets of gamelan instruments to just intonation and employed a western-style compositional process where he was named as the sole composer, thereby taking credit for elements of the music that were created by the musicians during performance.

Spiller argues that these four Javaphiles utilized orientalist ideas of spiritual power, mystery, and exoticism, and cultivated "slight mistranslations [of] bits and pieces of Javanese culture" (p. 184) to enhance the popularity of their work and reputations. The lack of a significant Javanese diaspora in the United States and the limited ties between Indonesia and America enabled them to successfully promote themselves as experts on Java within their own milieu. Spiller skirts around the complex issue of authenticity and leaves it unclear (though maybe it

is impossible to say) to what extent the four Javaphiles were aware of the limits of their knowledge of Java and the inevitable influence of their own pre-Java ideas and values on their work.

In reviewing his personal encounter with Java, Spiller invites readers to question their own relationship with music and arts from other cultures. He controversially suggests that such an interest may emerge from perceived inadequacies in one's own music, a viewpoint that is interesting to consider. Although he explains that different conventions for gamelan have developed in the United States and Canada to those in Java, Spiller argues that today's foreign gamelan players continue on the same trajectory as those he describes, "nurtured by intrepid Javaphiles over the course of the twentieth century" (p. 200). He explains that, like the historical Javaphiles, contemporary American players find fulfilment by using gamelan in their compositions or playing for pleasure. I would argue that while some aspects of foreign engagement with gamelan remain the same, such as studying in Java before returning home to teach and perform gamelan, the position of gamelan in western society has developed significantly since the eras of the Javaphiles described. It is no longer always the outsider option, and in ethnomusicology departments it is one of the most common musical genres taught.

*Javaphilia* is significant among works on Javanese performing arts for bringing together four apparently disconnected foreign pioneers who devoted their lives to Javanese arts. Spiller combines biography with analysis to create an appealing and highly readable work that will not only be of interest to readers involved with gamelan performance and study, but also to ethnomusicologists in the wider field, who may consider how similar patterns of cultural contact and portrayal have taken place in their own areas.

RACHEL HAND

## CONTRIBUTORS

**RACHEL HAND** completed her PhD in Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore in 2017. Her dissertation examines knowledge transmission, heredity, and education in Javanese gamelan music, *wayang*, and traditional dance from the 1920s to the 2010s. She has presented papers on her research at several international conferences.

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