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John Enrico and Wendy Bross Stuart. *Northern Haida Songs. Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, in cooperation with the American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1996. xiv, 519 pp. ISBN 0-8032-1816-8 (hardcover)

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This book, the result of collaboration between a linguist (Enrico) and ethnomusicologist (Stuart), is a careful descriptive study of repertoires of Masset and Alaskan Haida song, recorded by various collectors between 1942 and 1987. The heart of the book, consisting of musical transcriptions, analyses and detailed linguistic translations of 128 songs, is framed by sections entitled "Ethnographic Background" and "Analysis." The field work for this study was conducted by Enrico over the past two decades and it is his linguistic perspective which is dominant in the study. (Stuart has become primarily a scholar of Japanese music since an early 1970s study of Coast Salish music.) The textual transcriptions and analyses which appear to be the real gold in this study are the hardest aspect for this reviewer (and presumably other musicological readers) to assess for accuracy. The care taken has all the marks of fine scholarship and long immersion in the language of the Haida people. Furthermore, this careful record of the songs will probably prove useful not only for scholars but for practitioners in the future.

Altogether, descriptive care is, indeed, the feature which this study has to recommend it. The ethnography, for example, compares variant descriptions of Haida ceremonial events, validating those of Swanton over those of Murdoch in many cases.¹ Not only genres (the principal concept around which the ethnography is organized), but also composition techniques, performance practices, musical concepts, and cultural change (represented as the "decline of traditional music") are outlined in this manner. Each transcription records further significant socio-cultural detail, including the composer, owner, singer, and recording source, as well as miscellaneous comments which sometimes relate to provenance, usage, or textual detail. Stuart's transcriptions, in conventional Western notation, are complemented by analytical information about pulse, meters, percussion (simply recorded as presence or absence), pitch change within the performance, number of "renditions" ("strophes" seem to be implied), scale, solfège, "characteristic interval" (the most frequent interval is implied), "characteristic rhythm" (the most frequently repeated pattern), contour (described as undulating, descending, ascending, or stationery). A detailed text transcription with morphemic meanings indicated is followed by a transla-

¹ John R. Swanton, trained in linguistics and anthropology at Harvard and Columbia universities, did ethnological fieldwork in 1903-4 on the Queen Charlotte islands, under the auspices of the Jessup Expedition. He published *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Haida*, Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History (Leiden: Brill, 1905), *Haida Texts*, Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History (Leiden: Brill, 1908), and *Haida Song*, Publications of the American Ethnological Society (Leiden: Brill, 1912). Yale University professor of anthropology George P. Murdock worked over twenty years later in the same area. He published *Rank and Potlatch among the Haida* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, for the Section of Anthropology, Department of the Social Sciences, Yale University, 1936).

tion. Musical and linguistic phrase structures are compared. The analytical section of the book quantitatively assesses the results of these individual analyses, attempting by means of a distributional analysis to attribute patterns to specific regions or communities, composers, and singers (where the sample is large enough to provide conclusive results).

Nevertheless, I regret that a study as well informed as this one on the level of “texts” is seemingly unaware of its paradigmatic assumptions on the level of cultural position. The nature of the intended audience is one question which remains ambiguous. Native speakers’ concerns are addressed in the introduction to the orthography used, but linguistic terminology and objectifying scientific analyses seem oriented rather specifically to linguists. Further indication that native speakers are not the audience is the fact that the index does not include generic terms or other conceptual labels in Haida. Another question concerns the views of the performers about the nature of appropriate responsibilities relating to the representation and use of these songs. “Singers and Sources Represented in the Collection” are listed at the end of the ethnographic section; a number of the recordings are listed as “restricted by request of the singer.” This seems to beg for further explanation in that songs from these recordings are, indeed, transcribed and translated here. Was it the performance only that was restricted or was it the texts themselves? Did the singers understand that transcriptions were to be made? It is important to acknowledge inter- and intracultural discussion about such matters in the interests of promoting awareness of important issues about appropriation and access. This leads to a third kind of question about the study. Exactly how was the community based work conducted? The authors are absent from this text except for one paragraph on page 3 where their credentials are clarified. Questions of methodology become critical in relation to some conclusions about the contemporary vitality of certain genres. Mourning songs are a case in point. While the authors state that “like lullabies, *kiihljaaw qagaan* are almost completely forgotten” (p. 33), the conclusion seems questionable since this assertion is followed by a clear statement that these songs were only to be sung on proper occasions for their use; the apparent “ignorance” of these songs seems more likely to be simply respect for their proper use and polite refusal to perform them outside of appropriate contexts. Field methodology is also an issue with regard to a number of analytical assertions in Part III where intent or process is described. How was the intention to sing in harmony determined in some instances, for example (p. 444) but denied in others? On what basis do the authors assert that “drumming is probably impossible for mourning songs and lullabies” since they were “unable to verify this” (p. 436)? On what basis are certain parts of songs said to be extemporized (p. 469)?

These concerns relate, it seems, to the belief stated at the outset of the introduction, that “the salvage nature of Northwest Coast ethnomusicology means that it necessarily belongs to an earlier period of the ethnography of music, drawing as it does on early rather sketchy accounts and fading memories” (p. 3). The statement belies both a perpetuation of the notion that Indian cultures are less than they were as well as a problematic belief in a “pure” Haida culture

at some historical moment, a belief reinforced at numerous points by statements such as the following: “the crucial period for Haida ethnography ended with the death of the last person socialized around the time of the introduction of Christianity” (p. 4). Distinctions are drawn around aspects which are “not native” (p. 431). Intercultural relationships, especially the troubled and troubling relationships between the Haida and the Canadian government, need to be acknowledged as complex interactions. At one point, the authors claim that the Haida might have preserved their culture if they had wanted to (p. 65), an agency also implied when historic gestures of cultural violence such as the banning of the potlatch in the 1880s are described euphemistically (on p. 22, we are told that “the potlaches stopped,” although on p. 65, the Canadian move to make the potlatch illegal is acknowledged).

The ethnographic description seems intent at creating a narrative of a homogeneous Haida culture, though not quite a seamless one. Particularly when early ethnographies by Swanton and Murdoch differ, we are urged to think of one or the other as inaccurate—and indeed there may be legitimate questions of scholarly competence here—but the contingencies of truth claims in different times and places are never considered. It would be useful to see these authors struggle with interpretations of changes between the time of Swanton’s work from 1905, Murdoch’s from the mid 1930s, and Enrico’s in the 1970s and 1980s.

The narrative of homogeneity resurfaces in the analyses of Part III. Here the commitment to quantification makes little sense in many aspects. The mean tempos of generically diverse songs, for example, is as meaningful as an assertion about the mean tempo of all of Mozart’s works. The logic of lumping together children’s songs with chants and all dance genres is not clear in the first place.

A hopeful aspect of the analysis was the clear recognition that performances (labelled “tokens”) rather than songs (labelled “types”) were the object of scrutiny. Contemporary ethnomusicology has begun to recognize that performance decisions and unconscious gestures too are often “sites” where important cultural values are asserted, negotiated or resisted.² Performances, then, have become rich discursive spaces, a fact which the label “tokens” obscures. But here, in relation to broader cultural issues—e.g., spiritual systems, moiety and lineage, gender and class beliefs—the songs remain largely decontextualized.

There are some specifically musical problems in the analysis. For example, precise instrument descriptions are not given even though the instrumentarium of the Haida is complex. As well, a number of visual aspects of the transcriptions are confused with aural aspects of the performances. A case in point is the calculation of metre. Conclusions are drawn about the number of metre changes in various songs. However, several 7/4 metre songs could equally be subdivided

²See, for example, essays in Martin Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford and Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994), or recent monographs by Thomas Turino (*Moving Away from Silence: Music of the Peruvian Altiplano and the Experience of Urban Migration* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993]), Sara Cohen (*Rock Culture in Liverpool: Popular Music in the Making* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991]), or Jane Sugarman (*Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997]).

into $3/4$ plus $4/4$ (or vice versa) hence yielding a statistic of 2 rather than 1 metre. Songs in $6/4$ and $6/8$ are distinguished but this difference simply indicates that a different unit was chosen as the basis for the transcription. Another visually based concept is the notion of "line" in relation to song texts. Like other subdivisions and assertions about units or boundaries, there is no evidence that the units so defined are emically recognized; rather they are conveniences adopted by the transcriber. The legitimizing power of such terminology becomes really problematic when the songs themselves do not fit the vocabulary of the analysts. With regard to form, for example, the "line" concept (as well as related ones such as motif and phrase) are thought to be so "normal" that songs which do not exhibit a clause = line relationship (but which do exhibit the well-known Plains form often called "incomplete repetition" form) are labelled "deviant" (p. 448). Other formal "violations" are described regarding motif and phrase, breathing pauses and vocable phrases (see p. 453 where certain songs are described as having "excessive vocables," or p. 458 where vocables are not counted as part of the structure).

The number of "renditions" (read "strophes") in a single performance are not connected with performance context which, in other Native events is an important determinant of song repetition. The syntax of composition is presented with the rather strange a priori assumption that if the music "displays constancy of form," it must therefore be "a given in the mind of the composer to which he or she matches language" (p. 445).

In sum, I could not help reading this book with the three fundamental questions in mind which I repeatedly ask my students. Is it really true (and for whom is it true)? So what? Does it really matter? The care with which detail is presented about the song texts and transcriptions lead me to trust those as reliable representations, but "true" in relation to the ideologies embedded in orthographies and musical transcription decisions. The care with which ethnographic detail is presented from diverse historical sources is an important step toward understanding different "truth claims" and hence a significant aspect of this publication, but the interpretation of differences among those sources is not always convincing. The So what? and the Does it really matter? arguments about these repertoires of Haida songs are less satisfactorily addressed. It would be extremely helpful to read discourse about these songs as well as to see transcriptions of the songs themselves, to understand how people regard their meaning and their use. The disclaimer, cited earlier in this review, that "salvage" work "belongs to an earlier period of the ethnography of music" is neither logical nor adequate in my view. This study is situated in the 1990s as the relationships within and among First Nations communities, within and between other heterogeneous communities in Canada, are being renegotiated. How do these songs function discursively within and beyond contemporary Haida communities? I sincerely hope that Enrico and Stuart will address this in a subsequent publication.

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