

Pacific Review of ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

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Zakir

Synergy and Surrealstate: The Orderly Disorder of Free Improvisation

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From the Editors

The *PRE* has always been open to submissions from scholars of any discipline whose work demonstrates original research that bears relevance to the field of ethnomusicology. Through the years the journal has drawn submissions from across the United States and around the World. Annually, the *PRE* receives more submissions than can be published and, to broaden the scope of the research presented, has generously reserved up to thirty percent of the publication for outside contributors. This year has been no different in terms of the demographics of the submissions. However, for the first time in the journal's seventeen-year history, this volume is comprised entirely of the work of our colleagues at the Department of Ethnomusicology at UCLA. Since their submissions to this journal, several have moved on to their professional careers. It is with great *PRE* pride that we present their early work here.

In this volume we are also extremely proud to present the Ki Mantle Hood Award winning papers from Heidi Feldman and Charles Sharp presented at the SEMSCC meetings in 1998 and 1999 respectively. The *PRE* has had a long-standing agreement with SEMSCC to review for publication, the annual award winning paper. Since submission is voluntary, the *PRE* depends upon the award-winning author's desire to have the paper published. For their generosity, we would like to acknowledge and thank Heidi and Charles.

Finally, acknowledging the seventeenth anniversary of the *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology*, this volume concludes with a 17 Year Index of Authors and Titles compiled by the Editor in Chief.

With that said, please enjoy the tenth volume of the *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology*.

– *The Editors*

Synergy and Surrealestate: The Orderly Disorder of Free Improvisation

Dr. David Borgo

This kind of thing happens in improvisation. Two things running concurrently in haphazard fashion suddenly synchronize autonomously and sling you *forcibly* into a new phase.

—Cornelius Cardew (1971:xvii)

Buckminster Fuller describes synergy as the behavior of whole systems unpredicted by the behavior of their parts taken separately. Adopting this general orientation, the theoretical physicist Hermann Haken (1987) has introduced the concept of synergetics to name a new unifying trend in science.¹ The basic goal of synergetics is to explore the general ideas, laws, and principles of self-organization across various fields of human knowledge, from the natural sciences to the humanities. The world as we know it has seemingly come into being and developed through an endless chain of self-organizing processes, from the formation of galaxies and stars to the development of biological and social structures. A synergetic style of thinking and inquiry is beginning to infuse ever wider fields of human knowledge.

Synergy is a common goal and a cherished activity of musical improvisers as well. The dynamic and synergetic qualities of improvisation, however, have proven slippery for many in the music academy.² In the present work I will compare certain aspects of the modeling approaches to the natural world currently of interest in synergetics and chaos research to the process of performance, listening, and reflexive interpretation explored in musical free improvisation.³ This article is informed by my experience participating in regular free improvisation sessions with the Los Angeles-based group Surrealestate since late 1995 and includes an analysis of the synergetic qualities of an extended group improvisation (also heard on the accompanying compact disc).

Surrealestate

Surrealestate formed at UCLA in late 1995 as a number of interested musicians coalesced to form a varied, flexible, yet cohesive group. We maintain an egalitarian organization, although saxophonist Robert

Reigle has often emerged as the principal organizer, coordinator, motivator, and *de facto* leader of our playing sessions and performances. The personnel and the musical direction of the group have changed considerably over the years. Several players, including myself, came to the group from primarily jazz backgrounds, while others have experiences with Western classical music and composition, American popular musics, and various non-Western musics (particularly Hindustani, Latin American, East Asian, and Balkan musics).

These diverse backgrounds have proven to be both an asset and a liability for the group. The group's eclectic nature has made for some very interesting combinations of players, instruments, styles, and techniques, but each individual has had to confront the option of maintaining, abandoning, or reconciling his or her tradition and experience while participating in this collective and spontaneous form of music making.⁴

The group adopted the name Surrealestate after a concert we gave at the Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles on October 19, 1996, titled "Surrealism in Music." The concert was presented in connection with an exhibit of Rene Magritte's surrealist paintings. That concert, our first real gig, brought together in nascent form many of the musical strands that have continued to be explored by the group to this day. During the course of the hour-long performance, Surrealestate performed compositions by members of the group involving standard, graphical, and conceptual designs; improvised along with a New York City poet (Steven Koenig) via a long-distance telephone connection; interacted with a recording of an improvised version of a composed work (Robert Reigle's "The Marriage of Heaven and Earth" with a segue into the fifth movement of "Pfhath" by Giacinto Scelsi); and freely improvised as a large ensemble, ten musicians strong, actually surrounding the audience in physical space. During the entire performance, a recording of Erik Satie's "Vexations" was playing at a barely audible level in the background.

Since that time, Surrealestate has given several other notable concerts at UCLA including an interpretation of Ornette Coleman's seminal 1960 *Free Jazz* recording, a soliloquy to Charles Ives entitled "ImprovIves," and a live interaction with painters called "Spontaneous Combustion of Music and Art." Regardless of whether or not there was an upcoming performance, the group meets regularly on a weekly basis for playing sessions or, less frequently, to listen as a group to previously recorded performances or commercially available recordings of impro-

vised and composed music.

Surrealestate's playing sessions normally last for two to three hours with a 20 to 30 minute break at the midpoint. Stylistically, a typical session may involve extended periods of eastern-sounding drones and modality, African-derived rhythmic intensity, jazz-inspired harmonic exploration, or the more abstract textural and expressive approaches often associated with the European avant-garde. Within a single piece, Surrealestate may move freely between moments of extreme quietude and introspection to periods of unbridled exploration and near reckless abandon.

The first piece of a session is usually entirely freely improvised. This allows the musicians to enter the spirit of the performance without any imposed compositional schemes or conceptual handicaps. Often the only instruction, either overt or implied, is to listen first to the silence before beginning to play. After the free improvisation, the group might look over a sketch brought in by a member or establish a group conceptual design on the spot by soliciting individual suggestions. With a group whose participating members can occasionally range in the double digits, we have found that these schemes help maintain a direction and a coherence to our sessions and performances. Many of our most cherished musical moments, however, have been group free improvisations without a pre-established framework. Since this type of performance may best illuminate the spontaneous and synergetic qualities of the ensemble and the music, I have selected for analysis an extended improvisation featuring nine members of Surrealestate that was recorded for and released on the group's commercially-available CD.⁵

My analysis highlights ensemble transitions and the emergent musical form of the performance—qualities that are often valued (yet often difficult to achieve) in large ensemble improvised performance—and borrows the terminology set forth by Tom Nunn, a San Francisco-based improviser and scholar, in his 1998 book *Wisdom of the Impulse*. Despite the seeming openness of free improvisation to all sounds and musical practices, Nunn identifies several stylistic elements as typical of the practice (57):

- (1) the use of any tonal system and a free mix of tonal systems (modal, diatonic, chromatic, pantonal, atonal)
- (2) irregular rhythmic character and irregular phrase lengths that are oriented to physical gesture
- (3) compound "voice" texture, or multiple independent "voices"
- (4) multiple stylistic influences of different traditions

- (5) catalytic and cadential formal processes that function as cues
- (6) sectional nature, with each section defining a certain musical character or mood, and connected to the subsequent section via transition
- (7) responsive and quickly changing interaction among "voices" to create various shifting role relationships in real time

The individual musician works to establish, maintain, cadence, and begin anew musical "identities." Identities include traditional notions of melodic and rhythmic motives, but more often involve gestural identities of shape, articulation, timbre, or a combination of these and other elements. Each improviser then aims for what Nunn calls "gestural continuity/integrity" by linking together successive identity gestures according to the ongoing implications of the moment (53).⁶ In the course of performance, the individual improviser must work to relate individual identities to the group, establishing what Nunn refers to as "relational functions." Nunn describes seven primary relational functions (48-50):

- (1) solo - a single or dominant voice
- (2) support - the active underlayment to support other higher profile voices
- (3) ground - the static underlayment to support other higher profile voices
- (4) dialog - immediate interaction between/among players
- (5) catalyst - an action to stimulate change in the musical character
- (6) sound mass - a collective complex sound made up of a number of voices that are roughly equal in contribution
- (7) interpolation - the insertion or overlaying of utterly foreign material upon existing material wherein two (or more) independent musical characters coexist without affecting one another

Ensemble free improvisation is inherently segmental in form, involving sections usually articulating a particular musical character or a certain level of gestural continuity or integrity. Transitions between sections in a segmental form represent collective decision-making and are important formal aspects of free improvisation. Small-scale transitions continuously occur between linear functions and relational functions, but larger-scale transitions occur only when the ensemble flow comes to a complete and obvious consensus and may happen only a few

times within a performance (or not at all in shorter performances). Nunn enumerates seven types of transitions (51-53):

- (1) sudden/unexpected segue – an unprepared, immediate change with unexpected continuation
- (2) pseudo-cadential segue – an implied cadence with sudden and unexpected continuation
- (3) climactic segue – a peak moment that stimulates unexpected change and continuation
- (4) feature overlap – one feature of the antecedent section is sustained and becomes part of the consequent section
- (5) feature change – a gradual change of one feature that redirects the flow (usually subtly)
- (6) fragmentation – a gradual breaking up, or fragmenting, of the general texture and/or rhythm
- (7) internal cadence – a prepared cadence followed by a short silence then continuation with new material. (In addition to presenting a moment of resolution, an internal cadence can signal a moment of extreme unpredictability in the performance since there is always the possibility that it will become the final cadence of the improvisation.)

These relational functions and ensemble transitions provide a manageable outline of the process and interaction inherent in free improvisation, but they rarely occur individually in actual performances. As Nunn explains, “multiple processes typically occur at the same time, appear in hybrid combinations, change in some way, often quickly, and can be highly unpredictable how they occur and what relationship they have upon one another” (73).

While this enormous complexity may be viewed as productive—continually presenting fresh options and possibilities to the improvisers and novel experiences for the audience—the challenge in performance is often to avoid either simple cat-and-mouse type interactions or a state of unintentional group dissociation. In practice, once interesting identities and relational functions have been established (often a daunting task in itself), they are maintained for considerable stretches of time to avoid the potentially crippling state of oversaturation and indecision. Of course within the dynamic of group interaction, the option of not playing (best conceived of in terms of active or engaged silence) is always available to any player at any time.

Free improvisation certainly requires focused listening, quick

reflexes, and extreme sensitivity to the group flow, but it equally demands individual fortitude and tenacity not to be overwhelmed by the speed of interaction and the availability of musical options. Preunderstandings and a history of experiences with this practice necessarily and continually inform the production and reception of this music. The inevitable uncertainty of the practice, however, is welcomed and even revered by its practitioners and fans. Free improvisers intend for unintended things to happen. These exciting and unpredictable moments are integrated into the fabric of the music and the experience of listening and participating. In performance, free improvisers aim to reach a critical state of self-organization—not through individual or collective *effort* but through collective *experience*—that allows for unpredictable yet dynamically ordered and understandable occurrences.

“Contrafactum in the Spirit of Surrealestate”

Gustavo Aguilar – congas, percussion; David Borgo – tenor saxophone; Roman Cho – lap-top steel guitar; Andy Connell – soprano saxophone; Jonathon Grasse – electric guitar; Kaye Lubach – tabla; David Martinelli – drum set; Brana Mijatovic – drum set; Robert Reigle – tenor saxophone.

Recorded December 17, 1998 in Popper Theater, Schoenberg Hall, UCLA (Listening Example #1 on CD)

This ensemble free improvisation was performed last in a series of improvised “contrafactum”—improvisations done in the style of, and immediately after hearing, selected brief musical recordings. After emulating sound sources as diverse as John Sheppard, Cecil Taylor, and Giacinto Scelsi, as well as Weddell seals, Korean shamans, and New Guinean flutes, Robert Reigle instructed the group to begin with a complete minute of silence and then improvise “in the style of Surrealestate.”

The resulting thirteen-plus minutes of improvisation by a nine person ensemble includes far too many details and subtle interactions to describe in full. Therefore, I will focus attention on the overall segmental form that emerges from the improvisation process and a few specific transitional moments within the ensemble. The following chart provides a temporal reduction of important structural moments and pronounced examples of ensemble transition.

Time Prominent Ensemble Features and Transitional Moments

0:00	coloristic percussion, guitar drone, and saxophone polymodal lines
1:40	texture thickens and intensifies
3:00	climatic segue (with continuation and intensification)
3:50	psuedo-cadential segue
4:00	strong internal cadence (with gradual decay)
4:40	conga and tabla dialog
5:30	various percussion sounds
6:00	high-register guitar figure joins
6:30	strong internal cadence (with high-register saxophone feature overlapping)
7:00	texture thickens and drone reinstated
8:00	intensification
8:30	fragmentation transition begins
9:00	intentional interpolation and sound mass
10:00	intensity begins to subside
10:40	feature change – return to prominent drone and relaxed modality
11:20	dissonance and loudness gradually increase
12:00	ascending passage begins
12:30	loudness stabilizes
12:50	tremolo effect
13:20	final cadence (with gradual decay)

The improvisation begins with a few splashes on the cymbals, some percussive figures on the congas and tablas, and brief melodic motives on the soprano. Jonathon enters with an electric guitar drone on the note concert E, which ends up becoming a musical “attractor” that frames both overtly and subtly the entire 13 minute performance. Andy skillfully adopts this note as his pedal point establishing a solo with ground relational function (following Nunn’s taxonomy). He then proceeds to play some “Eastern-sounding” lines (with strong allegiances to the polymodal style of jazz playing associated with John Coltrane) that emphasize the chromatic half-steps circling the drone pitch. After a short development, the two tenor sax players enter—David establishing a dialog with similar modally-inflected lines, and Robert providing support emphasizing the drone pitch—and the ensemble energy level increases slightly. Brana briefly taps out a pulse on her ride cymbal

making the jazz connections even more apparent. By this time the guitar drone has taken on the characteristics of an Indian tamboura, articulating an arpeggio of tonic and dominant notes.

The "multiple stylistic influences" become more apparent as David briefly takes the melodic reins from Andy, emphasizing some yodel-type effects and pitch bends. Kaye's rapid and undulating tabla figures expand the "compound voice texture" and provide a dramatic frame for this exploration. Just as David is bending a pitch gradually upwards from the seventh scale degree to reach the tonic drone, Andy enters a half-step above the tonic and bends the pitch downwards on a collision trajectory. This strong cadential feeling appears poised to conclude with a peaceful resolution, but instead it changes character as the dissonance is extended beyond normal expectations and the intensity and dynamic level of the group as a unit intensifies.

A clear and collectively felt ensemble transition has taken place. Following Nunn's taxonomy, this transition is best described as a climactic segue involving a peak moment that stimulates unexpected change and continuation. The shift in mood and texture is not drastic, but is clearly a marked transition in the development of the ensemble improvisation.

The overall intensity continues to build and David careens upwards with some heavily vocalized phrases implying strong tonal associations. Roman emulates his glissando effects on the slide guitar. At the peak of his phrase, David reaches the flattened sixth scale degree and seems poised to resolve downwards to the dominant. However, Roman counters with a forceful phrase involving the notes F and Eb, denying the more obvious resolution in the "home key" of E. This acts as a deceptive resolution for the ensemble or what Nunn would classify as a pseudo-cadential segue; an implied cadence with a sudden and unexpected continuation.

Although Roman could have chosen to continue exploring distantly related tonal regions, instead he deftly resolves to the E tonic before it has disappeared from the listener's short term tonal memory. This final resolution becomes a clear internal cadence followed by new material.

The strong cadence is subtly buttressed by Kaye's rapid tabla strokes, which serve as a feature overlap. The dramatic texture change inspires Gustavo to enter on congas, which leads to an involved duo between himself and Kaye. The constant tabla figurations seem to provide a ground for the more pronounced conga articulations. The two

drummers gradually ritard their rhythms together until an implied cadence or pseudo-cadential transition is felt.

At this point, rather than reaching into his nearby box of small percussion for new sonic materials, Gustavo impulsively decides to rattle the entire box. During the rumbling of various shakers, bells, and idiophones (even a music stand situated nearby), Jonathon executes a melodic figure in the extreme high register of the guitar with rapid picking techniques. This leads to another strong internal cadence followed by both a feature overlap and new material.

Robert enters in the extreme upper register of the tenor, clearly referencing Jonathon's earlier expressive device. Roman reenters in the mid-range of the slide guitar, providing a decisive interpolation. The other saxophonists eventually enter and join Robert in his stratospheric explorations. However, David soon switches gears and produces a subdued drone pitch, in a sense taking over the role provided earlier by Jonathon's guitar. Several dramatic chokes on the high-hat cymbal and powerful tom-tom rolls also catch the listener's attention.

After a reasonable amount of time in this new textural area, Andy begins a strong fragmentation by playing dramatic and punctuated phrases on his alto. Robert maintains his piercing long tone for a time, which provides a feature overlap into the next section. This fragmentation transition, following Nunn's outline, is equally decisive even though it involves considerable overlap in place of clear resolution or strong cadence. The increased wind dynamic provokes a torrent of loud percussion responses and provocations. Andy's playing becomes increasingly vocal and appears to lead the ensemble further into dense, sound mass textures. Jonathon subtly switches the drone emphasis to B, or the dominant of E, further increasing the sense of musical tension.

Slowly, a relaxation of density and intensity is collectively felt. A few more subtle textures are able to emerge out of this denouement, including some elaborate guitar slides and a few saxophone multiphonics and pitch slurs. The drone pitch seems to reemerge (or did it ever leave us?) as the wind players begin exploring sustained sounds together. The guitarists provide more musical activity, albeit at soft dynamic levels, underneath the sustained winds.

While a final cadence at this point seems immanent, the group chooses to extend and build upon these cadential moments rather than letting the resolution come prematurely. A few subtle appearances of flattened sixth and major and minor thirds in the winds and strings help to keep the closing moments from sounding too static. Gradually

the ensemble dynamic increases and David begins an upwards gesture as Robert takes over the drone in the bottom register of his tenor. Andy provides a tremolo effect on the second and third scale degrees and the final group resolution on the open fifth with the delicate tinkling of bells offers a satisfying end to a synergetically powerful performance. Although this may not have been our most successful group improvisation to date, most of Surrealestate's members felt it was quite representative of the expressive range of the ensemble.

I asked Robert Reigle to describe his perceptions of both the individual and group improvising process. He expressed that "when I realize what I've started, more thoughts start to happen and I have to decide, O.K., in what direction am I going to take this? Am I going to think about it or am I going to try not to think about it anymore? But usually what happens then is I focus on whatever else is happening...and I try to make that my total focus and let my own playing be automatic...When the music is really happening, I as a player try not to think about it and let the music lead. Other times thoughts creep in. In an ideal situation the music would always take over."

Robert describes a general situation in which the first few seconds of an improvisation may be littered with a constant parade of thoughts formed in words, but soon concerted listening, the immediate response mechanisms of the intelligent body, and the feeling of the moment take over. He begins thinking in music rather than thinking conceptually. During the final moments of an improvisation Robert admitted that often thoughts in words creep back into his psyche: "There is definitely a continual parade of thoughts in my mind [but] I always trust the intuitive more than I trust the intellectual." Robert expressed that it is easier to use intellectual reflection and analysis to a more meaningful advantage after the fact. He believes that a successful performance should balance the predictable with the unpredictable, should have a give and take between leadership roles within the ensemble, and often a rapid pace of new musical ideas and events.

Although personal tastes can vary considerably, the primary criteria I have found that many free improvisers use to evaluate a performance are: (1) was there a felt sense of unity to the performance, not did everyone take the same journey, but did everyone have a sense of journeying together?; (2) were there moments of musical synergy or pronounced moments of ensemble togetherness and transition?; and finally, (3) was a broad, interesting, or novel musical palette arrived at and explored? All three of these qualities do not have to be present for

a performance to be judged successful. If a sense of journeying together is profoundly felt, a performance without strong transitions or no more than a single musical idea may be considered effective. Equally, at times, a novel or exciting musical palette may be interesting enough on its own to make an improvisation enjoyable, even if pronounced transitions or lengthy stretches of felt unity were absent. While spontaneity is certainly savored in performances of musical free improvisation, it is the spontaneous appearance of surprising musical order or synergetic performance behavior that seems to delight most practitioners.

Orderly Disorder in Free Improvisation

All chaotic systems share certain dynamic traits. They are non-linear in their organization and rely on a nonequilibrium state to maintain their chaotic behavior. In other words, they are open to continual disturbances and energy influxes from outside the system. Chaotic systems also demonstrate extreme sensitivity to initial conditions and are dependent on the arrow of time described in classical thermodynamics, as we shall see shortly.

A musical free improvisation ensemble may also be described as an "open system" that takes in energy gradually from the enculturation, education, training, and experience of its members, and more immediately in the form of influences from the physical and psychological context of the performance (i.e., the acoustic space, the potential sonic materials, and the audience reaction and possible participation). A state of "nonequilibrium" is reached through the expectation by all present that music will be made and the specific mandate of free improvisation to deconstruct or recontextualize known or familiar musical properties.

Since free improvisation, at least in its idealized form, involves no preconceptions as to what may follow the initial performance gesture, the system naturally displays an extreme sensitivity to its initial state. Even a small change in the first performance gesture—a shift in dynamic level, attack, or articulation, etc.—can lead to a sudden divergence from the evolution of a system started with nearly identical initial conditions.⁸ In more poetic language, the slightest musical disturbance (the metaphorical flapping of a butterfly's wings) by any individual at any time may lead to completely unexpected performance outcomes. Unavoidable discrepancies or "noise" also creep into the com-

municative channels as a given performer's intended performance action is (mis)interpreted by others in the group. Intentional dissociation or unpredictable sonic outcomes also introduce randomness into the system.

The irreversible "arrow of time" of nonequilibrium thermodynamics is valid as well for free improvisation. Improvisers must continually operate in the moment. They may contextualize a gesture by themselves or others after the fact, but the real-time nature of the creative act does not allow for revision. Yet free improvisers must be continually aware that they are improvising both content and form. The most effective free improvisation performances involve decisive musical idea spaces and marked transitions that take place at moments of group consensus with an awareness of what has occurred and a conception of what may follow.

Thermodynamics researcher Ilya Prigogine, co-author of *Order Out of Chaos* (1984), has demonstrated how, in the energy- and entropy-rich environment of chaotic systems, dissipative structures may "self-organize" and propel a system into higher levels of complexity and order. Without violating the second law of thermodynamics, these systems operating far from equilibrium can experience a local entropy decrease. In musical free improvisation, individual musical identities are playfully explored and combined to form "relational functions" between the various voices in the ensemble. While the overall musical "entropy" of the system may continually increase, dissipative experiences of localized ordering can occur as relational functions are established, transformed, and abandoned by the ensemble when a collective consensus is perceived by the various participants.

Ensemble transitions may be analogous to the bifurcations exhibited in chaotic systems. The appearance of collectively perceived transitions, however, is never entirely predictable due to the extremely varied interactions and influences endemic to the practice. The exact behavior of the ensemble at moments of transition appears to be both locally unstable and in intriguing ways globally comprehensible. Just as in Prigogine's theory as the instability of the system paradoxically provides a source of order emerging from chaos at moments of bifurcation, at transitional moments in free improvisation, both the musical direction of the improvisation up to that point and the ensemble's collective experiences with improvisation strongly influence which musical path is pursued by the group after the "bifurcation."

By modeling the dynamics of chaotic systems using computer

algorithms, scientists have already discovered several types of “strange attractors” that, while inherently unpredictable and infinitely complex on the micro-level, display an ordered, self-similar design that is both surprising and aesthetically pleasing. As we have seen, the uncertainty of free improvisation appears tempered by common attractor types defined by relational functions and transitions. Free improvisers tend to favor “strange” musical attractors to those that rely on periodic cycles or predictable interactions. For example, if too many references to traditional musical idioms creep into a performance, many free improvisers will immediately begin to search for more uncharted and uncertain musical terrain.

The performance described above has several pronounced moments of climax, cadence, transition, and continuation (most notably from the *tutti* beginning, climaxing and transitioning to the percussion interlude, and returning to the *tutti* ending). While the performance moves through several structural changes and transitional moments, the modality implied by the drone pitch and the coherent and concerted development of the ensemble leave the listener with the impression of slowly uncovering a single musical idea. In conversation, Robert told me he often enjoys exploring musical ideas over lengthy stretches of time. He expressed, “I don’t necessarily think that every piece has to have more than one idea...if it is a rich sound then you can find all sorts of things in it. It gives your mind the freedom to build its own structures out of that.”

Self-similarity, a mainstay of fractals and the phase portraits that describe chaotic systems, may be observed within the practice of collective improvisation. Similar processes operate on different scales and structural similarities (e.g., dialog, fragmentation, catalysts, or feature changes can operate on many levels), between individual identities and larger relational functions or sectional forms. Scale-dependent listening in free improvisation, by both participants and audience, involves switching attention between these various levels of interaction; from the dramatic figure or gesture to the composite field. Robert’s comment above that a rich sound allows the mind to build its own structures clearly speaks to this attentive and directed listening. This music does not lack meaning (as its critics sometimes argue), but its meaning must be actively engaged and reengaged. In a musical setting where multiple ideas, textures, and layers of interaction are commonplace, listeners and participants must actively stitch together a composite, synergetic meaning rather than expect a preconceived struc-

ture to be presented to them.

Robert admits that "it is harder to sustain a musical idea over a long period of time with a[n] [improvising] group." He believes the fact that Surrealestate meets only once a week and for a relatively short time provides an impetus to favor *tutti* sections so everyone has a chance to play. He concedes that "it might not be satisfying to play for only ten minutes" during an entire session. With Surrealestate, Robert believes "we have a deep trust for each other... I never feel like the whole band is just noodling because they want to fill up the space." There may be less interesting moments or times when the ensemble seems to be, in his words, "just floating along," but Robert envisions these as preparatory periods of "working through something to get to a better place." For him, "the final intention is to have good music!"

While virtuosity of technique, density and intensity of sound, and speed and clarity of performer interactions are often important aspects of musical free improvisation, they are certainly not the only aesthetic ideals of engaged performers and listeners. In choosing to play together with no preconceived material or only the barest of organizational designs, Surrealestate performs not only improvised music in the formalist sense, but dynamic social relationships as well.

The Life(time) of a Free Improvisation Ensemble

The evolution of a complex dynamical system is not ruled by a Platonic king, constructed by a Cartesian architect, or forecast by a LaPlacean spirit, but grows much like a living organism.

—Klaus Mainzer (1994:271)

Is it possible to envision a free improvising ensemble as an aesthetic community that develops in a similar fashion to a living organism? Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures demonstrates how complex biochemical systems, operating far from equilibrium, can evolve "order out of chaos" at critical points of instability as energy continually flows through them. Chilean biologists and neuroscientists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1988, 1980) devised the theory of autopoiesis to expand this orientation into the realm of life. The same kinds of catalytic loops that Prigogine describes are central to the metabolism of a cell, the simplest known living system. Maturana and Varela devised their theory by modeling the self-bounded, self-generat-

ing, and self-perpetuating behavior of a living cell. Using computer techniques called cellular automata, they demonstrated that significance and complexity can arise in any system that is autonomous (having operational closure) and structurally coupled.

Structural coupling is Maturana and Varela's term for the history of interactions leading to the coordination and coevolution of autopoietic systems within a consensual domain. The range of interactions a living system can have with its environment defines its cognitive domain. From an autopoietic perspective, intelligence is manifest in the richness and flexibility of an organism's structural coupling. Maturana and Varela have also broadly reenvisioned communication, not as a transmission of information, but as a coordination of behavior that is determined not by any specific or external meaning but by the dynamics of structural coupling.

The theory of autopoiesis evolved from a general dissatisfaction among its creators with definitions of living systems which provided nothing more than a listing of features and functional attributes. This dissatisfaction mirrors in many ways my own discontent with formalist studies of individual improvisers and their musical syntax – descriptions of the product rather than the process of improvisation. Maturana and Varela's important move towards understanding communication not as information commerce but as a coordination of behavior within a consensual domain supports my concern with the collective behavior of an improvising ensemble and offers the possibility of envisioning that ensemble and its resultant music as a self-producing and self-regulating system.⁹

Fritjof Capra (1996:211-213), who frequently references Maturana and Varela's work, uses the model of a family system to illustrate this approach. A human family can be described both as a biological system defined by blood relationships and as a conceptual system defined by roles and relationships that depend on social, cultural, and historical conventions. A social autopoietic description would define this conceptual system as a network of conversations exhibiting inherent circularities that create self-amplifying feedback loops. In Capra's words, "The closure of the network results in a shared system of beliefs, explanations, and values—a context of meaning—that is continually sustained by further conversations" (212-213). Since this network of familial "conversations" takes place in the symbolic social domain, the boundary of the autopoietic system is not a physical one, but one of expectations, confidentiality, and loyalty.

While free improvisation is in one sense liberated from many idiomatic constrictions, social hierarchies, and externally-imposed constraints that may be located in other musics, for the practice to be meaningful and for something to emerge out of the union of musicians and musical/cultural backgrounds, an autopoietic boundary must develop. This is not a physical boundary, but one of trust, conviviality, expectations, and loyalty. This boundary remains dynamic and is continually maintained and renegotiated by the autopoietic network of musical and social interactions.

A specific example from the collective experiences of Surrealestate may help to demonstrate this point. During the Summer of 1998, a new musician was invited by two different members of Surrealestate to attend a playing session and "sit in" with the group; I will refer to this new musician as Paul. Paul is a musician with considerable background and experience in the modern jazz traditions. While drawn stylistically to a few of the more adventurous exponents of the jazz tradition, Paul has not listened to much free improvisation. After his first experience with Surrealestate he was excited to have found a group of talented musicians and exploratory improvisers and he continued to attend our weekly sessions. No discussion was ever taken up by Paul or any of the long-standing members of Surrealestate regarding joining the group on a full-time basis.

Despite Paul's considerable facility on his instruments and well-developed musical "ears," certain conflicts in terms of social and musical personalities seemed to arise within the group. After several months of playing sessions with Paul in attendance, Surrealestate met for a listening session that Paul could not attend due to schedule conflicts and an unplanned discussion turned to problems associated with Paul's participation in the group. Robert referred to this entire affair as "the most difficult and challenging episode in terms of interpersonal relationships" that the group has endured.

While it is difficult to present in any objective terms the issues that were discussed, I will attempt to list a few actions and attitudes that were felt by various members to be detrimental to the group's musical approach and even its very existence. In general, Paul's personality was felt to be too forceful or self-centered, which was reflected in his playing. For example, he would at times strongly express dissatisfaction with certain conceptual or composition schemes adopted by the group. During preparation for Surrealestate's tribute to Charles Ives, "ImprovIves," he did not understand many of our designs and accord-

ingly did not get into the spirit of the music or the performance. Several members commented that the only times the Ives repertoire was successful were occasions when Paul could not attend a playing session or if he sat out entirely on a performance. Others commented that his forceful personality was reflected in his penchant for taking extended "solos" that drew too much attention to himself rather than the collective processes of the group. Other members sensed a competitive edge to his playing when he would often take up the same idea that was just developed and try to "outdo" what had occurred rather than offering new insights or a fresh perspective on the music. Robert acutely summarized: "his participation was so different from everybody else's, but in a way that took away from the other people."

While in one sense free improvisation is extremely open to sound exploration of all types, Paul began bringing instruments to our session over which he had extremely limited control and a few members felt this to be disrespectful to the musical goals of the ensemble. At one session he also made derogatory remarks towards a female in the group and intentional belching noises during an improvisation, which everyone agreed after the fact were entirely inappropriate.

Several other Surrealestate members mentioned additional breaches of expectations and trust that seemed to upset the egalitarian social organization of the group. For example, Paul organized a performance for the group at a Los Angeles space but, without consent of the group, he advertised the performance under his own name rather than the group's collective identity. This was seen as an impertinent move on the part of a musician who had only been playing with the ensemble for a short time.

During our discussion at the listening session about Paul's musical playing and social behavior, several individuals were understandably reluctant to express accusations and blame in a musical and cultural setting that is inherently flexible and welcoming. But perhaps the final factor in collectively deciding to ask Paul to cease from attending playing sessions with Surrealestate was that his continued attendance seemed to be prompting other members of longer standing not to attend. In the final analysis, Paul's addition to the group was viewed as a potentially crippling and destructive force to its conviviality and longevity. Robert explained that "he wasn't able to participate in such a way that people felt the group could continue as it had."

Paul was disheartened by this news and he individually contacted each musician by phone to gain a more accurate picture of the per-

ceived problems with his participation. While this may have been genuinely motivated by a desire on his part to learn from his past behavior and receive musical and social feedback from the group's members, even this technique was perceived by many as a means of undermining the group's identity in a roundabout fashion.

Clearly the composition and well-being of a free improvising ensemble is not dictated solely by musical factors. With other musical practices that are organized more or less in a hierarchical manner—say traditional concert music—personality differences can often be managed in deference to the group leader, the authority of the musical score, or the professionalism of “getting the job done.” Free improvisation ensembles functioning as an autopoietic social system appear particularly susceptible to the full spectrum of so-called musical and extramusical influences on performance.

This example provides one illustration of how a free improvisation ensemble may be viewed as an autopoietic social organization that establishes dynamic codes of acceptable behavior and conduct through a network of conversations exhibiting inherent circularities and through continued structural coupling and self-amplifying feedback. Another emerging theory in evolutionary biology, symbiogenesis, may shed additional light on this orientation.

Rather than conceiving of evolution solely in terms of random mutations and competitive natural selection as Darwin proposed, several contemporary biologists are focusing on the cooperative and creative aspects of life that lead to the ever-increasing diversity and complexity inherent in all living systems. Capra (1996:227-28) explains:

The driving force of evolution, according to the emerging new theory, is to be found not in the chance events of random mutation, but in life's inherent tendency to create novelty, in the spontaneous emergence of increasing complexity and order... Our focus is shifting from evolution to coevolution—an ongoing dance that proceeds through a subtle interplay of competition and cooperation, creation and mutual adaptation.

Symbiogenesis, a theory barely 30 years old, looks beyond the divergence of species studied in conventional evolutionary theory to the formation of new composite entities through the symbiosis of formerly independent organisms. Symbiosis, the tendency of different organisms to live in close association with one another and often inside of one another, is a well-known phenomenon.¹⁰ In the words of Lynn

Margulis and Dorion Sagan (1986:15), "life did not take over the globe by combat, but by networking." Social Darwinism, an understandably maligned nineteenth-century intellectual stance, saw only competition in nature. With this new outlook on the continual cooperation and codependence of all living things, metaphorical forays from biology into the social sphere may be welcomed instead of feared.

Improvisation in jazz music has in the past often been construed in highly competitive terms. "Cutting sessions," familiar in swing and bebop circles, describe the practice of pitting soloist against soloist (often on like instruments) to determine a winner by swaying both the audience and the fellow musicians in attendance. The lineage of trumpet and piano "kings" from the first decades of jazz history is well known.

With free improvisation, harmonic intricacy, uniform rhythmic speed, and cyclical chorus structures are abandoned, making the idea of a "cutting session" obsolete. As soloist and accompanist roles become increasingly blurred, cooperation necessarily replaces competition as the primary performance objective.¹¹ With free improvisation, it may be useful to view the evolution of the individual musician and the collective ensemble in symbiogenetic terms. A single player exists within the larger entity, taking in resources and energy and offering in return additional grist for the improvisational mill, all in a delicate balancing act of attempting to collectively create a performance gestalt which transcends the input of its isolated parts. Free improvising ensembles, if they choose to stay together, tend to coevolve in terms of shared dynamics and aesthetics.

Conclusions

The "freedom" inherent in free improvisation is not an "anything goes" type of anarchy, but involves collective discovery in a communal environment and a mode of personal liberation made possible through cooperation and mutual respect. On a musical level, this freedom may involve disrupting traditional expectations of musical form and sound. On a social level, the egalitarian organization of ensemble free improvisation questions the traditional roles performed by composers, conductors, musicians, and even audiences. On an economic and political level, musical free improvisation challenges the dominant modes of production and consumption proffered in a mass market society. And on an

individual, cultural, and spiritual level, free improvisation is an expressive form that dramatizes the individual's struggle for identity and acceptance and broadens the spiritual efficacy of art in general.

While I firmly believe that in-depth social, political, and cultural analysis are beneficial to the study of improvisation, the diverse and dispersed aspects of the contemporary free improvisation community challenge any localized and monolithic cultural investigations. Moving in this direction, I have looked to the contemporary paradigm shifts in the natural and social sciences and the current cultural and historical moment that have allowed for new visions of order and disorder to emerge across many academic disciplines and artistic pursuits.

Contemporary scientists working in a broad array of fields are increasingly interested in complex dynamic systems poised at the edge of chaos. These diverse systems appear best able to function adaptively, as their network dynamics allow for both enduring patterns of organization and spontaneous responses to unexpected occurrences. Contemporary scientific research demonstrates that infinitely unique and locally erratic behavior can have a stable and robust global pattern. In free improvisation, the open and unpredictable micro details of performance can combine to create a robust collective statement and a pronounced ensemble identity. Like many complex dynamic systems in the natural world, musical free improvisation involves a continual tension between stabilization through communication and instability through fluctuations. Human societies appear to illustrate the idea that the more complex a system, the more robust it may become but also the more numerous the fluctuations that can threaten its stability.

The new sciences of synergetics and chaos and the practice of musical free improvisation are recent trends that remain limited and marginalized. They both exist, however, within a contemporary culture that is beginning to question many tacitly assumed notions of coherence and conditions for knowing. I believe that both pursuits point towards the possibility of a renewed relationship between humanity and nature—one that avoids issues of imposed power and hierarchical control in favor of a dynamic sense of interconnectedness and a strong emphasis on the synergetic processes that appear to define all complex systems—poised delicately between order and chaos, between stasis and extinction.

Notes

1. See also Bushev (1994).
2. As a result of a preference for static, structural investigations, most music scholarship has reflected a bias for individual and isolated composers, notated or notatable music forms, and complex linear and hierarchical musical designs. In his important book on the subject, Derek Bailey (1992:ix) writes: "improvisation enjoys the curious distinction of being the most widely practiced of all musical activities and the least acknowledged and understood." See Ferrand (1961) for work on improvisation in the European classical tradition, Berliner (1994) and Gray (1991) for an overview of work on the subject in jazz, and Nettle (1998) for a survey of relevant ethnomusicological work. See also Small (1998) for a cogent critique of traditional academic approaches to the study of music performance.
3. Free improvisation is an umbrella term that describes the work of an eclectic group of artists with diverse backgrounds in avant-garde jazz, avant-garde classical, electronic, popular, and world music traditions who share an interest in exploring improvisation unencumbered by overt idiomatic constraints. An excellent web resource for an introduction to this music is the European Free Improvisation Page (www.shef.ac.uk/misc/rec/ps/efi/ehome). Bradlyn (1988-89) and Pignon (1998) are the only works I have found that specifically deal with the relationship between chaos theory and musical free improvisation. The relationship between contemporary science and literature has received more attention (see Hayles 1990).
4. The following is a list of artists and musicians who participated in free improvisation sessions at UCLA from 1995-2000: Gustavo Aguilar – congas, percussion; Christian Amigo – electric guitar; David Borgo – tenor and soprano saxes, various flutes; Roman Cho – percussion, lap-top steel guitar; Park Je Chun – percussion; Andy Connell – alto and soprano saxes, clarinet; Tonya Culley – dramatic reading; Phil Curtis – electric guitar; Dave DiMatteo – acoustic and electric bass; Joe DiStefano – alto sax; Loren Ettinger – electric guitar, vocals; Alan Ferber – trombone; Mark Ferber – drum set; Dan Froot – soprano sax; Jonathon Grasse – electric guitar; Steven

Koenig – poetry reading; Kaye Lubach – tabla; David Martinelli – drum set; Brian McFadin – saxophones, clarinets, trumpet; Andrew McLean – tabla; Brana Mijatovic – drum set, percussion, piano, vocals; Christian Molstrom – electric guitar; Robert Reigle – tenor saxophone; Todd Sickafoose – acoustic bass.

5. *Surrealestate: Contrafactum* (Acoustic Levitation AL 1004, 2000). 2625 East 13th Street, 2K, Brooklyn, NY 11235-4422, AcousticLv@aol.com.
6. Unfortunately, Nunn provides little sense of how one is to judge the continuity or integrity of successive gestures in this style of playing other than to mention that this type of continuity is primarily psychological rather than expressly structural in nature. These questions of musical meaning and performance evaluation in musical free improvisation remain some of the most difficult with which to grapple.
7. This and all subsequent quotations by Robert Reigle stem from an interview with the author on April 27th, 1999.
8. In a non-improvising musical situation, (e.g., classical chamber ensemble), small performance changes are tempered by the musical score and by the rehearsed interpretive decisions of the ensemble.
9. The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1995) has proposed that an autopoietic social system can be defined if the description of human social systems remains entirely within the social domain. Luhmann's central point is to identify the social processes of the autopoietic network as conceptual ones involving language and communication.
10. The most striking evidence for symbiogenesis is the mitochondria, the "powerhouses" inside of all animal and plant cells. These vital parts of cellular respiration contain their own genetic material and reproduce independently of other parts of the cell. It is believed that mitochondria were originally free-floating bacteria that invaded other microorganisms and remained within them, cooperating and evolving together.

11. David Ake (1998) has framed this move in jazz in terms of gender as well. He perceives a shift from masculine to feminine traits as jazz musicians in the late 1950s began liberating the ensemble from a shared, uniform pulse and liberating improvisation from the demands of chord changes and tonality. His discussion of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" foregrounds these and other issues.

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Which Side Are You On? "Victim Art" and the Cultural Politics of the Art—Ethnography Continuum

Heidi Feldman

The "Still/Here" Standoff

When an artist integrates the images, gestures, and voices of survivors of life-threatening illnesses into a performance, is the result art or victimization? Not long ago, a provocative event in dance criticism launched a national dialogue around this question.

In 1994, award-winning choreographer and dancer Bill T. Jones presented the evening-length dance-theater work "Still/Here." The performance was based on "Survival Workshops" conducted by Jones in eleven U.S. cities with people experiencing life-threatening illnesses. Jones, who was diagnosed HIV-positive in 1985, believed that people facing life-threatening conditions have a special understanding of managing mortality. With his collaborators,¹ Bill T. Jones derived choreography, video installation, and music for his company from the words, movements, and images of workshop participants as they "walked their lives," described their epiphanies, raged, held on to what they loved, and imagined their last moments on Earth.²

In a glowing advance feature in *The New Yorker* magazine before the U.S. premiere at Minneapolis' Walker Art Center, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. predicted:

"Still/Here" is less a poetics of death than a poetics of survival. ...Tomorrow, the work will indeed be seen by about five thousand people, and it will be greeted by a standing ovation....When the work had its world premiere, on September 14th in Lyons, France, it was met with a standing ovation that changed into a "stomping ovation"—a rapturous audience stomping its feet in appreciation for something like fifteen minutes. Jones glows when he tells me about that audience. If you are a performer—and Jones is nothing if not a performer—there is an ecstasy to this sort of response. (Gates 1994:121, 112-113)

One month later, *The New Yorker's* reigning senior dance critic, Arlene Croce, refused to see or review "Still/Here." Causing a public

uproar, she wrote about "Still/Here" anyway, urging *The New Yorker's* readers to join her in boycott:

In this piece, Jones presents people who are terminally ill and talk about it. I understand that there is dancing going on during the talking, but of course no one goes to "Still/Here" for the dancing....it is a kind of messianic traveling medicine show, designed to do some good for sufferers of fatal illnesses, both those in the cast and those thousands more who may be in the audience....If we consider that the experience, open to the public, as it is, may also be intolerably voyeuristic, the remedy is also obvious: Don't go.

In not reviewing "Still/Here," I'm sparing myself and my readers a bad time, and yet I don't see that I really have much choice.... By working dying people into his act, Jones is putting himself beyond the reach of criticism. I think of him as literally undiscussable. (Croce 1994:54)

Ironically, though Croce considered Jones "undiscussable," she continued her angry essay for four pages. Cultural critic bell hooks noted the vendetta-like quality of Croce's polemic, stating: "Disclaimers like 'Jones' personal story does not concern me' do little to deflect her from this agenda. She is obviously obsessed with his story" (hooks 1994:10).

Croce's piece touched a nerve. Artists, arts presenters, writers, and scholars (including bell hooks, Hilton Kramer, Camille Paglia, Tony Kushner, and Harvey Lichtenstein) flooded *The New Yorker* with letters, both laudatory and outraged, and a month later, the entire 4-page "Letters to the Editor" section was devoted to the topic ("Who's the Victim" 1995:10-13). Even those who agreed that "Still/Here" was victim art admitted that Croce had no right to write about a show she hadn't seen. The most poignant testimony was a brief letter from Carol MacVey:

As a participant in Bill T. Jones's survival workshops for "Still/Here," I found it ironic that Ms. Croce describes the workshop participants as "dying people" who "aren't there" when in fact most of us are alive and still here. (MacVey 1995:13)

Susan Sontag (1978, 1988/89) and Barbara Browning (1998) have documented the ubiquitous political and racist use of illness as

metaphor from ancient times to the present. Arlene Croce used metaphors of illness and contagion to warn audience members away and to link Jones to a larger American social disease of community outreach. This ethos of community outreach, according to Croce, displaced the critic in the 1960s by squeezing the art out of dance and replacing it with politics, postmodern conceptual constructions and everyday motions. This process, aided and abetted by arts support networks and academic dance courses and reinforced by the NEA culture wars of the 1980s, reached its apex when Bill T. Jones was infected with the AIDS virus and began to make political art. In her words:

In theatre, one chooses what one will be. The cast members of "Still/Here"—the sick people whom Jones has signed up—have no choice other than to be sick. The fact that they aren't there in person does not mitigate the starkness of their condition. They are there on videotape, the better to be seen and heard, especially heard. They are the prime exhibits of a director-choreographer who has crossed the line between theatre and reality—who thinks that victimhood in and of itself is sufficient to the creation of an art spectacle....

What Jones represents is something new in victim art—new and raw and deadly in its power over the human conscience....From the moment Bill T. Jones declared himself HIV-positive and began making AIDS-focussed pieces...it was obvious that the permissive thinking of the sixties was back, and in the most pernicious form....Jones and Mapplethorpe, parallel self-declared cases of pathology in art, have effectively disarmed criticism. (Croce 1994:54-58)

Art, for Croce, is aesthetically superior to life in a quasi-religious way.³ Comparing the Romantic period with today's bias toward what she calls "utilitarian art," Croce explains why, for her, the obsession of Keats, Chopin, and Schuman with death and illness are different from the utilitarian work of Bill T. Jones. The difference lies in the autonomy of art and the contrast between Self and Spirit:

The morbidity of so much Romantic art is bearable because it has a spiritual dimension....The Romantics did not use art, they were used by it, consumed by it as much as by killer diseases....Even in music, which can name nothing, but which can only attract names (the Funeral March) and which can therefore speak freely,

it is the surging spirit of Chopin that calls out, not the raging bacillus. (Croce 1994:60)⁴

Art that explores themes of death, war, illness, and despair is nothing new, by Croce's own admission. What she objects to is the "in-your-face" quality of Jones' inspirational material. Listening to a requiem, we can revel in a vague sensory understanding of mood without fully comprehending the real life events which served as the artist's inspiration. Where "Still/Here" differs is in the explicitness of its ethnographic content.

The Art-Ethnography Continuum

Increasingly over the past four decades, American art and ethnography have mingled along a continuum whose negotiation informs creative products. In the 1960s, the National Endowment for the Arts was created, social movements changed the power positions of American cultural communities, and artists began to explicitly incorporate community-based research in their work. By the 1980s, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists were similarly exploring artistic—even polyphonic—means of writing culture in a postcolonial world (Clifford 1988:50-51). Treading on each other's territories, artists and ethnographers sometimes broke new, highly contested, ground by either venturing into previously uncharted areas or by giving a new look to much-traveled terrain.

In the realm of the arts, explorations of the meaning of life, death, human culture, and spirituality have long flourished. Anthropologists, on the other hand, have tended to erect a wall between Self and Other in their ethnographies of death and dying. Ruth Behar, a lone voice for the importance of "anthropology that breaks your heart," notes:

Even ordinary death leaves us on the brink between silence and speech. This is why anthropologists have found it less unsettling to write about "how others die" than to wrench from the resources of their experience and language some sense of how the dying of others speaks to "how we die." The shroud of silence, after all, offers protection against having to name the unnamable, as de Certeau calls death. (Behar 1996:84-85)

Bill T. Jones fills the gap “between silence and speech” with dance. His ethnographically informed treatment of death and survival in “Still/Here” brings audience members face to face with the unnamable, through the real words and movements of survivors of life-threatening illnesses. Thus, his dance is a kind of embodied ethnographic writing that strives for what James Clifford calls ethnographic polyphony, or the simultaneous envoicing of multiple subjects (Clifford 1988:50-51). Henry Louis Gates, Jr. writes: “Jones believes in narrative, but narrative in a language parsed by the configuration and movement of bodies, the precisely coordinated relations that his dancers have to one another at any given moment. The storyteller is Jones; the dancers are, variously, his alphabet, his words, his syntax” (Gates 1994:113).

Bill T. Jones’ ethnographic/choreographic authority must be understood in the context of his status as what Gates calls “poster boy for the Zeitgeist” (Gates 1994:114). Jones began to choreograph thematic, political works with community involvement after his partner Arnie Zane’s AIDS-related death in 1988. “Last Supper at Uncle Tom’s Cabin/The Promised Land,” a 1989 dance-theater epic on racism that toured for two years and was denounced by the Vatican, launched Jones’ larger-than-life public persona.⁵ After “Last Supper,” Jones was featured as a model in *Mirabella*, invited to perform at society benefits, and granted a “Genius” Award by the MacArthur Foundation. Thus, in the rush of publicity for “Still/Here,” it was understandably difficult to separate the work from the phenomenon of Bill T. Jones. The public is too familiar with his authoritative style, the mark of his body on the movements he choreographs for his dancers, the influence of his intellect on the construction of the narrative, and the traces of his pain in the story itself. Behind the scenes, before the curtain opened, Jones infused “Still/Here” with his authorial voice. This choreographic authority triggered Arlene Croce’s powerful attack on the mixture of ethnography and art.

For ethnomusicologists, unlike anthropologists, blending art and ethnography is a time-honored practice—in the fieldwork stage. While Bill T. Jones’ art was based on ethnography, all musical ethnographies are based on the ethnomusicologist’s immersion in the art of music-making. Yet, since Charles Seeger first described the difficulty of using language to explain music, ethnomusicologists have struggled unsuccessfully to evoke the artistic power of music in written ethnographies. The fusion of art and ethnography, successfully achieved in the fieldwork process, has not been replicated in the ethnographic product.

In recent years, ethnomusicologists have been visibly involved, as both artists and critics, in debates around the mingling of ethnography and art in commercial recorded music. These issues are also vitally present when art and ethnography meet in fieldwork—as well as in documentary and archival recordings—but the public nature and financial implications of commercial recordings expose them to more criticism. Three examples of ethnographically informed music provide an especially interesting comparison to “Still/Here,” because of their treatment of what may alternately be seen as cultural survival or victim art: Steve Reich’s “Different Trains” (1989), Michel Sanchez and Eric Mouquet’s *Deep Forest* (1992), and Steve Feld’s “Voices of the Rainforest” (1991).

Like “Still/Here,” Jewish composer Steve Reich’s 1989 Grammy-winning “Different Trains” is an insider ethnography that is polyphonic, but mediated by its author’s experience. As a child, Reich traveled on trains from Los Angeles to New York to visit his separated parents between 1939 and 1942. During that same period, Jews in Europe were transported to their deaths in the gas chambers on very different trains.

Reflecting on the irony of his survival, Reich created what he called a “documentary-musical reality.” Using a tape recorder, he interviewed his childhood governess and a retired Pullman porter, and he copied the sound tracks of Yale University’s archival videotapes of Holocaust survivors. These ethnographic “speech melodies” were transcribed, digitally sampled, and woven into a tape texture with train sounds and sirens of the 1930s and ‘40s. The imitative score was performed by the Kronos Quartet. Reich wanted to “present as faithfully as possible the era in which I survived, and...they perished—through having the participants recall it in their own tone of voice, and through having the music grow out of their reminiscences” (Schwarz 1989:35).

Reich’s artistic treatment of the Holocaust troubled several critics. In *Musical Times*, David Wright characterized the work as a “distasteful B-movie cliché...strongly at variance with the emotional potential of its subject” (Wright 1990:661) and, in *Tempo*, Christopher Fox noted: “Such a project is, like any which seeks to make art out of other people’s suffering, fraught with danger” (Fox 1990:2). In an interview with Reich, K. Robert Schwarz asked: “How can a Jew, or for that matter anyone living in 1989, deal with the Holocaust in an artistic manner?” to which Reich replied that “no piece of music can have the slightest effect on any political reality” (Schwarz 1989:35). Yet, David Harrington of the Kronos Quartet says “Different Trains” “dealt with a period of history that I felt that anyone who is an artist in the 20th

Century must deal with: the...Holocaust....It has given me a sense that our concerts can be a place where social issues are musically investigated" (quoted in Young 1991:999).

Challenging Reich's notion of the political impotence of art are two musical recordings that promote themselves as helping endangered cultures survive. The 1992 ambient dance album *Deep Forest* rocked the ethnomusicology world by sampling Simha Arom and Hugo Zemp's UNESCO field recordings (Zemp 1973), set to ambient dance grooves. Arranged by French duo Michel Sanchez and Eric Mouquet, *Deep Forest* linked music to the cultural survival of rainforest peoples, and a portion of the profits are donated to The Pygmy Fund. In a review in *Artforum*, Andrew Ross wondered if *Deep Forest* is the musical equivalent of Rainforest Crunch (Ross 1993).

The Grammy-nominated album put pygmy pop (Feld 1996) on Billboard's Hot Dance Music Club Play and Modern Rock Track charts, selling over 2.5 million copies in three years and going gold in the U.S., France, Norway, and the U.K. and double platinum in Australia (Ibid.:25; Brozillo 1994:44). The single "Sweet Lullaby," which samples a lullaby from the Solomon Islands, was featured in an award-winning MTV video, a US promo tape for the 1995 Carrera, and commercials for Sony Trinitron, Neutrogena, Nutella, and French shampoo. As *Creem's* Brook Wentz wrote, *Deep Forest* is "a modern listener's wet dream, and an ethnomusicologist's worst nightmare" (quoted in Feld 1996:27). Ethnomusicologist René Lysloff calls *Deep Forest* an "impressive but troubling" example of "plunderphonics" and points out that "the Pygmies are unknowing collaborators in an Orientalistic narrative of cultural exoticism" (Lysloff 1997:212-213). The powerful fact that "Sweet Lullaby" brought the music of the Solomon Islands to millions of appreciative listeners should give pause to every ethnomusicologist who creates field recordings.

Hugo Zemp recounts his personal nightmare around the *Deep Forest* CD in a thought-provoking article about the politics of field recordings (Zemp 1996). Zemp initially refused to grant permission for the use of his recordings, and later he was persuaded to reconsider by UNESCO's Francis Bebey.⁶ However, *Deep Forest* used samples other than those authorized by Zemp, and as of 1996 UNESCO had received no royalties. Zemp wrote a letter to Sanchez and Mouquet, which reads in part:

The piece which you entitled "Sweet Lullaby"...stealing...the voice of the singer, Afunakwa, has become an international success....You have been disrespectful first to the musical heritage of the Solomon Islands...and second to the ethnomusicological discipline....It is time to...pay back part of your profits to the real owners of this music, to a cultural/scientific association of the Solomon Islands (Zemp 1996:48-49).

Sanchez and Mouquet refuted Zamp's charge. It is striking that, in the numerous public discussions about the *Deep Forest* affair, I have seen no evidence of the actual position of the people of the Solomon Islands.⁷

Ethnomusicologist Steve Feld's 1991 CD *Voices of the Rainforest* is another recording linked to cultural survival. Supported by Mickey Hart's The World label, Feld used digital technology to create what he calls a meta-composition, evoking a mythical day in the ambient world of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea and combining nature sounds with the music of Feld's Kaluli field consultants. Real sounds of roads and logging are edited out to help the listener comprehend the artistic losses incurred by the destruction of rainforests (Feld 1991a:136). Feld explains that this recording enabled him to convey cultural aesthetics through commercial, ethnographic art: "Without academic explication, the recording allows the listener to enter and subjectively experience what the Kaluli call... 'lift-up-over sounding'" (1994b:280).

Exploratory oil drilling and logging schemes threaten the Kaluli, and—like *Deep Forest*—this CD is billed as "endangered music," with a portion of the proceeds donated to the Rainforest Action Network. In a review in *Oceania*, Lowell Lewis notes the multiple risks Feld took with this recording, exposing himself to debates around salvage ethnography, the politics of representation, Feld's privileged position versus the Kaluli, and commodification. Feld, himself, has publicly expressed his conflicts about the project in a series of articles (1991a, 1994a, 1994b, 1996), and *Voices of the Rainforest* is the only recording I've discussed that (like "Still/Here") involved the input of the ethnographic group. *Voices of the Rainforest*, in contrast to Feld's two little-known academic field recordings of Kaluli music, is not a research document but (in Feld's words) an "effort to validate a specific culture and musical region otherwise generally submerged in American record stores in a bin labeled 'Pacific'...an unabashedly commercial project, meant to attract as large an audience as possible" (Feld 1994b:279).

Voices of the Rainforest has been criticized by some academics for being too much art and not enough ethnography, trivializing the serious plight of the Kaluli. Feld responds "because I am equal parts researcher and artist, I feel a need to make the world more hearable....artistic projects are, for some of us, equally overt and serious, however much more risk their subtleties bring to the realm of cultural politics" (Feld 1991a:138).

Which Side Are You On?

I began this discussion with the story of Arlene Croce's attack on Bill T. Jones to suggest the political volatility of the continuum between art and ethnography. "Still/Here" was not victim art; it was ethnographically informed performance, which offends some proponents of autonomous art. Does a Jewish composer have the right to transform archival recordings of Holocaust survivors into concert music? Should commercial artists be forbidden from using field recordings, and would anyone have noticed if millions of people hadn't fallen in love with a dance version of a Solomon Islands lullaby? When ethnomusicologists respectfully, even dialogically, produce musical representations of our fieldwork in order to move others, do we create art or ethnography?

Each situation is nuanced with its own dangers, risks, and rewards. Critical responses to mixtures of art and ethnography have shown ethnomusicologists that the artistic side of the art-ethnography continuum can be a dangerous place, especially when questions of cultural survival versus victimization arise. Yet, our fieldwork and our products are always a hybrid of ethnography and art (as is our discipline) and they should be both criticized and defended as such. Carefully considering—if never solving—the cultural and commercial ramifications of each artful ethnography, ethnomusicologists can disarm critics who ask "Which side are you on?" by leaving one foot firmly planted on each side of the art-ethnography continuum.

The portion of this paper that describes the "Still/Here Standoff" was developed in an independent study course with Susan McClary at UCLA. I would like to thank Susan McClary for her excellent suggestions on that initial document, as well as the weekly discussions that inspired me to write about Bill T. Jones and Arlene Croce. The second half of this paper was created for a conference presentation at the Southern California Chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology in 1998, and I am grateful for my panel chair, René Lysloff's, enthusiasm and encouragement. I also extend my gratitude to Philip Brett for his thoughtful and incisive remarks over email, and to those whose feedback I received the second time a version of this paper was presented in public, at the 1999 SEM meeting in Austin, Texas.

Notes

- 1 Music for "Still/Here" was composed by Kenneth Frazelle and Vernon Reid, using recordings from the workshops. The scores were performed by Odetta and the Lark String Quartet. Video installation of the workshop footage was created by Gretchen Bender.
- 2 In survival workshops, Bill T. Jones asked participants to "walk their life," embodying their feelings about that mortal journey. He also asked each participant to "take us to your death" and describe it. The content of these workshops may be witnessed in an extraordinary documentary video by Bill Moyers (Moyers 1997). "Still/Here" was aired for public television on Alive TV in 1995.
- 3 A former NEA panelist known for her hostility to art with political content, Croce even castigated her favorite choreographer, George Balanchine, for having his dancers bring candles on stage in a tribute after Martin Luther King's assassination (Garafola 1995).
- 4 Of course, Croce's contention that music "can name nothing" would be challenged by those who find tangible meaning in music. And if music names nothing, how does Croce know it is Chopin's spirit, and not his fever, which calls out in his music?
- 5 "Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land" featured the backwards deconstruction of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, a dance of protest by Job (Jones), an improvised debate with a local minister, and the participation of approximately 40 members of each host community, whose nude appearance in the last act symbolized interracial harmony and the absence of fear.
- 6 According to Zemp, Bebey was misled regarding the scope of the recording project.
- 7 This omission is reminiscent of the point made by "Still/Here" workshop participant Carol McVey's letter to the *New Yorker*, quoted earlier.

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Where is the riot in "Zoot Suit Riot"?

Charles Sharp

My paper examines the song "Zoot Suit Riot," which was written by Steve Perry and performed by his group, The Cherry Poppin' Daddies. According to *Billboard* magazine, the recording sold over one million copies, and was on the charts for over thirty-four weeks (*Billboard* 1998:250). When I began this paper, I heard this song everywhere: on the radio, while shopping in Tower records, and a friend of mine told me she heard it in Denny's. The band was featured performing this song on TV in "Dick Clark's Rockin' New Years," all of which seems strange for a song about a riot. Needless to say, this song has not been presented as a political statement, but as just another song by a new swing group. The neo-swing scene is characterized as fun dance music, not as a platform for political statements. I will argue that the song "Zoot Suit Riot" is in fact political, even if the author's intention wasn't. The song refers to an actual riot and serves as a reminder of this country's multi-cultural roots and senseless racism. This paper will present a historical background of the actual riots, how neo-swing is marketed and made popular through commercial industries, and how this marketing erases the riot. Finally, through critical theory I will investigate the political implications and potential of the song.

Let us begin by examining what the song refers to, the actual Zoot suit riots. Many writers have suggested that these riots were not actually riots in a formal sense, but rather a series of attacks on Hispanic youth (Hinojos 1975, Mazon 1984, McWilliams 1943, Pitt and Pitt 1997). These attacks became known as riots through countless racist newspaper articles that framed the victims of the attacks as the perpetrators, reflecting the racist attitudes held during the time. These attacks began after local Los Angeles papers began to report on a murder case called the "Sleepy Lagoon Murder." José Díaz, a young Mexican-American, died from a beating received from unknown assailants in August of 1942. The police rounded up 300 Mexican-American youths and arrested 23 of them on murder charges, without any physical evidence. During the trial, Los Angeles police Lieutenant Edward Duran Ayres testified as an expert witness for the prosecution, claiming that people of Mexican descent were biologically prone to violence and crime due to their "oriental" Aztec ancestry (Ayres 1942). Twelve of the youth

were found guilty based on this racist testimony and by the time the ruling was overturned by the U.S. District Court of Appeals in 1944, eight of the youths had spent two years in the federal penitentiary.

The local newspapers focused on these racist accusations and fueled rumors of rampant crime-waves perpetrated by gangs of Mexican-American zoot-suited youths, known as *Pachucos*. From 3 June to 13 June 1943 these rumors inspired hundreds of American service men in the Los Angeles area to attack these youths. Initially the service men targeted those wearing zoot suits, but eventually beat and stripped anyone of color they could find. Chicana women were assaulted as well. The police broke up the disturbances by arresting the victims. The coverage of these events in local newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times began to refer the attacks as the "Zoot Suit Riots."¹

Despite the press coverage, we can now understand Pachucos as a rebellious and independent youth culture among Chicanos. Arturo Madrid-Barela describes how the Pachuco has become a symbol of resistance against the homogenizing effects of assimilation (Madrid-Barela 1973). He notes that the Pachucos' style is derived from elements of urban black culture, such as their suits and the music they listened to, but elements of Mexican culture are maintained, in essence enacting their difference through style.² Luis Valdez drew upon this vision of a self-defining culture in his play and subsequent film, *Zoot Suit* (Valdez 1981). The play documents the events of the riot and is narrated by the character El Pachuco, who acts as the conscience of the main character. Valdez emphasizes the Chicano's struggle to create an independent identity "because an identity was needed" (Orona-Cordova and Valdez 1983:101). He goes on to state that "The Pachucos...were making some rather important statements. They were standing up to a society that was...obviously unjust, obviously racist, and it seemed to me that they had some balls...The Pachucos were not afraid" (ibid.3:101). Valdez acknowledges that many Latinos perceive an association between Pachucos and crime, an association he believes is only partially true. Valdez emphasizes that *despite* any criminal activities, the Pachucos were able to define themselves.

This self-definition becomes apparent in examining the musical style of the Pachucos. Many elements were borrowed from African-American jazz musicians, who were involved in a similar project of self-definition through style. Steven Loza documents the music and style associated with these original zoot-suiters in his book *Barrio Rhythm* (1993:161-3). He writes that among Mexican-Americans during the

1940s, the widespread popularity of swing, traditional Mexican-American and Caribbean music was symbolic of the changes occurring in their adaptation to an urban environment (Loza 1993:80).³ Loza interviewed Chicano composer Lalo Guerrero, who was an active performer and composer in Los Angeles during the 1940s, and later provided music for Valdez's film *Zoot Suit*. During the 1940s, Guerrero combined Afro-Cuban elements with the swing music, thus typifying the emerging hybrid identity of the Pachucos. For example, his composition "Chuco Suaves" utilizes the Cuban *guaracha* form and the lyrics use words in Caló, a language used by Pachucos. (This song is fully analyzed in Loza 1993: 178-89).

Now I will turn to the neo-swing scene. A half century from the Pachucos and nearly two decades since Luis Valdez's film, the Cherry Poppin' Daddies sell millions of copies of the song "Zoot Suit Riot." The Cherry Poppin' Daddies are but one group associated with the revival of swing music. V. Vale documents the origins of this scene in his book *New Swing* (Vale 1998). He explains how the revival began with a small group of friends in California who had an interest in the music, dance and fashion of the 1930s. The scene grew through an increasing exposure in the media. Perhaps the most influential moment occurred when the Gap began using Louis Prima's jump-blues classic, "Jump, Jive and Wail," in its ads to sell pants. Vale notes that, "As soon as [the Gap ad] came out, all the dance studios were besieged with young-sounding voices...asking if they could teach them to dance 'like in that Gap commercial'" (Vale 1998:4).

The neo-swing scene has blossomed from an intimate group into a nation-wide phenomenon, amalgamating various styles including 1930s lindy hop dancing, 1940s suits and hats, and 1950s jump blues (Eig 1997 and Spring 1997). As the scene grew, it received a great amount of media coverage in print, television and film.⁴ Besides the previously mentioned Gap commercial, many advertisers had begun and continue to use swing fashions to conjure up images of better times (Steinhauer 1998).

Advertisers use swing for its seemingly happy connotations, essentially fixing a meaning to the music. In the trade journal *Brandweek*, T. L. Stanley wrote an article explicitly detailing the appeal of swing music for advertisers. Stanley quotes advertising executive Steve Friedland, whose clients include the ABC network, as saying, "We were talking about what the trends are right now, and swing is huge. It's not just the 18-34 demo[graphic] that likes it. It has very broad

appeal, from 17-year-olds to 54-plus" (Stanley 1998:38). Stanley goes on to note, "for commercial use, swing has developed a buzz on the lowest common denominator meter, perhaps because of the lightness and unintrusiveness. The sound seems 180 degrees from some of the other popular genres, such as message-charged...hip-hop or angst-ridden, doom-and-gloom grunge" (1998:38). Thus, neo-swing becomes both meaningless and able to cross great demographic lines.

The popularity of swing for the advertisers, which has, in the case of the Gap ad, brought extensive media exposure to the neo-swing scene, rests on a certain notion of nostalgia. Sociologist Fred Davis theorized that nostalgia can be seen as "a collective search for identity...that looks backwards rather than forwards, for the familiar rather than the novel and for certainty rather than discovery" (Davis 1979: 107-8). The safety of nostalgia figures strongly into the advertising executives' view of the music, but it resonates in the musicians' intentions as well. Eddie Nichols, the leader of one of the first neo-swing groups Royal Crown Revue, evokes the nostalgia found throughout the scene. When asked in an interview if he was "living in the past," he stated, "Guilty as charged....Give me a time machine and I'm gone, everything was beautiful back then—the style, the clothes, the aesthetics" (Soeder 1998: 2E). Nichols's comments illustrate that the desire to create music by imitating past styles plays into such a search for identity from better times.

Keeping in mind these concepts of nostalgia, let's return to the song "Zoot Suit Riot." By referring to a race riot, this song does not seem to long for a better time. How can any one be nostalgic about a riot? Nevertheless, the political aspects of the song vanish under the happy veneer overwhelmingly perpetuated by the subculture of neo-swing including the performers, the audience, and their portrayal in the media. In fact, only one of the dozens of newspaper features on the song mentions the actual riots. In an article written by Marc Weingarten in the *Los Angeles Times*, after very briefly explaining the actual riots, Weingarten asks Steve Perry, the song's author, if he had received any response from Latino fans. Perry explained that there had been some response but seemed to negate the importance of it when he stated, "I don't mind if people take it as a Latino anthem, but I was just trying to pay tribute to this new breed of swingers that was emerging. I just like stylish people" (Weingarten 1998: 57). The article's accompanying large photograph shows Perry dressed in a zoot suit, with the truncated quote reading "I just like stylish people," which leaves little doubt of the mes-

sage intended. Perry's statement and the accompanying photo depoliticizes his song's references to a political event. Chicano victims are reduced to their attire. The riot is reduced to a signifier of style. The nostalgic view of the past eclipses the hatred, racism and oppression that caused the riot.

The nostalgia of "Zoot Suit Riot" not only looks back towards a "more stylish" time, it appropriates and commodifies the riot as merely a symbol of this mythical past. Neo-swing thrives off a constructed "Other," easily packaged and sold as lifestyle/culture. bell hooks terms the commodification of cultural difference "eating the other" (hooks 1982:21-39). She states that "cultural appropriation of the Other assuages feelings of deprivation and lack that assault the psyches of radical white youth who choose to be disloyal to western civilization" (1982:26). hooks emphasizes the desire voiced in the neo-swingers longing for the past. Using her ideas we can locate Perry's appropriation of an event outside of his own culture within a rubric of desire. She goes on to state, "the over-riding fear is that cultural, ethnic, and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate—that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten" (1982:39). We can understand this fear when a riot can be reduced to something as insignificant as a hat.

While the lyrics acknowledge the events of the riot and the music bears at least some stylistic similarity to the swing music favored by Pachucos at the time, the events themselves vanish after being eaten. Chicanos' efforts to bring the riot to the public, as a way to document the racial injustice, such as Luis Valdez's film, brought the riot to a larger, and consequently whiter, audience. Perry is able to erase the political implications of his song, merely equating the riot with style. Mario Barrera, Carlos Muñoz, and Charles Ornelas astutely noted in 1972 that "the problem of Chicano politics is essentially one of powerlessness," making an argument the more-often-quoted Foucault would make some years later (1972:282; Foucault 1980). Power is essential to representation. It is clear to see who currently holds the power in the representation of Pachuco style if you try to buy a Lalo Guerrero recording at your local record store—and when was the last time you heard "Chuco Suaves" in Denny's?

This notion of power complicates models of culture and ethnicity. Steve Loza uses a cyclical model of musical change that moves from tradition to reinterpretation to innovation, then back to a new tradition (1992:192-3). When Lalo Guerrero utilized swing and strong Afro-Cuban

elements with Caló lyrics he was innovating from his reinterpretations of various different musical traditions, effectively creating a new tradition. The Pachucos developed their tradition by adopting various urban styles in their own act of self-definition. When the neo-swing bands revive out-of-fashion styles, they are innovating as well. Musically, the Cherry Poppin' Daddies, like many other neo-swing groups, merge American guitar-based rock with the piano and horn patterns associated with swing. The lyrics evoke the riot in a manner that is not all that different than Luis Valdez writing a play about such an event. Except for Valdez, such an action is implicitly political. The Cherry Poppin' Daddies have the power to take or leave the political connotations. It is this notion of meaning that needs to be examined. Theorizing about musical influences and change, Richard Middleton states that such musical borrowings and revivals, which are now common, need to be incorporated into an understanding of meaning. This musical meaning must be understood as existing within what he terms a "socio-musical ecology" (Middleton 1990:95).⁵ "Zoot Suit Riot's" meaning is interpreted within this system or ecology and it is within this system that meaning becomes altered to fit into the apolitically rendered nostalgia.

The problem is not the Cherry Poppin' Daddies' evocation of the event, which could serve a political purpose of reminding us of the racism and injustice suffered by people in this country. The deeper problem lies in the biased and still racist system of commodification. The advertising executives, who play an active part in popularizing the music, refuse the political content of the music. Perry, perhaps to his credit, did willingly include an overtly political theme into his music and even recorded the song in Spanish (included on their CD as a "hidden" track).⁶ His non-political comments may seem inappropriate but may also have something to do with wanting to sell a million records. The system of commodification gives an advantage to young white kids and marginalizes the originators of the style. Jacques Attali theorizes that "music did not really become a commodity until a broad market for popular music was created. Such a market did not exist when Edison invented the phonograph; it was produced by the colonization of black music by the American industrial apparatus" (1985:103). Attali locates the desire for the Other in the very origins of the music industry. Nathaniel Mackey, drawing in part from the work of Amiri Baraka, writes, "white imitators enjoy commercial success and critical acclaim greatly disproportionate to their musical contributions. The nonrecognition of black artistic othering is symptomatic of the social othering to

which black people are subjected, particularly in light of celebration accorded artistic othering practiced by whites" (1995:96-7). His comments equally apply to the othering of the Pachuco innovators in this case. The commodification of neo-swing represents a social othering of the past in which White imitators, in this case the Cherry Poppin' Daddies, are rewarded while the Chicanos' experience remains invisible.

To conclude, bell hooks' concept of eating the other is manifested here within this system of commodification. Neo-swing is popularized through its use in commercials. Its commercial use is based on the notion of nostalgia and demographics, which construct swing as a safe, happy music, free of messages that get in the way of product. Within this system, or ecology in Middleton's terminology, even a riot becomes a symbol for a better past. The author of this song is in a position that allows him to recognize the riot, but also allows him to dismiss the political connotations as he sees fit. Many theorists have examined this phenomenon of how meaning becomes assigned or constructed within systems of often-conflicting power. bell hooks's theory draws attention to the desire and othering that has ultimately erased the riot. The neo-swing subculture's reduction of the riot to style becomes the privileged meaning, in terms of power. But, it is precisely this ability to re-inscribe meaning that allows for contestation of dominant meanings. If this song becomes meaningful in some way within the Latino community it would not be because they accepted the dominant culture's interpretation of the song. They would have to examine the lyrics and the music itself, pointing to this country's multi-cultural roots and long history of racial oppression. I hope this paper in some way empowers the notion of Pachuco, and decodes this mythological figure of self-determination.

Appendiz I: Lyrics

Ex. 1: Lyrics to “Zoot Suit Riot” by Steve Perry [excerpt].

Who’s that whisperin’ in the trees?
It’s two sailors and they’re on leave
Pipes and chains and swingin’ hands
Who’s your daddy? Yes I am
Fat cat came to play,
Now he can’t run fast enough
You had best stay away
When the pushers come to shove

Zoot suit riot
Throw back a bottle of beer
Zoot suit riot
Pull a comb through your coal black hair

(From: Cherry Poppin’ Daddies. 1997. Zoot Suit Riot. Mojo UD-53081)

Ex. 2. Lyrics to “Chuco Suaves” by Lalo Guerrero [excerpt].

Spanish:
Cada sabado en la noche
Yo me voy a borlotear
Con mi linda pachucona
Las caderas a menear.
Ella le hace muy de aquella
Cuando empieza guarachar
Y al compas de los timbale’
Yo me siento patatear.

Chucos Suaves, baila rumba
Baila la rumba y la zumba
Baila guaracha sabroson
Y el botecito y el danzon.

English:

Every Saturday night
I go dancing
With my beautiful pachucona
To shake those hips.
She's really something
When she starts dancing the guaracha
And to the rhythm of the timbales
I really feel like dancing

Smooth Chucos, dance the rumba
Dance the rumba and the zumba
Dance the tasty guaracha
And the botecito and the danzon.

(From: Luis Valdez's film, *Zoot Suit*. (1981) and Steven Loza. [1993:178-189].

Notes:

- 1 Such racist accounts were contested during the time. Writing in the *New Republic* shortly after the riots, Carey McWilliams, the head of the Sleepy Lagoon defense committee, portrayed *Pachucos*, not as members of organized criminal gangs, but as "loosely organized neighborhood or geographical groups... Many of them are, in effect, nothing more than boys clubs without a clubhouse" (McWilliams 1943).
- 2 Francisco J. Hinojos writes that the Pachucos emphasized their difference as urban Mexican-Americans through the use of their own dialect, Caló, a mix of English and Spanish slang with *Náhuatl* and archaic Spanish words (Hinojos 1975; see also Gonzales 1967).
- 3 Loza explicitly writes "Swing became especially popular among Los Angeles Zoot-suiters during the 1940s. Dances not only were places for socializing but also typified the way young Mexican Americans adapted to and assimilated different styles. Along with the tropical music of the Caribbean and traditional Mexican popular music, the bands of Cab Calloway, Jimmy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, and Duke

Ellington became symbolic vehicles of change and adaptation" (Loza 1993:80). He goes on to note the close affiliation between African Americans and Mexican Americans in Los Angeles. Both groups lived in roughly the same neighborhoods and in approximately the same economic conditions (ibid.:80-3).

- 4 Recent newspaper reports regarding neo-swing includes the following: "You'd Better Get in the Swing of Things," in the *Dallas Morning News*, 15 November 1998, Arts sec., p. 6C; "Dancing for joy: Exuberance of swing-era music inspires the young and old to adopt the Fashions and Footwork of a Stylish and Simpler Time," by Sondra Farrell Bazrod in the *Los Angeles Times*, 2 July 1998, Valley ed., p. 40(F); "Swing Dance: A Comfortable Fit and the proper accessories," by Chris Bynum in (New Orleans) the *Times-Picayune* 2 September 1998, p. 1(D); "Jump Back Into the Swing," by Mike Joyce in the *Washington Post*, 19 July 1998, Sunday arts sec., p. 5(G); "Ring-a-dingers," by Miriam Longino in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 20 March 1998, p. 3(P); "Steppin' Out to the Big Bands: Swing Music Inspires Revival of Ballroom Dancing Scene," by Christine MacDonald in the *Boston Globe*, 4 October 1998, city edition, northwest weekly sec., p. 14; "High-octane Nitro: Swing at the Paramount Theater," by Patrick MacDonald in the *Seattle Times*, 5 November 1998, final ed., p. 18(H); "A Swinger Never Stops," by Tony Moton in *Omaha World-Herald*, 1 November 1998, sunrise ed., p. 1(E); "Timeout: Get into the Swing of Things," by John Petkovic in the *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), 15 July 1998, final ed., p. 1(E); "Local musicians honor swing," by Michael J. Renner in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 13 November 1998, five star lift ed., p. 8(E); "Swinging Toward the Past," by John Soeder in the *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), 12 October 1998, p. 2(E); "Daddies Dearest; The Neo-swingers Pioneers Play Buffalo State," by Anthony Violanti in the *Buffalo News*, 30 October 1998, city edition, p. 30(G). These articles represent favorable coverage of swing events such as live music concerts and some feature descriptions of the neo-swing lifestyle. This list does not include the numerous recording reviews, since such reviews do not reflect neo-swing as a burgeoning social phenomena of fashion, dancing and live music.
- 5 He writes, "New collisions arise all the time, both between synchronically coexisting songs and styles, and between historical

points of reference. Internal quotation and allusion, ironic mixes of style, revivals of older songs and styles, have become common....More than ever meaning is generated within a field, not a discrete work; and the non-autonomous aspects of this field lead one to think in terms of a complex system of socio-musical ecology" (Middleton 1990:95).

- 6 In an interview, held far from the mainstream media, in the realm of the internet, Perry revealed that he had recorded the song in Spanish as well as English, and released it unofficially via a hidden track on the CD, 3 minutes after the last listed song ends. (*Totally LA* 1998). While the interview does not reveal any possible political motivations he may have had for doing it, it seems to indicate some sensitivity lacking in the newspaper article.

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Dularawan: Composing the Filipino Nation

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The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP)¹, founded by then-First Lady of the Philippines, Imelda Marcos, celebrated its inauguration on September 8, 1969 with an original Filipino music drama entitled *Dularawan*. The theatrical event was based on a pseudo-historical event in Philippine history, with instrumental music supplied by an orchestra of bamboo instruments and gongs from the Philippines and other countries of Southeast Asia. Attempting to create a new model for the Philippine arts, *Dularawan* experimented not only with musical sound, but also with the very mode of presentation, utilizing two or more artists—an actor, a dancer, and a singer—to simultaneously portray a single character. This paper examines the multiple meanings contained by this musical centerpiece of the CCP's inauguration and contextualizes the interplay of music, text, and politics during a fascinating historical moment.

The intent of *Dularawan* was to produce a music theater piece that would epitomize Filipino artistry and creativity. Yet, even as they attempted to mold something new, the creators harkened to existing Filipino forms and genres as inspiration for the storyline and music. The plot of *Dularawan* is based on a well-known Filipino epic called the *Maragtas*. The Filipina historian Sonia Zaide summarizes this story in the following manner:

According to the *Maragtas*, at around 1250 A.D., ten *datus* [chiefs] and their families left their kingdom of Borneo and the cruel reign of Sultan Makatunaw, to seek their freedom and new homes across the sea. Led by Datu Puti, the ten royal Malay families landed in the island of Panay. They bought the lowlands of Panay from the Ati king named Marikudo, who agreed to bring his aboriginal tribe to the mountains. The purchase price was one gold *saduk* (native hat) for Marikudo and a long gold necklace for Queen Maningwantiwan. The land sale was sealed by a pact of friendship between the Atis and the Bornean Malays, and a merry party was had by all, as the Atis performed their native songs and dances. After this party, the Atis went to the hills, where their descendants remain, and the Malay *datus* settled in the rich lowlands. (1999:38)

The source of the story, originally published by an Augustinian priest in 1902 and again by his sacristan Pedro Monteclaro in 1907, was supposed to have been based on an ancient manuscript from the Visayas region in central Philippines (Nakpil 1973:175). Despite the fact that the original writings have never been produced and that there is no evidence for the origin of the *Maragtas*, the story has enjoyed longevity in the print medium, with many still taking for granted that the event actually occurred.

Filipino scholars had already attempted to unveil the *Maragtas* as less real history and more folk legend. For instance, the Filipina writer Carmen Guererro Nakpil commented on the fuss made over the inauthentic nature of the *Maragtas* at a scholarly conference in 1968 (a year before *Dularawan*). She wrote, "The *Maragtas* is perhaps the main prop of the theory that the ancestors of the modern Filipino were the Malay immigrants who came in waves between 100 A.D. and the 13th century from mainland Asia and the neighboring islands....*Datu Puti* and *Marikudo* are probably as legendary as King Arthur and Lancelot" (1973:174-175). If, then, the story is more fable than fact, what meanings lie behind the choice to make it the centerpiece of the CCP's inauguration?

While there is basis in historical research that Malays from Borneo did indeed come to the islands for various reasons, including to trade and to proselytize for Islam, the choice for the *Dularawan* storyline cannot be seen as merely historical in nature. As Zaide comments (in contrast to a history book penned much earlier by her father), "Before World War II, the *Maragtas* was not a prominent feature of Philippine history books. But after independence, in 1949, the doyen of Philippine studies at the time, Prof. H. Otley Beyer enthusiastically pronounced the *Maragtas* as a prehispanic document" (1999:41). That Beyer should have done this is not surprising, since the *Maragtas* fit well into his wave migration theory of the populating of the Philippines, a theory long since discounted for Western bias and lack of evidence. Most scholars on Southeast Asia today see the region as having more common cultural traits than the various European colonizers recognized in their blind desire to carve up the territory. Moreover, the assumption that Filipinos as a people had to depend on the importation of technological and social change, rather than developing on their own, has racist overtones. Hence, the storyline of the *Dularawan* should be seen as based in myth rather than reality.

As a kind of genesis story in which members of the Malay race

populate the lowlands and become ancestors to the modern-day Filipinos, the *Maragtas* fallaciously distinguishes lowlanders from tribal mountain peoples and pushes a political message that transcends mere artistic experimentation. The Atis, also called the *negritos*, are considered to be the aborigines of the Philippines; however, the *negritos* actually make up a very small population of mountain people in the Philippines. What is significant to this analysis of *Dularawan* is that Filipinos have come to equate the *negritos* with other mountain tribes and consider tribal culture in general to be less "civilized" than syncretic lowland culture.² The *Maragtas* myth sets the stage for a racial division between mountain people and lowland people, a division that serves ideological purposes more than any other. In reality, the majority of Filipino mountain people are of the same race as lowland Filipinos. As one scholar described the actual racial relationship between the mountain people and the lowlanders during the revolution against Spain in order to combat the popular myth, "Igorots and Aetas [a generalization of mountain peoples] had joined the Revolution to share in the victories of their brothers in the valleys. They had lived in the mountains not because of racial difference with the lowlanders but because they loved liberty" (Majul 1999:371). Yet, because of cultural divergences, essentially begun during the hispanization of the inhabitants of the Philippines, the differences between populations have become concretized erroneously in the popular consciousness as racial in nature. Imelda Marcos and her husband (who later bestowed upon themselves the Filipino legend of the origin of man in order to metaphorically depict themselves as the parents of the Malay Filipino race) surely saw the significance of the *Maragtas* as proof of the dichotomy between "tribal" (mountain) and Malay (lowland) Filipinos. The story on which *Dularawan* is based could be seen merely as the meeting of two peoples, both of whom are considered ancestors of today's various Filipinos (along with the Spanish, Chinese, and others.) But textbook Filipino history and common attitudes of non-tribal Filipinos relegate lower status to the *negrito* people who purportedly gave up their land to the traveling *datus* of Malay descent.

An even closer look at the Marcos' relationship with the tribal communities reveals how the romanticized arrival of the *datus* in *Dularawan* as progenitors of the lowland Filipinos speaks to an elite ideology of the Philippine nation. To Filipinos, the dark-skinned *negritos* are considered culturally backwards and separate from the contemporary Filipino race. Besides distancing the lowlanders from a *negrito* her-

itage (and, by association and implication, from the other non-negrito highland peoples of today) the *Dularawan* myth trivializes the role of "tribal" Filipinos in the making of the nation. In fact, the designation of "tribal" Filipino only came into being because a segment of the population resisted assimilation by the Spanish colonizers. Taking to the hills as a result of colonial pressure, the "tribal" people became distinct from those who allowed themselves to be converted and to live where the Spaniards required. That *Dularawan* supports the idea that mountain people were always inherently separate from the Malay race, the race of which lowland Filipinos (including the Marcoses) saw themselves, is indicative of the prevalent ideology during the Marcos period. Not surprisingly, under the Marcos presidency, "the situation of tribal Filipinos deteriorated significantly....The activities of the Private Association for National Minorities (PANAMIN), formed in 1968, became one of the scandals of the Marcos regime. Among other things, Manuel Elizalde [a wealthy Marcos crony] was widely accused of using his power to give access to tribal lands to loggers, miners, and agribusinesses" (May 1997:335).

There is a wincing irony in treating highland Filipinos with complete disregard in practice, while elevating their instruments as symbolic of "true" Filipino culture within the main theater of the CCP. The story on which *Dularawan* is based has also become the theme of a Filipino fiesta in Aklan called the *Ati-Atihan*. Each year revelers cover their bodies with soot to represent the darker-skinned Atis of the *Maragtas* story, and they march through the streets playing drums and other percussive instruments. At the same time, worshippers come great distances to honor the local version of Santo Niño, or little Christ Child statue originally brought to the Philippines from Spain in 1521 and presented to Queen Juana of Cebu. The combination of pagan and Christian celebrations is by no means uncommon, as evidenced by many similar events in Latin America, and the raucous merrymaking does not conflict with the religious significance of the festival day. As the *Ati-Atihan* displays an overlaying of Christian worship onto a pagan festival tradition, *Dularawan* conversely reinfuses the ethnic into the storytelling through compositional devices and instrumentation.

Using percussion as iconic of something primitive, the music of the *Ati-Atihan* has no need to be faithful to any existing tribal music tradition. In contrast, lowland Filipino folk music differs from tribal gong and bamboo music in its relative lack of percussive elements. In the *Ati-Atihan*, the dark soot covering the skin of the revelers (much

like "blackface") and the insistent percussion accompanying the marchers is less a statement of ethnic pride than a kind of masquerade celebrating the exotic. *Dularawan* takes advantage of this same iconicity in order to lend a suitable ethnic flair to the musical aesthetic.

Dularawan makes use of a range of instruments. Drawing from her own collection gathered during ethnomusicological fieldwork, the composer of the music for *Dularawan*, Lucrecia Kasilag, utilized Filipino gongs, such as *babandil* (small handheld gong), *dabakan* (drum), and *kudyapi* (plucked chordophone with a drone string) from the Mindanao region of the Philippines; and a variety of gongs and xylophones gathered from Java and Bali (Kasilag 1997:11). So varied and, at the time, exotic were the instruments for the *Dularawan* ensemble, that the collection of Kasilag's instruments began a museum exhibit of Asian traditional instruments that can still be viewed at the CCP some thirty years later. Notably, in the liner notes for the recording of *Dularawan*, Imelda Marcos is credited with the idea of using indigenous instruments for the theatrical presentation, and not Kasilag. Even Kasilag herself credits Imelda Marcos with the idea. However, the composition of music using these instruments was left completely to Kasilag's skills. With a degree from St. Scholastica's College and a Masters in Music from the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, Lucrecia Kasilag was a respected academic and composer in the Philippines. Kasilag's compositional ideology took the Philippine "past" into consideration as fodder for future inspiration and development (Kasilag 1998). Interestingly, the very idea of "taking from the past" belies the evolutionary bias towards "tribal" music in which traditions of today are taken as examples of yesterday merely in their differences with urban music.

In any case, Kasilag's use of "tribal" music and instruments was done intelligently and respectfully, bringing the sounds into the national theater and introducing them to mainstream audiences as inherently valuable rather than primitive. Many of Kasilag's compositions were considered to be groundbreaking when first performed, for they showcased her Western training, while bringing into the orchestra instruments and sounds from far-flung areas of the Philippines. Yet, the admiration for her nationalist tendencies did not necessarily indicate a populist appreciation for her music. In fact, responses to *Dularawan* by critics were mixed, with some finding the music unappealing and the staging of multiple performers for one character to be very confusing. On a positive note, one critic gushed:

This *Dularawan* concept is...a brilliant solution to the problem in traditional operatic situations of actors who cannot sing and singers who cannot act....It will be a long time before our artistic innovators develop an audience who will at least bring tolerant attitudes to courageous if sporadic attempts to redefine points of view. (Cruz-Navarro 1969:13)

For audiences, Kasilag's compositional style in *Dularawan* did not flow easily over ears expecting a more conventional score, making the music subject to, perhaps, harsh criticism. Given that Filipino composers most venerated by mainstream concert-going Filipinos of the time stuck ardently to a lyrical and sentimental romanticism, music veering stylistically from that norm was probably thought to be somewhat incomprehensible. In any case, whether *Dularawan* was merely ahead of its time or not, it has never been restaged; however, it has served as a kind of progenitor for other original Filipino presentations. As Kasilag mentioned in 1997 at the opening remarks of a conference for Asian music composers,

Let me just say that this historic pioneering and innovative attempt to use indigenous Asian instruments on a grand scale for a theater production actually set the tone and pattern for succeeding stagings of dance-drama after the controversial *Dularawan*. To mention just a few of the recent theater pieces: the enchanting *Encantada*, *Revolucion Filipina*, and even the latest ethno-rock opera *Lapu-Lapu*. (Kasilag 1997:11)

In any case, the first production at the CCP generated strong feelings, and not only in regards to the music. "The P250,000 (about \$5,000 in 2001 dollars) budget for *Dularawan* became an endless subject for long discussions. A leading drama group maintains that if it had been given that much money, it would have enough to work on for a year's program of stage presentations" (Carunungan 1969:2). Funding not only engendered fears as to who would benefit from the largesse and who would be left to fend for themselves, but also raised the question of just what was motivating Imelda Marcos to find finances for something so costly and controversial. One journalist wondered:

The way the opening of the Center was timed to the birthday of President Marcos and the manner in which the construction was rushed so that it would be opened at this time when every bit of attention is courted by both President and Mrs. Marcos in the for-

mer's reelection bid, gave the impression that the Cultural Center was a political gimmick, which all artists hope it is not. Nevertheless, this hope was practically dashed to pieces when, on August 31, a full-page ad appeared in some newspapers, containing a declaration of support for the Cultural Center by a Committee on Arts and Sciences for Marcos-Lopez, and signed by a distinguished array of Filipino artists, some of whom later disclaimed any connection with such an ad. (ibid.:4)

Despite negativity, after all is said and done, attention during a re-election meant publicity; and if the Marcoses were eventually vindicated by the successes of the CCP, then all the better. Still, it would be great folly to presume that the CCP did not serve the needs of performing artists, for the staff actually employed there were among the most dedicated cultural workers striving to fulfill the stated goals of the Center. In a letter to *The Manila Chronicle*, responding to criticism of *Dularawan* and the Center itself after its inaugural presentation, the Deputy Director of the CCP wrote:

Dularawan has engaged some of the best musical, literary and dramatic talents in this country. You may argue that the production was unsuccessful. The fact is that *Dularawan* has meant that much more artistic activity in our community...We have not been out of touch with the artists or the impresarios either...A forum on the Center in relation to the artists was held...That forum demonstrated the abundance not only of artistic talent in this country but the abundance as well of diversity of opinion among the artistic talent in this country...We were a bit jarred by that forum but we mean to go on patiently (and quietly) trying to reconcile all these diverse views into a meaningful program for the Filipino artist. (Roces 1969:20)

During that forum, some expressed, "As it is, the Cultural Center breaks the unity of the artists. Being for the happy few who are identified with the Establishment, it tends to disintegrate the artists from the world, and possesses the danger of becoming an academy. Only the yes-artist and the name artist will make it to the Center, never the young talented rebel on the left of the Center" (Lanot 1969:20). Integral to the argument, of course, were the words "as it is." While the CCP as playground for Imelda Marcos and her chosen artists brought up the most bile, the very idea of having a cultural "center" to serve such

a variegated nation was itself a paradox. "As it is," or was in the late 1960s when the CCP first opened, the Center was not designed to serve more than a narrow target market regardless of the rhetoric. Even given a wide range of ticket prices in which the most expensive tickets bought by the rich were supposed to subsidize the cheaper tickets of the poor, the masses were simply not motivated to attend the CCP events. Furthermore, those who did attend most certainly did not travel from far beyond the suburbs of Manila given the state of roads and transportation. As such, the Center could, in fact, be a center for a certain kind of culture involving a stage and a ticket-buying audience; but it could not truly be a center of "culture" for the Philippines as a whole.

Having enough meanings as to lead to a sense of no meaning at all, the word "culture" for Imelda Marcos in 1969 could probably still be boiled down to a couple of key ideas. On the one hand, culture referred to the high art of the West (performance, visual, literary, etc.), not unlike western ideas of highbrow and lowbrow. On the other hand, culture also referred to a vaguely-defined amalgamation of Filipino practices from all over the islands. Given the Philippine government's long-running attempt to hold together the archipelago as a unified nation under state power, this kind of culture also could be understood as that which signified peoples who were quite different from one another but were all still Filipinos (even if they themselves might protest against this label). Imelda Marcos' intentions for the Cultural Center echoed sentiments of Filipino nationalism that harbored an innate tension between the desire for the development of things "Filipino" and the ambition directed at joining the global scheme of modernity.

In the end, whether or not one agreed with Imelda's grandiose statements regarding the CCP, and whether or not one might be suspicious of her ideas about culture, the inauguration of the Center with a homemade extravaganza like *Dularawan* was just one way of composing the nation.

Notes

1. As a state-sponsored patron and home venue for Filipino composers and performing groups, the Cultural Center has played a significant role in the musical universe of the Philippines. While any number of private organizations have financed musicians, the CCP has rep-

resented the Philippine government's hand in the preservation and promotion of Philippine culture. Begun as a pet-project of Imelda Marcos, the CCP has continued functioning in various capacities despite political turmoil and critical opposition.

- 2 Even the word "tribe" is controversial in the Philippines, since the term has become burdened with various negative associations. While some prefer designations such as "ethnic minority" or "ethnic community," others prefer more narrowly-defined terms such as "lumad" [highland communities in the Southern Philippines]. Many continue to use the word "tribe." I use "tribe," in the context of this document, since it is the term used during the historical period in question.

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Feel the Power: Music in a Spanish-Language Pentecostal Church

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Introduction

When I was in the 5th grade in the early 1970s in Bell Gardens, California, a small suburb in southeast Los Angeles, I was invited to church by my best friend, Marvin Wyatt. His family, like many others in the area, had come to Bell Gardens from Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and neighboring states, searching for work in the southern California industrial boom that followed WWII. In a sense they represented another wave of the dust bowl families that had come to California in the 1930s and had been documented so heartbreakingly in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. When these families came west in their beaten-up Fords and Chevrolets, they brought with them little more than the clothes on their backs, their dreams for a better life, and their unwavering faith in God.

My visit to Marvin's church left a lasting impression on me. Being children, we were initially taken to a small room where we discussed the Bible while the adults performed their service in the main sanctuary. I don't remember very much about the Bible discussion and the little that I do remember makes me think that nothing out of the ordinary happened there. However, when we finally joined the adults in the main sanctuary, the spectacle there was unlike anything I had ever seen. There were adults scattered all over the sanctuary screaming, yelling, weeping, jerking and contorting on their feet, rolling on the floor, and speaking in a language I had never heard before. Above all this, there was music—loud, guitar and drum-driven music. This was not the kind of sacred music that I was accustomed to hearing in my family's Catholic Church. No monster movie, no ghost story, no Halloween haunted house had ever scared me as much as I was that night. It was chaos. It was pandemonium. It was my first visit to a Pentecostal church.¹

Pentecostalism is sweeping Latin American. It now represents the second largest body of Christians in the world. This popularity is reflected in the Latino community of Los Angeles, which represents a mixture of long-time citizens and recent immigrants. On any Sunday,

from hundreds of informal store-front churches in central Los Angeles, one can hear Pentecostals singing to the sound of bands playing energetic, loud, American-style popular music as the Holy Spirit descends in the form of worshipers wailing, speaking in tongues, raising their hands toward heaven, and falling to the ground in epileptic-like seizures.

Why is Pentecostalism so popular in Los Angeles and Latin America? Obviously, the Pentecostal church is meeting a great number of needs—social, economic, and spiritual—for these Latinos. This movement, while still relatively in its infancy, cannot be ignored completely nor easily dismissed. This paper examines and analyzes the role of music in attracting people to Pentecostal churches and the work music does in the services.

Background

The Pentecostal movement represents the second largest group of Christians and the fastest-growing Spanish religious movement in the world. Without the gift of tongues there would have been no Pentecostal movement. But Pentecostalism is not just a tongues movement. Rather, it seeks to personally experience God as well as to believe in God. In many, but not all, this experience finds expression in tongues (glossolalia) when one receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit, from which also flow the other gifts of the Spirit manifest in the early church (1 Corinthians. 12:4-11). Essential to the Pentecostal ethos is power directed to ministry: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

While some may view Latin American Pentecostalism as an outgrowth of American imperialism, its success is more likely due to its similarities to many indigenous folk religions, which stress an intense emotional spirituality. On an individual level this climaxes in the experience of Spirit-fullness and glossolalia, and on a communal level in group prayer, song, dance and the cultivation of varied charismata of healing. Latin American Pentecostal churches follow holiness doctrines and hold to literal Biblicism. Although originally the consequence of North American missionary activity, these phenomena have effectively connected with Latin American folk religiosity (Nida 1961).

Intense emotional spirituality characterizes this form of Christianity, which has its roots in the negative daily experiences of the working class. As a result Pentecostalism compels followers to protest

their position in a morally ambiguous society and take action to change their condition. The conversion of the Pentecostal believer is seen as a means through which the individual is freed from the negative world into a new life within the church (Westmeier 1993).

It is increasingly difficult to tell the difference between the various forms of Pentecostalism because of its informality as a religious movement. Therefore, in this study, the terms "Pentecostal," "charismatic," and "evangelical" (*evangelico*) will be used interchangeably. Pentecostal denotes those modern groups that descend from the founding preaching of the Rev. Charles Parham in Topeka, Kan., in 1901, and from the Rev. William J. Seymour, a former slave and holiness minister, of the Azusa Street church in Los Angeles in 1906. The Biblical manifesto of these Pentecostals can be found in Acts 2:1-4 of the Bible, which states, "And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from Heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit was giving them utterance."

Pentecostals are thought to number 500 million worldwide. Social scientists studying Pentecostalism in Latin America have argued that it is political in the identities, expectations, and social formations it creates; and that it could have important political consequences in the future. But what do Pentecostals themselves think about their role in changing society? What are the consequences of Pentecostalism on the future of Latin America and Los Angeles? These questions may be answered partly in time, but by looking at one such church in central Los Angeles we might get a glimpse of the values promulgated within the church and the role of music in the Pentecostalism movement.

Case Study: Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia

Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia- Iglesia de Restauracion (Christian Mission Shower of Grace- Church of Restoration) is located at 261 N. Bonnie Brae St., approximately one mile from MacArthur Park near downtown Los Angeles. The pastor of this church is Julio Lopez, an elegant, well-dressed, mild-mannered, monolingual Spanish-speaker in his mid-forties. The congregation rents space from a Korean Christian church. The seating capacity of the church is approximately 200, although most services for the Pentecostal church attract approximately 75-100 worshippers.

A typical Sunday service begins at 6:00 PM with singing, accompanied by keyboards, electric bass, drum set, electric guitar, and electronic percussion played on drum pads set to various sounds (tambourine, shaker, claves). Many members of the congregation also accompany the music with tambourines. The singing is led by a male song leader who is backed up by three female vocalists who sing along in unison (one octave above the song leader). The words to the songs are projected on to the front wall of the sanctuary using an overhead projector. The music continues without a break for an entire hour as each song melts almost seamlessly into the next. The meters of the songs are invariably duple and the tempo begins slow and builds to a frenzy by 7:00 PM, when pastor Lopez takes over the last song, finishes it, and begins his sermon. (Listening Example #4 on CD) This first hour of music sets the stage for worshipers to give themselves fully to God and allow the Holy Spirit to enter them. A very important aspect of these songs is that their form is very simple and highly repetitive. Most songs are strophic. Others open with a verse that is only sung through once. Once the chorus is sung it continues to be repeated until the end of the song. Here are a few examples of the texts for these opening songs. These first two songs are slow, duple meter, American-style pop ballads.

SONG #1: "ESTOY AQUI PARA ADORARTE"

Estoy aqui para adorarte	(I am here to worship you
Y contemplar tu hermosura	And contemplate your beauty
Y decirte que te amo	And tell you that I love you)

SONG #2: "AL ENTRAR DE TU PRESENCIA"

Al entrar de tu presencia	(To come into your presence
Derramo mi corazon	My heart overflows
Afligido y angustiado	Troubled and anguished
ante ti, oh mi Señor	Before you, oh my Lord
Proclamo tu grandeza	I proclaim your greatness
en medio de la congregacion	Before the congregation
Abandono todo atras	I leave everything behind
Me sumerjo Señor	I submerge myself Lord
En tu habilitacion	To your will)

In Song #1, the text states explicitly that the people are here to worship. The references to a very personal and passionate love for God, e.g. "and contemplate your beauty," "and tell you that I love you," are

similar to the manner in which Sufis speak of their love for Allah, almost in the same way one might speak of their lover. In Song #2, the phrase, "Before the congregation," foreshadows the need and desire to experience the presence of the spirit before an audience. In every culture where possession occurs, it is a very public act, taking place in what Arendt would call a public space of appearance (Ricoeur 1995: 88). In today's world, this is problematic since we tend to equate reality with appearance and the "public." As Ricoeur states, for Arendt in modern society,

...even the greatest forces of intimate life—the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses—lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance (Ricoeur 1995:88).

Perhaps this legitimization through the public accounts for the fact that at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia they are very open to visitors observing their service and take great efforts to document their services by filming each service using three video cameras. The resulting videos are used by members to enjoy the services in their homes and to recruit new members. In addition, the videos provide a documentation of the visitations by the Holy Spirit, reinforcing its "realness" for all to see.

As the first hour of music progresses, the tempo of the music increases and the rhythm becomes similar to a polka, as in Song #3, which provides a joyous atmosphere that encourages dancing, both through the music and the text.

SONG #3: "ASI SE ALABA A DIOS"

Asi, asi, asi se alaba a dios	(This is the way we praise God
Asi, asi, asi se alaba a dios	This is the way we praise God
Y dale una danzadita	And do a little dance
Asi se alaba a Dios	This is the way we praise God)

Near the end of the first hour, one of the final songs sung before the sermon is Song #4, "Hay Una Paloma Blanca." The text for this song uses the metaphor of a dove to represent the Holy Spirit searching for a place to land, foreshadowing the entering of the Spirit into the hearts of those present.

SONG #4: "HAY UNA PALOMA BLANCA"

Hay una paloma blanca	(There is a white dove
Que esta bolando en este lugar	That flies in this place
Es el espiritu santo	It is the Holy Spirit
Que esta buscando done morar	That is seeking a home
Abrele tu corazon (3x)	Open your heart (3x)
Y dejale reposar	And let it come to rest)

During the sermon, the music does not stop. The keyboardist and drummer punctuate Pastor Lopez's sermon, often with minor 9th chords and cymbal rolls. As the sermon progresses and increases in intensity, the bassist and guitarist join in as the band improvises chord progressions to fit the pastor's mood and message. This use of music during the sermon is reminiscent of the constant use of music in African-American churches.

At around 7:45 PM, the children are ushered out of the sanctuary to an adjoining room, where they will do arts and crafts for the next hour. Pastor Lopez invites the adults to the front of the stage to receive the Holy Spirit, and practically the entire congregation moves to the front of the church. When Pastor Lopez invites the worshipers to the front, the following song is sung.

SONG #5: "LLEVAME"

Llevame, con tu precencia, llevame	(Take me, with your presence, take me
Llevame, con tu poder, llevame	Take me, with your power, take me
Llevame, con tu amor, llevame	Take me, with your love, take me)

In this song, the music and words are very repetitive and simple. This allows the singing of the songs to become almost automatic as they stand near the stage with eyes close and arms outstretched toward heaven, concentrating on feeling the presence of the Spirit.

After "Llevame," the band holds one chord loudly, usually a minor chord, while parishioners continue to raise their hands to heaven with their eyes closed. By this time Pastor Lopez's speaking becomes more excited. At this point, rather than speaking entire sentences, he repeatedly yells words and phrases such as "*Recibe lo*" (receive it [the spirit]) and "*Llena me*" (fill me) at the top of his lungs. (Listening

Example #5 on CD) Worshipers tremble, shake, weep, rock from side to side, and fall to the ground when touched by him. Within 20 minutes, the floor of the church is literally littered with bodies! After people fall to the ground they may lie there for a long time (up to an hour) or get back up within a few minutes. Some fall to their chairs when touched by the pastor. Others do not fall at all, but show other signs of being touched by the Spirit, such as weeping, yelling, shaking, or running in place.

After most of the members of the congregation have been "touched" by the Holy Spirit, the music changes to a slow ballad with singing. People gradually rise from the ground and join in singing. The next song is also a ballad, but with a slightly faster tempo. On one of the nights I attended, at this point in the service the congregation sang the American religious song, "How Great Thou Art" with Spanish lyrics. (Listening Example #3 on CD) I also heard Spanish versions of "The Red River Valley" and "When the Saints Go Marching In," all of these songs providing evidence of Pentecostalism's strong Anglo-American missionary roots.

As the service approaches its conclusion the music gets increasingly faster and joyous as people begin to dance energetically. The rhythm and melodies of these songs, I found out later, borrow heavily from Jewish songs. The songs are all sung in Spanish, however, with lyrics that offer thanks to Jesus and suggest the role of music in the service, e.g. "the music inside our hearts is the music of God." The service ends at about 9:00PM and people go to a side room to socialize and get a hot meal and non-perishable food items to take home.

The Role of Music

The role of the music in Pentecostal churches is multilayered. The work done by the music includes (1) sanctifying the space, (2) spirit invocation, (3) deepening of the spoken word, (4) attracting people to the service and holding their attention, (5) helping the worshipers to achieve an ecstatic experience, (6) providing a feeling of pleasure, (7) fulfillment of scripture, (8) evoking connections with Israel (the ancient promised land), (9) evoking connections with America (the modern promised land?), (10) creation of another world within the service, (11) alluding to the possibility of a better world outside the church in our lifetimes and beyond, and (12) personal transformation. Each of these

areas will be discussed briefly in more detail².

How does the music help to sanctify the space and the people? When I was in the Chiweshe rural area of Zimbabwe, just north of Harare, in the summer of 1998 I became very aware of the importance of sacred space to the Shona people in this district. Not only was a temporary space identified for ceremonies, which were always held in the main roundhouse, but there was also a permanent sacred space around us. An unusual dome-topped mountain loomed above my village. One day I asked my host if he would accompany me to climb this mountain. He told me that he would go with me part of the way up the mountain but could not climb with me to the top because it was a sacred mountain that could only be accessed at certain times by special spiritual leaders. There were also many legends about what lived at the top of the mountain, including a story about a giant snake. As a sign of respect to my hosts, I decided to take a different hike on that day.

In *The Sacred and the Profane*, Mircea Eliade contends that religious human beings need the comfort of being able to identify and access sacred ground or space (Eliade 1987). He talks of a nomadic tribe of religious people, the Achilpa, who used a sacred pole as a portable axis mundi (center of the earth), which for them acted as a sanctifier of sacred ground from which power emanated (Wooley 1999).

In *Figuring the Sacred*, Paul Ricoeur agrees with Eliade that humans have a need to preserve the sacred in everyday life. According to Ricoeur, "Modern persons no longer have a sacred place, a center, a *templum*, a holy mountain, or an *axis mundi*. Their existence is decentered, eccentric, a-centered" (Ricoeur 1995:61). He continues,

Can we live without some originary orientation? Is it simply a residual phenomenon, or an existential protest arising out of the depths of our being, that sends us in search of privileged places...? We return to such places because *there* a more than everyday reality erupted and because the memory attached to what took place there preserves us from being simply errant vagrants in the world. (Ricoeur 1995:64)

For traditional groups like the Achilpa and Shona, sacred space and time are explicitly identified and accessible. Its presence is known to all and it is something that these traditional peoples depend on. In industrial societies, the physical definition of sacred space has become less clear. One way in which sacred space is created in the Pentecostal church is through the sanctification of the church space with sound and music.

Music is a part of the ritual process at the beginning of Pentecostal services. Music fills the space with a loud sound. The songs provide a common text, which unifies the congregation in a ritual activity that sets this time and space apart from the rest of the members' lives inside and outside the church. In Pentecostal churches, those elements that are normally associated with rituals are present—time, space, place, change in status, and performance. For instance, it is obvious from the description of Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia that a regular time (e.g. Sunday 6 PM), place (261 N. Bonnie Brae St.) and space (church sanctuary) are all important to the services. It is also obvious that a change in status occurs during the ceremonies with spirit possession as manifested through speaking in tongues, fainting, falling, convulsions, and similar physical changes.

How does music help to call the Holy Spirit and create an environment for Spirit possession? The connection between folk religions and Pentecostalism was mentioned earlier in this paper. The similarities with traditions where music is associated with trance and possession are striking. For instance, we can compare and contrast Pentecostalism and its music with the *mbira* tradition of the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

Many types of ceremonies in Zimbabwe call for music and spirit possession. However, in theory, *mbira* is not absolutely crucial to any type of ceremony. Many times, thanks are given and spirits are acknowledged without the presence of music (Alviso 1998). Likewise, Pastor Lopez said that the service he performs could be done without music. The advantage of having music is that "music motivates us more" (Lopez 1999).

In Zimbabwe, if possession is important to a ceremony, it can be brought about through *mbira*, but may also be achieved through other means, particularly *ngoma* (drumming), hand clapping, or snuff (tobacco) (Berliner 1993, Maraire 1990). The same is true with Pentecostals, according to Pastor Lopez, who can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit even without music (Lopez 1999). This finding is consistent with that of Gilbert Rouget:

Music has often been thought of as endowed with the mysterious power of triggering possession, and the musicians of possession as the withholders of some mysterious knowledge that enables them to manipulate this power...There is no mystery to it at all. Or, if there is, then it lies in the trance state itself, as a special state of consciousness...This is source from which the trance springs. Music does nothing more than socialize it, and enable it to attain its full development. (1985:325-326)

Although trance and possession can occur without music in Pentecostal churches, it is unlikely that this happens very often. Music has been intimately connected with the presence of the Holy Spirit in every case that I've witnessed thus far. The reasons for this are many. Both *bira* ceremonies, in which the Shona worship their ancestors through music, singing, dance, and in many cases, trance and spirit possession, and Pentecostal churches provide the opportunity for participation, especially in the music (hand clapping, singing, dancing, and playing of tambourines). This gives everyone a role in bringing about possession and feeling the spirit.

During the music, especially when it is loud, there is also the opportunity for more of a personal expression of troubles and grievances that can be expressed concurrently along with the larger community functions. In my paper of the Shona *bira* ceremonies, I wrote, "Through the common experience of the rituals associated with these ceremonies, there is increased social cohesion and solidarity. In the process, the spirit provides comfort not only to the community, but also to the individual, guiding them both towards happiness, good luck and a positive future" (Alviso 1998). The same may be said for many religious ceremonies and groups around the world, but with its emphasis on first hand experience with the spirit, Pentecostals may come closer to the *bira* ceremony and other folk religions than the other Christian denominations. Pastor Lopez, while admitting that the service could be performed without music, says that the music plays a major role in providing motivation and clarity. Regarding the presence of music during a service, he says,

There's no difference in terms of what one preaches or says. It's the same. The only thing is that music motivates us more. It makes it easier. Because what we try to do is present the message and the word of God as well as can be done. We try to cultivate the mind of the person so that they can see things more clearly. (Lopez 1999)

How does the music deepen the spoken word of the minister? During the sermons at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia, Pastor Lopez's sermon is punctuated and accompanied by keyboards and cymbals. This adds drama at appropriate moments and helps to hold the interest of the audience. Pastor Lopez says,

We found that with the sound of the cymbals, bass, or keyboard, the words that are being spoken have a greater impact. It better

suits the human senses. So, that's why we have music—to achieve a greater attentiveness with the people. When there is something important like a blessing being given the music gives it the depth to impact our souls. (Lopez 1999)

The music is also used when the sermon builds by providing rhythmic accompaniment to both unison and call and response chants. One common example at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia is the call “*A su nombre* (To his name),” which is answered by the congregation with a loud “*Gloria a Dios* (Glory to God)!” This chant is often done to the accompaniment of the entire band.

How does music attract people to the service and keep them there? Part of the answer to this question is obvious. The use of loud music in a popular idiom is the main initial attraction to these churches, which demographically attract young families and teenagers. The melodies are memorable and the rhythms are strong, so that participation through singing and dancing are encouraged. Churches attempt to secure the best musicians possible. Even if the individual members of the congregation have little money, churches make it a priority to invest in high-quality instruments and sound systems. I was surprised to find excellent multi-channel sound systems with surround-sound speaker configurations even in the smallest, poorest storefront churches. The sound system at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia was typical: a 16-channel PA system with 8-10 speakers surrounding the audience. In addition, even though the churches are naturally reverberant, most sound engineers (and every church I've been in has one) add echo or reverberation to the voices to make them sound even bigger. When I asked one music director for a Pentecostal church about the role music and sound played in the church, he said, “If the bass and drums are turned up and miked really well, the people will be able to *feel the power of the Spirit*” (Tiguila 1999).

How does music help to create an environment that leads to trance and an ecstatic experience? On a purely acoustical level, the loud music, with the low frequencies of the drums and bass accentuated, vibrates the human body. The manipulation of tempo and dynamics throughout the service, from medium to slow to fast, and from medium loud to soft to loud, correlates with the spiritual journey from yearning to suffering to ecstasy and fulfillment that is taken in the service. As mentioned before, the song forms contain a high degree of repetition. Not only does this make the songs easy to learn and remember, but the

repetition also figures into the trance-like state that the worshipers arrive at from singing the same refrain over and over. The first hour of the service is one continuous medley of songs. This has the effect of warming up the voice, lungs, and body almost to the point of exhaustion, thus in the next section when the Spirit possession occurs, the worshipers are ready for a release. The holding of one chord during the Spirit possession has the effect of an extended climax. During and after the Spirit possession, the songs consist of deceptive cadences played over and over. When the final cadence is arrived at, the musicians hold the V chord, sometimes for several minutes before resolution. Many of these musical elements (repetition, cyclical chord structures, and manipulation of tempo and dynamics) are found in other traditions, such as Shona bira ceremonies, where music helps to achieve an ecstatic state.

How does music provide an emotional feeling of pleasure? According to Pastor Lopez, "The music is an expression of the fullness that we feel to allow God to be with us in this place. That's why we sing so much— because we want to express to God that we have happiness in our hearts." This desire for happiness by singing and dancing is an antidote to the hardships that many of these recent immigrants face in their daily lives. Pastor Lopez point out,

When we come from our homes, we bring certain things that during the day have happened to us, some sadness, some problems...The music stimulates us and lifts our spirit and gives us strength to go forward, because clearly the path we have begun in evangelism is not easy... We have to face many problems in the world—we are criticized, we are mocked, so many things. When we have music it liberates us.... (Lopez 1999)

How does music help to fulfill scripture, i.e. sacred text? In Psalm 150, the Bible says, "Praise Him with trumpet sound. Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with tambourine and dancing. Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals. Praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has brass Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord." The Biblical reference to trumpet blasts and the power of music is also referred to by Pastor Lopez, who says,

We believe firmly that the presence of music brings liberation to the soul. It's a kind of music like the battle call of an army. When an army goes to battle they sound the trumpet. That stimulates the army. If they were to go depressed or sad they wouldn't have

the same impact. So when the music comes, it's battle music for us... We are fighting against spirits that have the person's mind working to make them sad or anguished. When we have music it liberates us because the Bible tells us that David liberated Saul, when he was troubled by spirits of the world, through solely playing the harp. So for us the music is very important. (Lopez 1999)

This statement by Pastor Lopez ties together many of the reasons for music being so important to the Pentecostals. It brings "liberation to the soul." It acts as "battle music," and it "stimulates" and "lifts the spirit." It also fulfills sacred text by its use of music in the same manner that Saul "liberated" David.

How does music evoke connections with Israel in Pentecostal services? One of the most striking aspects of the music in Spanish language Pentecostal churches in Los Angeles is the lack of Latino influence in the style of the music. I went to these services expecting to find norteño, cumbia, mariachi, and salsa influences in the music. Instead I was surprised to hear music influenced mostly by American pop music and what sounded to me like Jewish music, including a Spanish version of "Hava Nagilah" (Listening Example #2 on CD). I asked Saul Aguirre, the music director at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia, about the origin of the music they play and its style. He said, "Some songs take something from Israel. They are from Israel, some of the refrains. The rest are Christian songs that originated here (in America) I believe" (Aguirre 1999). The texts of many of the songs, especially those after Spirit possession near the end of the service, mention the Israelites. The Israelites and the Jewish religion serve as a Christian *axis mundi* to many religious peoples, including the Pentecostals, and, as such, symbolize a return to pre-modern religion. Not only do Pentecostals relate to the stories of Jewish persecution, but also the Jews' search for a home, i.e. Promised Land, corresponds to the search for a new country for these Latin American immigrants and refugees. The Pentecostals' kinship with the Jews represents more evidence of the break from the continuity of Catholic tradition and a possible desire to return to and connect with pre-modern religious practices.

How does music evoke connections with America in Pentecostal services? As mentioned previously, most of the songs in Pentecostal services in Los Angeles have their origin in the American songs brought to Latin America by missionaries early in the 20th century. Saul Aguirre, music director at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia, states, "Mostly they are American hymns that have been translated to Spanish" (Aguirre

1999). In various services at several Pentecostal churches in Los Angeles, I heard Spanish versions of "How Great Thou Art," "When the Saints Go Marching In," and "Red River Valley." During the sermons at Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia I have also often heard gospel and blues riffs on the keyboards. Julio Lopez, the pastor, states, "The rhythm is not so important to us as what is written and what is being said—what the Lord expresses to us in words" (Lopez 1999). However, during sermons, Pastor Lopez also spoke often about how the Spirit had guided members of the congregation from their poor and war-torn countries to United States, making allusions to it as "the promised land." Many of the members of the church I spoke to, while recognizing that there are many racial and economic problems in the United States, admire its political system. Although Pentecostals such as Pastor Lopez may not feel that it is significant that they sing and play mostly American songs, there may be connotations for them between American music and political freedom and economic prosperity.

How does music help to create another world within the service? Interestingly, the use of American music in Pentecostal services may aid in creating an alternate reality for these Latin American immigrants. Theodor Adorno states that, "Autonomous works of art firmly negate empirical reality" (Adorno 1985:313). He contends that cultural works mediate aporias such as the relation between music and society. In particular, his position is, "What makes an artwork an artwork is its difference from reality." While I am hesitant to suggest that the bland American-style pop music that dominates Pentecostal services is the highest form of autonomous art, stylistically it does represent a different world from the daily reality of these Latin American immigrants, many of who may rarely hear American-style music outside of the Pentecostal church. The sophisticated amplification systems in these churches, with their enveloping sound and added reverberation, and the video cameras, also add to the larger than life feeling in the church. The creation of another world, distinct from that faced outside the church, has already been noted by Pastor Lopez when he stated that, "When we come from our homes, we bring certain things that during the day have happened to us, some sadness, some problems. So when we come and sing, our souls are lifted" (Lopez 1999). Thus, the American-style music with Spanish lyrics may represent, to an extent, a relation of non-identity between music and society, opening up a space to imagine, as Adorno puts it, "the creation of a just life" (Adorno 1985).

How does music allude to the possibility of a better world outside the church in our lifetimes and beyond? Another of the aporias

mediated by works of music is that between society or nature and freedom. The Pentecostal church is geared to provide its members with a sense of being able to change their lives today through contact with the Holy Spirit. Music has the ability to affect our moods and how we comport ourselves. Throughout the Pentecostal service, music stimulates the appropriate and desired emotions- from devotion to suffering to sadness to Spirit possession to fullness, happiness, celebration, and ultimately, liberation. In the process, Pentecostals feel at one with God and not only renew their faith in a better life in Heaven, but also experience and feel the sacredness of everyday life here on Earth. They desire to take the feeling of the sacred with them beyond the service to make their lives better in the here and now, to overcome hardships, and bring economic prosperity, and political and social freedom. Pastor Lopez reiterates this role of the music when he says, "The music stimulates us and lifts our spirit and gives us strength to go forward...When we have music it liberates us" (Lopez 1999). In a sense, the Pentecostals have created a space in their services where all are equal. During services, pastor and common worshipers alike are free to exclaim their sentiments loudly at any time. Men and women are equal in being able to receive the Holy Spirit through tongues and possession. Furthermore, they have created a space where there are few rules, abnormal behavior is the goal, and spontaneous action is the norm.

Finally, how does music contribute to personal transformation? Through the presence of singing and dancing to music with tempo and dynamic changes, people feel freer to weep, yell, and experience trance, ecstasy and an intense emotional release. In addition, people leave the service singing the phrase, "Cristo vive en mi [Christ lives in me]" (Listening Example #6 on CD). In *Figuring the Sacred*, Paul Ricoeur notes the power of music and singing in memorializing narrative. He writes, "In particular, as regards narrative, it is by making it a memory that the hymn takes up and repeats the narration" (Ricoeur 1995:179). The singing of the phrase "Christ lives in me!" sustains the text as the members leave the church and go back to their homes, jobs, and weekly routines.

Conclusion

The Pentecostal church now represents the second largest group of Christians in the world. As a religious movement it cannot be ignored nor easily dismissed. Music plays a central role in attracting members to the church and in its services and rites. The role of music in Pentecostal churches is multilayered. The work the music does includes sanctifying of the space, spirit invocation, deepening of the spoken word, attracting people to the service and holding their attention, helping the worshipers to achieve an ecstatic experience, providing a feeling of pleasure, fulfillment of scripture, evoking connections with Israel (the ancient promised land), evoking connections with America (the modern promised land), creation of another world within the service, alluding to the possibility of a better outside the church in our lifetimes and beyond, and personal transformation. While many of these functions are shared by other religious denominations, I would argue that few religions, aside from those still rooted in ancient traditions, combine all of these outcomes and few place music in such a central role toward achieving these outcomes.

Notes:

1. I would like to thank Pastor Julio Lopez and the members of Mision Cristiana Lluvias de Gracia- Iglesia de Restauracion for welcoming me so graciously into their house of worship and for their time and patience in answering all of my questions. I would also like to thank Amy Wooley for her invaluable insights and contributions to this paper in its early versions.
2. I conducted field research in Zimbabwe in the summer of 1998, gathering information on the *gandanga* tuning of the *mbira dzavadzimu* for an article yet to be published.

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Audio Examples:

- 1) "Viene y Alegramos (Come and Be Joyful)" to the tune of "Hava Nagilah" (excerpt 1:45) (#2 on CD)
- 2) "Tan Grande Fe (How Great Thou Art)" (excerpt 1:45) (#3 on CD)
- 3) Beginning of pastor's sermon with music in background (:22) (#4 on CD)
- 4) Section of sermon with Pastor Lopez exclaiming "*Que se mueva* (Let it moveyou)!", "*Gloria a Dios* (Glory to God)!", and "*Llena me* (Fill me)!" as members of the congregation convulse and fall to the ground when "touched" by the spirit. (1:01) (#5 onCD)
- 5) "Christo Vive en Mi (Christ Lives in Me)." End of service song. (excerpt 1:25) (#6 on CD)

The Instrument is Alive: An Interview with Ustad Zakir Hussain

Michael Robinson

Music, which possesses complexity and clarity at once, has always grabbed my attention and stimulated my imagination. First it was primarily Bach, and then primarily Charlie Parker, and in recent years, the art music of India, which for myself surpasses everything that came before. Within a tradition of Hindustani music looms the art of tabla drumming, exhibiting a degree of labyrinthal rhythmic sophistication and textural refinement as to seem from another planet. Alla Rakha, Anindo Chatterjee, Swapan Chaudhuri, Chatur Lal, Shufat Ali Khan and Shanta Prasad are some of the great tabla artists who have thrilled me as a listener and inspired me as a composer. There are many other great performers on this miraculous instrument who I look forward to appreciating in the future, either through live performances or recordings. However, when I am composing the percussion parts for my own music, it feels like Zakir Hussain's rhythmic language and vocabulary is very close by, awakening my own drumming instincts more so than any other percussionist.

Ustad Zakir Hussain is widely regarded as having inherited the throne of this fantastically demanding discipline from his father Ustad Alla Rakha. Indeed his musical life-force or prana is so potent that he transcends the medium, and has branched out into new musical forms, which includes the creation of pure percussion ensembles filled with the drums of different lands.

There is a three-dimensional quality to Hussain's solo tabla concerts that belies the previous limitations of non-pitched percussion. His limitless facility does not include the ability to produce an unnecessary stroke or an unmusical bol, for he exists in the musical realm of Nirvana where perfection is natural.

Hussain flew in from India to his home near San Francisco on Saturday evening, February 28, 1999, and then from San Francisco to Los Angeles on Sunday afternoon for a sold-out concert at UCLA's Royce Hall with Ali Akbar Khan on Sunday evening. Following the concert, there were almost a hundred friends, colleagues and fans who came to greet him in the Green Room, basking in the glow of his warm and unpretentious disposition.

Despite this flurry of activity, and two scheduled classes the next morning, Zakir was kind enough to keep our scheduled interview, inviting me to meet him at his hotel room on the Wilshire corridor at midnight. When I arrived, Zakir was resting on the bed with his head propped up with pillows against the headboard, so I pulled a chair up, the only difference being I felt more like the patient, with Zakir being the doctor!

I have italicized the words to which Zakir gave spoken emphasis, both in volume and intensity, in much the same way he places accents in his tabla playing.

Michael Robinson (M): There have been major changes in Indian classical music in the 20th century, and it is my understanding that Ravi Shankar was an important part of these changes, one critical aspect of which was the greater role given to the tabla player.

Zakir Hussain (Z): Well, I have to say that Ravi Shankarji, or Raviji, or Uncle, as we call him, has been a boon to the tabla fraternity *per se*. Also, I have to add that it requires a special kind of tabla player to be able to interact in the way that that they were doing, and it cannot happen with everybody, and it just so happens that Raviji hooked-up with my father, and they, somehow the way they reacted to each other on the stage, and also *offstage*, you know, more importantly *offstage*, it sort of worked its way into their musical repertoire as well....And that kind of an interaction just became a natural *extension* from their regular everyday social interaction.

M: I wasn't aware that [Shankar and your father] were close personal friends.

Z: Yes, of course, and that's the main reason they worked together for 30 years.

M: I see.

Z: And my father did not play for *any* other musician except for Ravi Shankar. For almost 22 odd years he did not play with anyone else.

M: That's amazing!

Z: Yes. So, I mean, that kind of a commitment was there, and it was simply because they *vibed* well together, and therefore the interaction showed that comradeship, that love, that affection that they held for each other. And so it doesn't happen with every tabla play-

er, or every instrumentalist. There are only a few examples of this thing happening in *those* days. I mean Kishan Miharaj was another one who reacted very well with Raviji, or Ali Akbar Khansaheb, or Vilayat Khan, and similarly, Shanta Prasad. So these three tabla players, my father, Kishan Miharaj and Shanta Prasad, they had the kind of personality, and the kind of magnetism that when they were on the stage with the instrumentalist, they had that confidence that they could *interact*, they could take chances, they could connect with the instrumentalist on the same level that the instrumentalist was himself or herself at that point, and therefore *their* strength or their magnetism also found a lot on the instrumentalist or the tabla player. So it was in effect Raviji's involvement with the South Indian music, where the mridangam player, in other words, the rhythm player is almost a parallel part of the performance. I mean both the rhythm player and the melodic player, they work hand in hand.

M: Mridangam more than the ghatam?

Z: Mridangam more than the ghatam. They actually work hand in hand together. They're almost playing *simultaneously*.

M: So this is something he heard in Karnatic music.

Z: Yes. And he has had an interest in Karnatic music. He has been in some ways influenced in his younger days with that.

M: Is it also true that the earlier dhrupad style had a more active involvement of the pakawaj?

Z: Exactly. The dhrupad style after the alap was over and the pakawaj player began, it was pretty much similar to what the mridangam player did with his...with the vina player or something. So it was exactly together. I mean they played together, they improvised together, and it was *simultaneous*.

M: So one might almost say at the same time he (Ravi Shankar) was innovative, he was also bringing back something.

Z: Yes. Except for it wasn't as *cluttered* as that was. I have to say, when a pakawaj player and the dhrupad singer or the vina player are improvising simultaneously there's bound to be places where you will *not connect*, and it will sound a little funny, and the same thing with the mridangam player and a vina player.

- M: But how is that different with the North Indian music and Raviji and your father?
- Z: Well, what has happened with people like Raviji, you know, they found a good middle ground. It wasn't like, OK, the tabla player should play like a pakawaj player does with the dhruwad singer, or like a mridangam player does with the vina player, but they will interact in such a way that there will be much more of an *input* by the tabla player *enhancing* what the instrumentalist was doing, and filling in the areas which the instrumentalist was *leaving* open as breathing space for himself. And so it almost felt like that there was a chain being created, and it just continuously was being, you know, being *tied*. The clips were being put on continuously. If the sitar was not doing it, the tabla player was, and if the tabla player was not doing it, the sitar player was. So there was an interaction which was not simultaneous but almost *instantaneous*. Almost, you know, it's like one followed the other.
- M. I find it an interesting parallel that in an entirely different culture, in another part of the world, the most influential Western improviser [of the second half of the 20th century], Charlie Parker was born the same year as Ravi Shankar...
- Z. Uh hum.
- M. ...and this new prominence given to rhythm, of which you are now the leader, or a leader...
- Z. I'm not the leader, definitely.
- M. ...is in the air, and these two giants of different cultures bring about great rhythmic innovations, as well as melodic, timbral and expressive innovations. I believe...
- Z. Well, when you're talking about be-bop, all that stuff, [shifting to swing jazz]
- Z: Well, (in jazz) there are horn players playing three or four different parts at the same time. I mean when you are hearing someone like Benny Goodman, and he's playing his clarinet, there's a trumpet section, there's a saxophone section, there's a trombone section, and they're all playing together, and it's one tune. But they're playing separately. They're playing separate parts, and none of these parts sort of run into each other and mess each other up, they *complete*

ment each other, and that's exactly what Ravi Shankar accomplished with his tabla player, namely my father, and it was *incredibly* generous of him to think that the tabla player should have a spot.

M: It took a lot of security I imagine, because many musicians would just be overwhelmed by someone like Alla Rakha, or today...

Z: Well, he's a musician who has an incredible amount of confidence, and an incredible amount of stage savvy, and he's probably the first Indian musician who's worked out what you may call a *presentation* package for Indian music. Nobody thought of that. You have to realize that Indian classical music on stage is a fairly young entity. I mean, what happened before Independence, the music was in the courts, in the palaces, and very rarely was it there for regular people to hear. It was only after Independence, when there were no more courts, the musicians had to look to common people as audiences. And so they had to *learn* to be entertainers. They had to *learn* to be on stage. They had to learn to perform for someone other than just his highness or her highness, and so on. So they were all still groping with the idea of being performers on stage and having to deal with an audience which really had no idea of what this music was all about, and then the musicians having no idea of how to go about making them *understand*, and so Ravi Shankar was probably the first person who actually figured out the whole stage-craft bag. This whole packaging of our presentation of a performance, and how to put it all together, and how to keep the audience interested. And one of those things was to be able to create the interactive *performance* along with the musicians on the stage.

M: I'd like to focus on your tabla playing.

Z: Uh hum.

M: One thing I find exceptionally unique about your playing is the tonal quality, the sound itself. I have never heard a tabla player who has such a full, rich sound.

Z: You're very kind.

M: And at the same time, you are able to play with unlimited articulation, whether it's a slow tempo or a fast tempo. So sometimes you might think with such a full, large sound, it might be difficult to play swiftly, but that isn't the case because you can adjust for different passages the sound of the tabla, the timbre of the tabla. I've

heard that South Indians regard the tabla (mridangam) sounds, the bols, as something that was given to mankind by divinities, or going back to ancient legends in history.

Z: Well, (Zakir's voice takes on a hushed tone) it is believed that Shiva's damaru was the origin of rhythm sounds, and whatever sound Shiva made on the damaru, he passed them onto his son, the elephant god, the god Ganeshka. Ganeshka, Lord Ganeshka, was a famous pakawaj player. He played pakawaj as his main instrument, and so naturally, he then elaborated on it, he refined it further and created a language based on those notes, and those few syllables that were given by Lord Shiva, and therefore we feel that, yes, this does have connection in divinity, and its been handed down as blessing. Yes, we definitely feel that.

M: And the Punjab gharana of your father is the gharana closest to the pakawaj?

Z: Punjab gharana and Benares gharana. These are two gharanas which are closest to the pakawaj. And Farukhabad, Delhi, Lucknow, they are more focusing on the tabla as an instrument.

M: I see. Is the sound quality that you get from the tabla, obviously you take great care and attention to the sounds you produce, the quality of the sound, the perfection of the timbre of each bol. Is that something you're conscious of, or is it just so natural now that you don't really think of it?

Z: No. I've been specially conscious of this. This is something that I learned. See, the whole concept of rhythms in India is that, OK, you've got this instrument, and you've got this incredible repertoire, and then you're going to play this repertoire on *this* instrument. Fair enough. Except for one has not stopped to think what can this instrument do...And so we've learned to play this fabulous repertoire onto the instrument, but we never really stopped to think what the instrument itself can do. The places the instrument has on its head. And how many different places there are, and, OK, if you got to play a particular stroke this way, is there another way of doing it? Is there another possible combination? Is there a *tonal* change that you can affect? And that only happened because I was watching the percussionists in the West.

M: Really!

- Z: Yes. When you're listening to percussionists in the West, they're actually trying to understand the instrument. They take a conga drum, for instance, and they play at various points, they play the edges, they play the center, they play...because they don't have as refined an instrument as tabla. So they have to think about it. And they have to see what more they can do with it, and what the instrument can itself do. Can the instrument speak? We firmly believe in India that the instrument is *alive*. That instrument is an *entity*. So why shouldn't the instrument be *allowed to speak*? And that is the basis of *any* focus when it comes to tabla.
- M: The instrument is alive... There is a word the Africans use called "numinosity" when they refer to an inanimate object, like a drum, having a spirit that resides in it.
- Z: Oh yes. That's what I mean when I say "alive." It is a spirit. So, the spirit should be allowed to say its piece, to insert its own parts into what's coming out of the instrument. And so that was the approach when I went for it, and that allowed me to look deeply into the instrument and find *what it had to offer*. And maybe that's what made me more conscious of the sounds, because I was thinking of something other than just the repertoire. I wasn't saying, "Oh, I have to play eleven beats, or nineteen beats, or fifteen beats, or eighteen beats, and all these patterns, but I was thinking of *what else*."
- M: That leads to a question that I've asked of some other great improvisers: What are you thinking when you're playing? Is it purely and intuitive type sensation? Are you thinking of the particular raga? I imagine you play Jog differently than you would play Jaijivanti, or if you're playing with Shivkumar Sharma, it's a different feeling than playing with Hariprasad Chaurasia.¹
- Z: It's mainly *who* you are playing with when the difference will occur. If I am playing with Shivji, it will be different, or if I'm playing with Hariji, it's different, and [if] I'm playing with Khansaheb, it's different. If I'm playing with Birju Maharaj it's different. And if I'm playing [a Kathic dance] with Birju Maharaj, it's different. If I'm playing with Birju Maharaj and his dance troupe, *that* will be different. And if I'm playing with Amjad Ali Khan, for instance—oh, totally different. So playing with musicians is what makes this instrument do different *things*. And within that sphere, within that performance,

there are certain things that a performer would do which will change the way you play with that person. A performer will play a serious raga, you play according to that raga requirement with the performer, and, of course, with each performer the requirements are different, and then, of course, when, like you said, Jog and Jaijivanti. Now, Jaijivanti is a much more romantic, a lighter mode raga, so it will require that kind of thinking, and that kind of playing. *A tabla player must learn music.* He must learn melody, and he must learn all compositions. So what happens is if I'm listening to Jog by an artist, and I have to accompany him, I'm thinking of certain compositions, and therefore, the words of those compositions then inspire the kind of feeling *and emotion*. Similarly, with a light raga, like Jaijivanti, then I think of some nice romantic light thing, and then how am I going to play that, and how can I express those feelings.

M: I was house-sitting for Nazir Jairazbhoy and Amy Catlin when they went to India last year for three months, and I was poring through their library of hundreds of books on Indian music, and I found a passage in a book from the 1800s written by an Englishman, Captain Day, where he says that when the raga is begun, the musician is actually attempting to conjure the deity of the raga...

Z: Ah! [in affirmation]

M: ...to bring it down from heaven, to be in the company, even a physical form, perhaps. And this is something which, obviously, can be trivialized by discussing in an interview, discussing in an interview something which is of a devotional nature, and I don't wish to trivialize it. However, this type of spirituality is almost unheard of here in the West, and perhaps is something that's taken for granted.

Z: No. For instance, Mozart...When he composed that piece about death [Mozart's Requiem]. Did he actually feel it? Did he actually experience it? Isn't that what we've heard? That he actually got physically *sick*. He actually got very close to death?

M: I don't wish to suggest that there's no spirituality in Western music. I was specifically talking about the raga. You mentioned you think of songs in that raga, with words, and to me this implies the unique individual personality of each raga, which certainly exists.

Z: Oh yes.

- M: And you may have a long relationship with a raga. You may have heard it when you were five years old.
- Z: Yes. And, of course, these songs, some are romantic songs, some are serious songs, some are sad songs, some are up-tempo songs, some are ballads.
- M: I was struck with your post-concert interview with Alonzo King, at the humorous remarks you made. You could take the attitude of being very ponderous and extremely serious, you could do that with your stature. However, there is this delightful, humorous aspect, and when we look at the rasas that they (Indians) list for the arts, for music, the second one, usually they say the erotic/creative (Sringara), they list first, and the second one is humorous (Hasya). I witnessed this in your personality, and I started listening for it more in your tabla playing, because, obviously, it must be an element in your tabla playing if it is in your personality, a playfulness, perhaps. Could you comment on that rasa?
- Z: Well, I myself, I enjoy what I do. I like to have *fun* when I'm on-stage and performing. *I like to be able to dance*. Sitting down doesn't mean you cannot dance. I like to be able to dance to what I'm playing, and enjoy that as much as possible. And with certain musicians you can take it a step further, and get them involved. OK, let's have fun, and sometimes it's funny, sometimes it's not, but most of the time it is gratifying. I mean, for someone like Ali Akbar Khan, it's *less* so. I mean, one must tread carefully because you know of his stature, and I'm a young musician, so I wouldn't want in some-way to dictate what happens on-stage. So I do what he wants, and then we still have a little fun, there's humor there, there's game, there is enjoyment, there's everything, and serious stuff as well.
- M: It was very fortunate that early in my studies with Harihar Rao, he mentioned a recording on Moment Records, which is the record label you formed to capture live performances of Indian music. At the time I was interested in hearing a very strong tanpura sound, and he recommended a recording by Bhimsen Joshi on Moment Records, and then I started purchasing other CDs on your label. A recording you made of Raga Jog with the violinist, Jog, was very important to me in the early stages of my studies, because V.G. Jog took a phrase from Raga Jog, and must have played this one phrase a thousand times (each time differently) in the course of the raga, and you were

interacting with him very actively, and it is an incredible lesson in the development of a raga. I find this one of the most amazing things about Indian classical music: the fact that a raga can go on for two hours, three hours, and still be cohesive, and still be growing organically. Also, what you do at a solo tabla concert: here are two drums, which seems fairly simple, and yet this entire universe of sound can be brought out and developed over time. Are there any things you can say about how you achieve continuity in a solo tabla concert, or if you're performing (a raga) with Shivkumar Sharma?¹⁸

Z: Well, first, to take the tabla solo concert, there's definitely a repertoire that has been written for solo performance, and over the years, I mean, added onto, and therefore there's a large, large selection.

M: What percentage is improvised, and what is memorized, would you say?

Z: To improvise you still need certain outlines to work with. You have to have that outline, and then you improvise with that outline, so all those simple themes, or those simple patterns, which you take and then develop into something *big*, are already there, and have been given, and have been composed. You have this huge repertoire available to you, so without actually even changing anything, traditionally, you could do a continuous solo of a couple of hours, no problem. I mean, obviously, you have to be able to do it good enough, so that you know people enjoy it. The connoisseurs would enjoy it, however, if you're playing well, and so continuity is not the problem there. What I like to do when I'm doing a performance, is that I like to feel like I'm going through a whole day. When I begin early in the morning, I get up, and I take a shower, I do my prayers, I, have breakfast...it's a whole different feeling, and then I work my way to leaving to go to work or something, and that's a different feeling. The interaction with whatever is happening around me is a different feeling. The afternoon is a different feeling. The evening coming home is a different feeling. At home at night is a different feeling. So all that is something that I think about, and I like to make a story, turn it into a story.

M: A musical story?

Z: A musical story, or a story that tells itself *with the aid of drums*.

M: Would you specifically think about a story that a particular raga has? Obviously, Lalit has a story to it...

Z: Well, see, you're focusing only on raga. I'm also focusing on rhythm. To me, rhythm also tells a story, and so when I'm with the rhythm, I'm constantly thinking about how its gonna go, and I am a character, I'm making a journey. *I'm making a journey with my friend the tabla*. I don't consider it to be some stranger. I mean, I consider it to be almost a twin. So, when I'm playing the solo, I'm trying to think of what me and my friend the tabla are going to do today. And some days we are in serious discussions, and we are thinking about various things in life, and how we are going to proceed with our, separate lives. We are in some ways intertwined, together, and some days we just are friends, we're having fun, we're having a good time. Some days we are serious about our discussions, and also having a good time somewhere along the line. Going with the tabla is almost like going for *a hair-raising ride through the mountains*. You know, and you fall down steep grades, or you jump across little schisms, you know, little holes in the ground, or, you know, you go from one mountain to the next to the next, and ski or whatever. So all these things are there, and *I feel that when I'm playing tabla I'm actually visualizing the ride*. I'm seeing it. It's like a roller coaster. Any tabla player you watch, any drummer you watch, you'll see that they're either looking straight down or looking up when they're playing. So its almost like they can visually see *the patterns*. The patterns become like a railway track. And the tracks are taking you up and down and sideways, and upside down, and whatever, and you're riding these rides, and so it becomes a visual experience, as well as an audio experience.

M: How is it that Indian music has this amazing resiliency to last over a thousand years, and still be growing, and still finding all these endlessly new paths?

Z: Because we have a loophole in our music. We are at one time told that we have to be very traditional, we have to maintain the old, and play that, and do it justice, and do it *right*, and not water it down, and whatnot, and everything. And once we are told that we are also, in the same breath we are told that *you must improvise*. So if you are going to improvise, you are obviously going to run into areas which are *alien*, which are new, which are *fresh*, and therefore, are they not traditional? Or are they traditional? So, the thought is there, and that's one of the reasons why this music has survived, is because of the loophole. Because we are allowed to *create*. We are

not allowed to stagnate with just this one thing there, and [perform in] exactly that way for the last five hundred years.

M: Is it possible that the forms of the music mirror the forms of nature, the elements in nature—fire, water, air, earth— perhaps more than other musical forms in different cultures? (this concept was introduced to me by Shiukumar Sharma during an earlier interview.)

Z: I don't think so. I think it is *people*. I think it's musicians who make it interesting. I mean, somewhere along the line the music is stagnating, and along comes Amir Khan, the singer, and suddenly, "Wow, what is this?" It's something *new*, something fresh, and he just takes this road, and then just kind of diverts it a little. OK, this is the way. Or along comes Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, or along comes Ravi Shankar, or along comes Ali Akbar Khan, and say, yes, sarod, but listen to it this way. See what I do with the sarod, see what it's capable of. And the same thing with tabla. Along comes Alla Rakha, and something interesting happens to it. So that's what's making the music still grow, still be fresh. Ali Akbar Khansaheb does not play anything like his teacher. Neither does Ravi Shankar play anything like his own guru. Vilayat Khan does not play anything like his teacher, or his father.

M: And your connection to Alla Rakha?

Z: And my connection with my father is the same way. I started off, obviously, learning from him, and doing what he does, and playing it to the best of my ability, and now with my confidence growing, I have reached an area where I feel, OK, this is something that I can add to it, and I'm doing it. So I am, and that's why it is fresh, that's why it's unique, that's why it is always growing and changing yet remains the same.

M: Have you ever performed with the shahnai artist, Ali Ahmad Hussain Khan?

Z: Yes, I have. Yes.

M: Because I heard him perform, and it seems to me that here in the West, he is perhaps one of the most underrated and least appreciated of the Indian musicians. I feel he is a magnificent...

Z: Well, apart from Ravi Shankarji, there are very few Indian musicians who are appreciated. I mean, at one time, in the West, Indian music

meant Ravi Shankar. It didn't even include Ali Akbar Khan. Now that has changed a lot, and, I mean, people have become much more informed.

M: In India, is Ali Ahmad's stature...

Z: Oh yes, he's known, definitely, yes.

M. That would be a wonderful recording on Montreux Records. I'd love to hear a recording of you and Ali Ahmad on shahnai, because you don't have that [any shahnai recordings] in your catalog.

Z. No, we don't.

M. I would be very interested to hear the two of you perform together. I think that would be a magnificent recording, so I hope it happens eventually.

Z. I hope so too. We are not getting any younger. He's a very fine musician.

M: I never heard anyone play so softly as he played when he gave a concert here.

Z: Bismillah Khanshab used to.

M: Oh, he used to?

Z: Oh!

M: Is he deceased or is he still alive?

Z: No, he's still alive. But the kind of shahnai that you hear from shahnai players today, I must say, even Ali Ahmed, is definitely inspired by Bismillah Khan. He's another one who showed the other road, and, you know, climbed the steps, and there's this other level. Bismillah Khan did that. Bismillah Khan for shahnai, Hariprasad Chaurasia for flute, Shivkumar Sharma for santoor, Ali Akbar Khan for sarod, Ravi Shankarji and Vilayat Khan for sitar. They've shown the way with these instruments, and what to do, and where to take it, and therefore, in doing that, they have also shown where the music can go.

M: One sitarist who I discovered for myself this year who I'm very excited about is Rais Khan. It would be wonderful if you did a tour with Rais Khan...

Z: Oh, I've done tours with him.

M: In the US?

Z: I did one tour with him in the US many years ago. Rais Khan is one of the great sitar players of our time, and it's unfortunate that he lives in Pakistan, so he doesn't get to play in India. But, I mean, he's really a fabulous sitar player. Definitely one of the *best*.

M: We've covered a lot of material here. Is there something you would like to mention or discuss?

Z: No, I just think that, you know, my views are, after all, my views, and someone else's views might be different, but it is a fact that our music has grown and has changed over the centuries, and the same time it is true that because of the changes certain innovations have been made. The instruments sound better than they ever did before, the musicians interact better than they ever did before. The class system in Indian music is pretty much gone. In those days instrumentalists...or the vocalists, vocalists were tops, then came instrumentalists, then came dancers, and then came the tabla players. But now everyone is pretty much on par.

M: I would like to mention that I had the fortunate experience of attending a private concert of Pandit Jasraj in San Jose last November. There were maybe a dozen people there. He performed Bhimpalasi and Puriya Dhanashri. It was overwhelming. I guess this is the way Indian music was performed a long time ago. One of my favorite recordings is Jasraj and yourself performing Adana.

Z: Ummm.

M: Could you comment on the unique feeling of performing with Pandit Jasraj?

Z: Well, Pandit Jasraj is another one who enjoys his music thoroughly. He is a very serious musician, but at the same time he would not stop himself if he was enjoying a concert. And he himself started off as a tabla player. He was first a tabla player who used to accompany his elder brother, and then he became a singer later. So, therefore, he has sympathy towards the tabla player.

M: He has incredible articulation and rhythmic power when he goes into the fast...

- Z: It's because of his command of the rhythm that he is able to articulate as well as he does. And his voice, of course, is amazing, and he's also mastered the art of singing through a sound system, and that also helps tremendously, [knowing] how to use the microphone, how to project your voice, and he really became very good at that. So all things considered, playing with Pandit Jasraj is a time of *pure joy*. It's a lot of fun. And he has such special, spiritual feelings towards the music. He's very spiritually oriented.
- M: I noticed before he sang, he had a substantial number of photographs and cloths [silk shawls, kept in his svaramandal case] which he, for a half-hour before he started singing, he would look at and hold to his face with his eyes closed, and breathe in the cloth, which perhaps belonged to his guru.
- Z: Belonged to one of his teachers or a swamiji.
- M: So, he goes through this ritual before he performs.
- Z: Oh yes. He does. He's very spiritual minded. So what comes out is very pure. It's very reverent, and, at the same time, it has a special *rasa*, and special *romance* to it.
- M: Each raga begins with a prayer in whatever raga he's...
- Z: And then he also goes on later to have fun and enjoy.
- M: I believe Krishna is...Krishna is the god he worships.
- Z: Not...well... anybody, I mean, Krishna is just one. Krishna is just one.
- M: You're Muslim, of course, yourself.
- Z: Yes, but that doesn't matter. Musicians have a religion of their... they're a religion unto themselves.
- M. One last question. Have you ever performed without a rhythmic cycle? Without a tala of eleven beats, or nine beats, or sixteen? Have you ever performed without any tala, and then maybe move into a tala, and out again freely at will?
- Z. Oh yes. We do that sometimes. I mean, not necessarily with Indian music. I do that when I'm performing with contemporary musicians.
- M. Would it be possible to perform a raga doing that?

- Z. I doubt it because though we have a lot of scope for improvising we are still within a tradition. It is like when you have a certain chord to use in a jazz song, and you play that chord, you're going to have to play it.
- M. Would you say that the tala, the rhythmic cycle, originally stems back to the syllables of the Vedic Hymns, where each line had a certain amount of syllables? Is it possible?
- Z. I don't know what you are saying.
- M. I've noticed in some of the surviving Vedas that there will be a certain amount of syllables in a particular hymn, say eleven syllables in each line. It occurred to me because the Sama Veda is regarded as a source of Indian classical music, that the form of having a certain amount of syllables per line could be where the concept of the rhythmic cycle, the tala, came from.
- Z. I don't know. Maybe, maybe not. Nowadays people think of rhythmic cycles without having to worry of Sama Veda, shloka (chant) or anything. They just come up with a rhythm cycle or pattern that is a new kind of rhythmic cycle. And so maybe in the olden days they did it the same way. I have no idea, or maybe they did it with these shlokas.
- M. Of course, when you play a rhythmic cycle you think of the subdivision of the cycle. Like a cycle of ten beats could be 2-3-2-3, but it could also be 4-4-2. Would you say you're conscious of this?
- Z. When you're talking about a rhythmic cycle, you're talking about a particular division that a rhythmic cycle has, and then you improvise, and when you improvise you come up with other patterns of the same rhythmic cycle. You might come up with fifty-eight odd patterns of the same rhythmic cycle.
- M. When you're doing something very complex, I imagine it seems very simple to you, that there is a certain involvement, but also a certain serenity because, you have to be relaxed when you're playing it.
- Z. What I'm doing...I'm not thinking about whether it is simple or complex. It is the audience who are thinking about that. For them it may be complex. I'm doing it because I know it, and because I know it the question of it being complex or simple does not even

arise. I'm doing it because I know it, and the audience, if they understand it at all, they may then judge how complex it is, or how simple it is, but for me it is just a pattern that I know and I'm going to do it.

The following morning I attended Zakir's Tabla Master Class held in the Gamelan Room of Schoenberg Hall at UCLA by the Department of Ethnomusicology. This was a first-time experience for me, and I had to scan back to Master Classes in conducting led by Leonard Bernstein at Tanglewood, to recall a teacher who matched Zakir's enthusiasm and clarity. There was also an abundance of disarming and friendly humor which was entirely unique and refreshing, resulting in a loss of inhibitions by the many observers who became unwitting participants in the singing of Hindustani tabla rhythms!

My compositional mentor, the eminent musicologist and arts administrator, Leonard Altman, shortly before he passed away, had confided to me in a hushed conspiratorial voice, "Music is magic."

The Indian phrase, "Swar is Ishwar- Sound is God," made such an impression on me that I make it the final printed sentence on all my CDs.

Ustad Zakir Hussain embodies both these truths, and we are blessed to have his music...and his teaching.

This interview is dedicated to the memory of Alla Rakha, the father of the modern tabla, and one of the greatest musicians in recorded history.

Segredos do Sul Documentos Sonoros Brasileiros 3

Reginaldo Gil Braga

Coleção Itaú Cultural/Acervo Cachuera!

Compact disc with booklet and photos. Produced by Paulo Dias and Fundação Cachuera (cachuera@uol.com.br, telephone (11) 387-28113, São Paulo–Brazil), 2000. Liner notes in Portuguese by Alberto Ikeda, Norton Corrêa and Paulo Dias, with collaboration of Walter Calixto Ferreira (Borel). Photographies by Norton Corrêa and Andrea de Valentim, with collaboration of Carlos Coutinho da Vitória. Booklet with 36 pages.

The recent release of the Compact Disc *Segredos do Sul Documentos Sonoros Brasileiros 3*, in 2000, brings to the other states of Brazil and to whom it may concern abroad, aspects previously unknown about the African, Portuguese and Azorean heritages present in south Brazil (an area that covers the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná). Despite the difficulties of distribution related to this kind of production, this CD would be of great interest to a larger public beyond that of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists because of its intrinsic musical and cultural value.

The project was conducted by Paulo Dias, president of the Associação Cachuera, a non-governmental organization dedicated to the protection of traditional music from southeast Brazil. In 22 tracks he presents different examples of the variety of unknown musical aspects from south Brazil that reveal slumbering manifestations from a region known to be the most European in the country due to a strong immigration of Germans, Italians, and Polish, and other Europeans, in the XIX century.

From the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the *Batuque* appears on the first 10 tracks and demonstrates the collaboration between Paulo Dias and the anthropologist Norton Corrêa on the fieldwork, recordings, photographs and texts of the CD insert (Listening Example #7 on CD). As Paulo Dias reminds us in the liner notes: "Porto Alegre is the largest black capital in the south and the local Afro-Brazilian religion, called *Batuque*, is as ancient as the old *terreiros* (temples) of *Candomblé* from Salvador, Bahia." The two drummers joined here are Antônio Carlos do

Xangô and Walter Calixto Ferreira, or Borel do *Xangô*, as he prefers to be known. Both of them are professional *tamboreiros* (drummers from *Batuque*) and are regularly sought after for paid performances of rituals and more recently for presentations in seminars, conferences and forums where religion and black culture are discussed. These ten tracks cover only a small sample of the entire repertoire of the 12 *orixás* (African deities originating from Fon and Yoruba cultures) who are worshiped in *Batuque*: *Bará*, *Ogum*, *Iansã*, *Xangô*, *Odé-Otim*, *Ossanha*, *Xapanã*, *Obá*, *Oxum*, *Iemanjá* and *Oxalá*. Although Antônio Carlos do *Xangô* is a drummer of the *Cabinda lado*, what we hear here are only ritual songs of the *Ijexá* repertory.¹ There are no musical examples from the *Jêje* tradition, which is always present in rituals of all *lados* (*Ijexá*, *Oiô*, *Jêje* and *Cabinda*).

What can be inferred by listening to these recordings are the different performances of a 55 and a 77 year old, respectively, who belong to different religious and musical lineages. Antônio Carlos is an innovator who uses glissandos and a vocal technique similar to that found in Brazilian popular music (most evident in track 9, for example) and plays faster, than older drummers like Borel. Borel do *Xangô* is representative of the old tradition and makes his interpretations according to what he believes to be the correct manner. Occasionally, both of he and Antônio Carlos named the same drum patterns differently, which is not an uncommon procedure among *tamboreiros*, yet this demonstrates a terminology that is not unified and is intrinsically related to specific lineages. Despite the differences, the two drummers are very representative of the current musical state of *Batuque* rituals (the recording are from 1997).

Although Dias succeeds in choosing excellent *tamboreiros* and samples of the worship repertory of the *orixás* presented, he fails in providing recordings of the performances in their original context. Recording the *tamboreiros* and chorus in a studio rather than ritual contexts seems to be a negative point in the undertaking, which actually under minds the ethnographic nature of the project. Obviously, the tradition of *Batuque* is stripped of its context under the conditions of studio recording where electronic apparatuses such as microphones, mixing boards, technicians and multiple takes contribute to distancing the musicians and singers from the spontaneity and vibrancy of a live performance in its ritual context. Despite the difficulties of making a recording under the conditions of a full *salão* (physical space where the public parts of the rituals occur), including the impossibility of adjust-

ing or positioning the performers and lack of control over recording levels, the separation of liturgical music from its ritual context is not justifiable in such an ethnographic project.

In the liner notes related to *Batuque*, occasionally the frivolous nature and unsubstantiated commentaries contribute to enforcing beliefs that have been established and disseminated by old scholars, and in creating new false understandings. As, for example, the *Batuque* is said to be hypothetically similar to the *Xangô of Recife*. It either originated in it or they share a common root, which is an opinion maintained by Roger Bastide in *Sociologia do Folclore Brasileiro* (São Paulo, Editora Ahembi, 1959) and much very much present in the author's text. Such suppositions in light of the rare number of ethnographies covering both religions, and the lack of comparative studies between them, discourage any precipitous projections. In the same way, to believe in the purity of *Batuque* in relation to an African model (its isolation and idiosyncrasy of its system of beliefs and rituals in relation to other Afro-Brazilian religions) date back to the comparative studies in Anthropology seeking for levels of purity related to some creator model. An example of this would be the affirmation that the drums of *Batuque* still follow the same principles of the "talking drums" of Benin.

The photos related to the *Batuque* are of unquestionable quality, but some falsely display people and ritual objects that are not linked to the musical material, nor to the performers on the CD. The photos in question are old photos of *tamboreiros*, priests and the objects that belonged to them which appear disconnected from the present recordings (with the exception of the photos of) Antônio Carlos do Xangô and Borel do Xangô's showing their respective choruses in pose). Despite this the photos are beautiful registers of the passage through the World of the *ialorixá* Ester da Iemanjá (the photo that follows track 9), and of objects and ritual implements that belonged to the *babalorixá* Ayrton do Xangô, and including a scene of a performance by the (present day) *tamboreiros* Ademar do Ogum and Hostílio do Oxalá (uncle and nephew) taken many years prior (the photo that follows track 3).

Another manifestation of Black music from Rio Grande do Sul is the *Maçambique*, a folk group linked to popular practices of the official Catholicism. Worshipping Nossa Senhora do Rosário, they sing, dance and pray in her honor in front of the church in the Town of Osório. The *Maçambique* of Osório configuration is a regional form of *Congada*, which can be found throughout country. The recordings here were made in the ritual context of São Benedito day (May 12, 1996) and demon-

strate the dynamics of a live tradition through examples of an old song (track 11), and one of the new creations of Faustino Antônio, a young and prominent musician in the group (track 12). Although she receives mention, the depth of the collaboration of Glória Moura, a known anthropologist and an expert researcher of *Congadas* in the southeastern region of Brazil, on the fieldwork and recordings presented in tracks 11 and 12 remains unclear.

From the state of Santa Catarina, this CD presents an example of the fiddle, the *Orocongo*, brought to the Florianópolis Island by a Cabo Verdian family, and according to the CD's producer it is still in use by Gentil do *Orocongo* (55 years old). According to the text accompanying tracks 13, 14 and 15, he built his instrument and is most likely the only player of this near-extinct Afro-Brazilian tradition. The questions with which any attentive listener or reader of this booklet might be left are: Who beyond Gentil performs on this instrument? What exactly was the history of this Cabo-Verdian family? Is Gentil an isolated case? And if so, what is significance of his inclusion on the CD? These questions, if answered, would help to understand what the *Orocongo* and Gentil represent to the traditional music of Santa Catarina. Gentil performs examples derived from traditional Azorean music like "Ratoeira" and "Terno de Reis" as well as an urban musical gender, the *Choro*.

A little known repertory originating in the Azores, the *ratoeira*, related to the almost extinct *rendeiras* (women that make a kind of lace craftwork) is presented straight away for the group of ladies called: "Recanto da Saudade" (tracks 16 and 17). In spite of being a repertory almost unheard among *rendeiras*, the *ratoeira* today is a repertory remembered mostly in schools and through groups of elderly people like this. As the liner notes remind us, many types of *cantigas de roda* (round songs) sung by adults, occur in various parts of Brazil although many are related to children's folklore.

The recordings of *Catumbi* from Itapocu, an Afro-catarinense manifestation similar to the *Maçambique* from Rio Grande do Sul, reveal the unique tradition of the Bantu alive in Santa Catarina (Listening Example #8 on CD). In truth, the *Catumbi* is a variation of the *Congada*, and a different manifestation of popular Catholicism including the music, dance and representation conducted by the brotherhoods of blacks, such as the *Cucumbi*, *Ticumbi*, *Moçambique*, *Maçambique* and the former *Maracatus* groups. We can observe that some songs, such as those in tracks 18 and 19, have words most likely in a Bantu dialect whose meanings are probably unknown and have been re-interpreted

for the performers of today. The drums, according to the liner notes, are built from carved wood exactly as they have been for ages. The recording was made in the beginning of a ritual cycle of Nossa Senhora do Rosário Festival on November 1997. All fieldwork of musical examples from Santa Catarina was carried out by JB Costa, a black movement activist and a representative member of the Foundation Franklin Cascaes, together with Paulo Dias and Marcelo Manzanni (all tracks).

Finally, from the State of Paraná this recording offers an example of the *Fandango*, a popular Spanish musical genre disseminated through world in the XVIII century when Spain was the cultural capital of western world (Listening Example #9 on CD). Aside from the fandango being a dance or a rhythmic pattern, such as the liner note indicates, it was a musical genre that acquired different characteristics through Brazil. In Rio Grande do Sul, for example, today the term fandango means any rural dance and is performed in the traditional patterns as "historic folklore" through the CTGs (Centers of Gaúcha Traditions), associations where habits and traditions from Rio Grande do Sul are "worshipped by members." In São Paulo and Minas Gerais there are living remnants of the "golden era" of fandango in the *São Gonçalo* and *Catira* Dances, for example.

In the state of Paraná, the fandango is found on the coastline among the *caiçara* people (who also inhabit the São Paulo coastline). The musicians recorded here are members of Master Romão's Group, a folk group founded in 1994 in Paranaguá, a small town along the seashore of Paraná, and linked to the Culture and Tourism Bureau from that town. The three tracks are performed for an ensemble of hand-crafted instruments: a guitar, a viola (10 strings), a rabeca (a rustic violin) and two adufos (tambourines). The voices are matched in parallel intervals like most heritages of Portuguese and Azorean folk repertoires.

The completion of this recording project would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of Itaú Bank. This initiative, conducted by Instituto Itaú Cultural, has invested a large sum of money in cultural projects like this and has guaranteed the preservation and dissemination of the research through free distribution of CDs to institutions linked to teaching and research in the area of music (for distribution to institutions consult www.itaucultural.org.br, telephone (11) 238-1778, São Paulo-Brazil). This support yielded a series of three beautiful CDs, the third of which, produced by Paulo Dias, is under review here. This third volume includes including informative photos (despite their disconnection from the specific context, as mentioned)

and excellent recordings made using a Denon DAT DTR 100-P with a Sony ECM 959-V stereo microphone; a Mackie 1202 (12 channel mixer) with AKG C 3000 and Shure SK57 microphones and edited with Sound Designer II and Sonic Solutions.

The texts written by Alberto Ikeda (ethnomusicologist), Norton Corrêa (anthropologist) and Paulo Dias with the collaboration of Borel do Xangô demonstrate rich fieldwork and often provides challenges, insights and questions to the listener. Unfortunately this CD was not produced with bilingual texts, which could have extended its usefulness to countries beyond the Portuguese speaking world. The Associação Cachuera deservedly received a percentage of discs to market, as did the musicians and interpreters. This served as a positive solution to problems with copyrights and intellectual properties. This CD was a great advance in ethnomusicological and cultural studies of southern Brazil and perhaps it will serve as the beginning of more projects like it.

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Notes

1. Lados are the different distinctive modalities, or "branches" of the batuque religion each of which are linked, for the practitioners, to ancient Yorùbá Kingdoms (Oió, Ijexá), to Fon culture of Benin (Jêje), and to the Bantu speaking Cabinda in Africa. Today, the most prominent "lado" is the Jêje-Ijexá, a syncetic combination of the Jêje and Ijexá traditions.

Audio Examples

Track 7 *Batuque* of Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul State). "Odã do Xapanã", a song with overlapped phrases and variations by Borel do Xangô and chorus (Auristela Calixto, Walter Calixto and Flávio

Rodrigues). Recorded by Paulo Dias/ Fundação Cachuera. Taken from CD Segredos do Sul, 2000. (1:20) (#7 on CD)

Track 18 *Catumbi* of Itapocu (Santa Catarina State). "Dendendê Cativindará". Recorded by Paulo Dias/ Fundação Cachuera. Taken from CD Segredos do Sul, 2000. (1:06) (#8 on CD)

Track 22 *Fandango* of Paranaguá (Paraná State). "Feliz". Recorded by Paulo Dias/Fundação Cachuera. Taken from CD Segredos do Sul, 2000. (2:18) (#9 on CD)

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Contributor's Page

David Borgo is an Assistant Professor of Music at James Madison University and a saxophonist who has performed widely in the United States, Europe, Asia, and South America. Last year he released a double compact disc of original jazz, *With and Against*, on the Resurgent Music label. Borgo has published in *Popular Music and Society*, *The Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology*, and the *Sonneck Society Bulletin*, and he is currently at work revising for publication his UCLA dissertation, "Reverence for Uncertainty: Chaos, Order, and the Dynamics of Musical Free Improvisation."

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Michael Robinson is a musician who mixes the organic virtues of raga with the synthetic ability of MIDI to create music that has been termed both "a spiritual journey of sound" and "a truly cerebral and challenging listen" with "heart and intelligence." His prolific output is represented by over forty CDs on Azure Miles Records. "The Instrument is Alive" is one in a series of interviews Robinson has conducted with Indian masters.



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