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Music from Yemen Arabia. Sanaani, Laheji, Adeni, Samar, 2 CD recorded by Ragnar Johnson et Jessica Mayer. Sub Rosa SR438

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► **To cite this version:**

Jean Lambert. Music from Yemen Arabia. Sanaani, Laheji, Adeni, Samar, 2 CD recorded by Ragnar Johnson et Jessica Mayer. Sub Rosa SR438. Yearbook for Traditional Music, 2018, 50, pp.230-231. 10.5921/yeartradmusi.50.2018.0230 . halshs-03904816

HAL Id: halshs-03904816

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03904816>

Submitted on 17 Dec 2022

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Audio Reviews

EUROPE

Roumanie. Musique du Maramureș. Groupe Iza / Romania. Music from Maramureș. Iza Group. 2017. Archives internationales de musique populaire, Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, and Disques VDE-GALLO, MEG-AIMP CXIIV/ VDE-CD-1497. Recorded, edited and mastered by Renaud Millet-Lacombe and HUSH Sound. Annotated by Fabrice Contri. Produced by Madeline Leclair. 40-page booklet with notes in French and English. English translation by Isabelle Schulte-Tenckhoff; additional translations by Jacques Bouët. Colour photographs, map. CD, 14 tracks (65:25). Recorded in Hoteni, Romania, in July 2013.

Roumanie: Musique du Maramureș / Romania: Music from Maramureș presents contemporary recordings by Grupul Iza, the premier tradition-bearing folk group from Maramureș, the northern-most region of Romania. This collection of 2013 recordings captures the high energy and stylistic vibrancy of music still performed regularly at celebrations in historic villages like Hoteni, Ocna Șugatag, and Breb.

Traditional ensembles in Maramureș use a modified guitar (*zongoră*), drum with cymbal (*dobă*), and fiddle (*ceteră*). True to the booklet photos, Grupul Iza's *ceterași* play their instruments left-handed; this reverse playing position, which requires restringing the fiddle to mirror standard tuning, is common among fiddle players in this region. The opening track offers a creative approach to arrangements, most notably the polyphonic juxtaposition of two distinct melodies: one imagines being at a celebration where two bands are playing simultaneously on opposite sides of the room. Also particular to this region is the shout-singing style, a cross between *strigături* (extemporaneous chants) and singing popular song texts. The dancers' rhythmic stomping is an important musical component that intertwines with the consistent pulse of the *zongoră* and *dobă*, and sonically paints a party atmosphere. The tracks with solo *tilincă* (wood flute), solo *ceteră*, and women's songs provide moments of intimacy.

In addition to background information for individual tracks, the liner notes offer detailed insight into Grupul Iza musicians, geography and history, singing styles, musical instruments, and performance contexts in Maramureș. Speranța Radulescu, Romania's leading ethnomusicologist, wrote the preface

dedicated to Grupul Iza's leader and multi-instrumentalist, Ioan Pop. The colour photos of the band in traditional costume add a rich visual dimension to the story depicted by this thoroughly enjoyable album.

COLLEEN BERTSCH

Entropy: Where Byzantium Meets Jazz. 2016. Enja Records ENJ-9638 2. Engineered by Wolfgang Stach. Annotated by Sokol Çunga. Produced by Eda Zari. 24-page booklet with notes in English. B/W photographs. CD, 8 tracks (47:43). Recorded at Maarweg Studio2, April/May 2015, Cologne, Germany.

Entropy: Where Byzantium Meets Jazz is large in conception, looking to find a space to encapsulate Byzantine chant, contemporary jazz practice and notions of improvisation and temperament that can move between Western and Near Eastern spaces. While often beautiful, jazz is a dominant force, as we wait until the last piece to hear traditional music as an equal partner.

To be clear, this project is part of the tradition of reinterpreting traditional music within the context of an augmented jazz ensemble. Zari has a mellow and fine voice, sweet throughout her range, with an ability to slow down the groove at key points, such as the opening to the tracks "Krishti U Ngjall" and "Lavirja". A greater stylistic engagement with Eastern chant is possible though. A fine ensemble, featuring Ibrahim Malouf as a soloist, shows extended techniques and micro-tonalities which help the project to move into a deeper space.

Multi tracking, fine production values, and a larger vocal sound are effectively used in the tracks "Kyrie Eleison" and "Zoti Është Bashkë Me Ne", which combine organum, field recording and improvisation, possibly the most important stylistic achievements of the album. Detailed liner notes show that the project is thoughtful and engaged with tradition. In summary, *Entropy: Where Byzantium Meets Jazz* is a fine project that shows that the prism of jazz in general and Eda Zari in particular are capable of meeting other spaces in a meaningful and striking manner, though not equally. This Byzantine influenced jazz is still firmly jazz.

KIM CUNIO

SOUTH AMERICA

Música y Cantos Tradicionales de Cañaris. 2015. Ministry of Culture, Peru. Recorded, mixed and mastered by Pablo Carbajal Hurtado. Annotated by Victor Manayay Rinza, Luiz Martínez Santamaría and Juan Javier Rivera Andía. Produced by the Ministry of Culture Directorate of Intangible Heritage and the Decentralized Directorate of Culture of Lambayeque. 204-page book with notes in Spanish. Colour photographs, maps, bibliographies. CD 1, 19 tracks (66:01); CD 2, 23 tracks (66:01); DVD, 7 tracks (26:33).

Woxrexcüchinga: El Ritual de la Pubertad en el Pueblo Ticuna. 2016. Ministry of Culture, Peru. Recorded by Paula Letts, mastered by Pablo Carbajal Hurtado. Annotated by Luisa Elvira Belaunde, Paula Letts, and Karina Sullón. Produced by the Ministry of Culture Directorate of Intangible Heritage and the Decentralized Directorate of Culture of Loreto. 265-page book with notes in Spanish. Colour photographs, maps, bibliographies. DVD documentary in Spanish with English subtitles. CD 1, 18 tracks (56:00); CD 2, 3 tracks (30:38); DVD (44:24).

The two multimedia publications reviewed here form a welcome addition to the robust scholarly archive documenting Peru's diverse traditional music and cultural practices. Indeed, thanks to the ongoing research and publication efforts of two institutions—the Institute for Ethnomusicology at the Catholic University of Peru, and, as represented here, the national Ministry of Culture—the availability of quality audio recordings, video documentaries, and other publications about such music is at an all-time high, particularly for coastal and southern highland regions. The focus on northern Andean and Amazonian traditions in these two new studies consequently makes them an especially welcome contribution to this already rich body of scholarship.

Beautifully illustrated, deeply researched and conceptualized, and professionally recorded and filmed, these multimedia packages also make a compelling case for the continued relevance and possibilities of a physical publication in the era of audio streaming and online content. Each volume includes two audio CDs and a DVD packaged inside a small format, hardcover book with more than 200 pages of text, color photos, maps, and other illustrative material. In the case of the Ticuna volume, which includes an extended video documentary and several long scholarly essays, it is difficult to determine whether the audio, the video, or the text are the “primary” document within the package.

Música y Cantos Rradicionales de Cañaris (“Traditional music and songs of Cañaris”) documents traditional, primarily rural, music in the eponymous province in the northern Department of Lambayeque. In a region sharply divided

between coastal and highland cultures, Cañaris is emblematic of the highlands: home to a distinctive Quechua dialect (Incahuasi-Cañaris), and located on one of the historic *qhapaq ñan*, the Incan roads that united the Andean empire prior to Spanish arrival. The first essay in the book, by Spanish anthropologist Luz Martínez Santamaria, offers an excellent introduction to these themes, positioning Cañaris within the *longue durée* of Andean ethnohistory from the pre-colonial era to the present.

The remainder of the publication documents extant traditional music practices in Cañaris in a variety of ways. The audio selections on the two CDs, as with the DVD selections and the second essay in the book, trace a largely normative account of Cañareño ritual music in private and public spheres. The first CD includes music for life cycle rituals that will be familiar to listeners already versed in other Andean indigenous cultures, including the *wambra yakun* (baptism), *lanta* (first hair-cutting), *kidamyintu* (courtship and marriage), and funeral songs. The second CD turns to community civic-religious festivals and the *takis* (song-dances) that accompany them, particularly the *unsha* (var. *yunza*, a Carnival event involving the cutting of a tree loaded with gifts) and the *danza de cascabel* (jingle bell dance) performed at major saint festivals. All tracks are accompanied in the book by extensive transcriptions and translations (Quechua-Spanish) of song lyrics and the rapid-fire explanatory interjections by performers in many of the recordings.

The third, and longest, essay in the book offers the most critically-informed account of the deeper themes at work in this project. Written by Juan Javier Rivera Andía, the essay focuses primarily on Cañareño organology, offering detailed descriptions of locally-manufactured instruments that include the *pinkullo* and *caja* (three-holed cane flute and small drum, played together), the *dulzaina* (a local variant of the oboe known elsewhere in the Andes as a *chirimia* or *chirisuya*), and most prominently, the *charanga* or *charanguilla* (a variation on the widely-known Andean *charango*, with four metal strings and a flat wooden body).

Rivera Andía provides a frank account of decisions made during research that impact how we might interpret the publication's contributions. These include the choice to include only older, traditional instruments (a term whose complexity he acknowledges), which constitute a distinct minority today in Cañaris even in ritual contexts, where they exist alongside brass bands, electronic instruments, and recorded music. He also discusses the decision to hold indoor recording sessions with individual musicians and thus record music outside of its ritual context. The resulting higher audio fidelity is certainly pleasurable for listeners, especially on the buzzy, overtone-rich recordings of the *charanga*, but as Rivera Andía candidly notes, the loss of the contextual soundscape in which this music is usually performed and heard also carries risks. This is especially evident in some of the *takis* included on the second CD, whose improvised lyrics focus

almost entirely on the “visiting gringos” from Lima and the performers’ desires both to impress them with their “musical customs” and to note their endangered status. Indeed, the paradoxical fragility of these musical traditions, in contrast to the pride expressed about them, is a recurring theme of the publication as a whole.

Woxrexcüchinga: El Ritual de la Pubertad en el Pueblo Ricuna (“Woxrexcüchinga: the Puberty Ritual of the Ticuna People”) documents a music, dance, and ritual practice facing similar existential challenges. Living in the Department of Loreto, 800 kilometers directly to the east of Cañaris, the Ticuna people are one of more than fifty distinct indigenous peoples who inhabit the Peruvian Amazon, though fewer in number and far less known than groups like the Asháninka and Shipibo. Ticuna lands transect national borders, stretching from the northeastern corner of Peru into Colombia and Brazil, and are inhabited today by nearly 7000 people living in thirty-seven communities. As elsewhere in the Amazon, Christian missionaries and the increased penetration of international media and economic interests have brought rapid cultural change to the Ticuna, even as debates linger over such basic tasks as standardizing an alphabet for their language.

As documented here, *woxrexcüchinga* refers to a puberty ritual for young Ticuna women which takes place at the time of their first menstruation. In its entirety, the ritual includes a period of seclusion that can last days or weeks, depending on the family, during which the initiate receives the counsel of older women. This is followed by a communal celebration in which the young woman’s body is painted, her hair painfully pulled out, and she is dressed and blindfolded in ceremonial attire. Masked spirits bearing staffs with *shacapa* seed rattles arrive to dance with her, and other community members join in on *coxiri* bamboo flutes and a *taricaya* turtle shell drum. The young woman is “reborn” at the conclusion of the celebration by bathing in the river, at which time all other implements used in the ritual, including the musical instruments and spirit masks, are discarded in the water as well.

Though similar in format to the Cañaris publication, with an extensive book accompanied by two CDs and a DVD, the emphasis on a single ritual here makes this a much more focused scholarly work. Drawing on more than eighty interviews in seven Ticuna communities, as well as fieldwork during a *woxrexcüchinga* ritual in 2014 in the village of Yahuma Primera Zona—the only Ticuna community where the ritual is still regularly practiced—the authors analyze Ticuna life and beliefs through reference to a broad anthropological literature on Amazonian cultural practices. In the introductory shorter essays, Brazilian anthropologist Luisa Elvira Belaunde positions the *woxrexcüchinga* in the context of other Amazonian female puberty rituals, while linguist Karina Sullón Acosta provides data on Ticuna history, clan structure, and language. The extensive concluding essay by anthropologist Paula Letts Wertheman,

constituting nearly half of the 265-page book, offers a deep and nuanced exploration of Ticuna cosmology and origin myths, a detailed ethnography of the *woxrexcüchinga* ritual itself, and reflections on cultural change among the Ticuna today.

These scholarly approaches are also reflected in the excellent accompanying audio and visual materials. The first audio CD contains songs drawn from the puberty ritual, with a combination of recordings made of elder singers outside of a ritual context, and several extended tracks recorded during the *woxrexcüchinga* in Yahuma Primera Zona. Extensive liner notes provide transcriptions and translations (Ticuna-Spanish) of all songs. A second CD includes narrations of three Ticuna myths related to the beliefs behind the puberty ritual, as told by Ticuna elders, valorising the importance of oral tradition in shaping the continued transmission and practice of the ritual. Finally, as already mentioned, the set includes a 44-minute documentary, presented in Spanish and Ticuna with optional English subtitles, which follows the *woxrexcüchinga* of twelve-year old Helda Virgilio Ruíz in Yahuma Primera Zona. Visually striking and sensitively filmed, the documentary itself is a major contribution to the scarce educational materials available for teaching about music and ritual in the Amazon region.

As outstanding audio-visual and textual contributions to the existing documentation of Andean and Amazonian music and cultural traditions, both multimedia sets are strongly recommended for anyone with an interest in this region. The underlying questions they raise, implicitly and explicitly, about cultural sustainability, ethnography of endangered traditions, and how best to confront and represent cultural change in our work, makes these publications worthy of consideration for all ethnomusicologists and anthropologists.

JONATHAN RITTER

WEST ASIA

Letters from Iraq. 2017. Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40577. Engineered and mixed by Pete Reiniger; mastered by Charlie Pilzer. Annotated by D.A. Sonneborn. Produced by Daniel E. Sheehy. 40-page booklet with notes in English and Arabic. Arabic translation by Osama Esber. Colour photographs, discography. CD, 8 tracks (69:40). Recorded at Santa Fe Centre Studios, Albuquerque, NM and Airshow, Takoma Park, MD, U.S.A.

Rahim Alhaj's recording *Letters from Iraq* is a piece of art. Sure, you could listen to the instrumental compositions in your car or at an intimate social gathering, but this work is best savoured with some thought. It is a tone poem in the finest nineteenth century classical music sense, in that the aural experience reflects narrative and/or visual art without being overtly literal. The eight musical tracks were conceived with letters and stories of war-torn Iraq in mind. These short narratives are penned in the track notes of the 40-page booklet (20 pages in English) which is embellished with haunting expressionistic images by the Iraqi artist Riyadh Neama. The content is somber: for example, Track 3, a crippled boy is unable to flee a bombing; Track 6, a youth's mother is killed in the market; Track 4, viewing the destruction of one's home.

Tracks 1 and 2 involve tragic love stories where couples are separated due to the ravages of war, all the while dealing with the struggle of being in objectionable Shi'a-Sunni romantic relationships. Though the stories are similar, musically the pieces are different. The 10/8 *sama'i* rhythm of Track 1 pulls the listener into Arab culture, while the percussion-less Track 2, with its long, mournful string melodies tugs the ears toward a western classical tradition. The coexistence of Arab, and even more so, western sounds is at the musical root of this CD.

Is this "world music" in the conventional sense? Would all the residents of Baghdad or Basra relate to the sounds? No, not at all. True, Rahim Alhaj is a brilliant Iraqi *oudist*, trained in the Baghdad Conservatory. But the string quintet is comprised of classical musicians from Santa Fe and New Mexico orchestras who do not utilize microtonal Arab *maqamat* (melodic modes) and Middle Eastern performance idioms. That said, in an increasingly global world, categorization may no longer be relevant. What does matter is that these musicians are extremely talented and, in *Letters from Iraq*, they have produced a worthy piece of art.

LISA URKEVICH

Music from Yemen Arabia. 2017. Sub Rosa SR438. Recorded and annotated by Ragnar Johnson and Jessica Mayer. Mastered by Dave Hunt. 16-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs. 2 CDs. CD 1, 6 tracks (49:05); CD 2, 4 tracks (46:38). Also available as two LPs. Recorded in the field in Sanaa and Ta'ez in September 1973.

This album is a re-issuing of two LPs originally published in 1975 by Lyricord, New York (LLST-7283 and LLST-7284) and later re-issued as CDs by Rounder in 1999. The new release is published by Sub Rosa, a label specializing in electronic music and based in Belgium. The two original LPs were among the first recordings of music made in Yemen after the Civil War (1962-1970). They represented, at that time, very precious documents. In this new album, the original format has been preserved, with each CD corresponding to an LP, and notes as per the original. This presents one disadvantage: as our knowledge of Yemeni music has progressed since these recordings were published over forty years ago, the presentation seems somewhat outdated.

The musicians recorded represent two different ensembles: the three Kawkabânî brothers with a table zither, *qânûn*, a *ûd* and a *derbûka*, much in favour at that time in Sanaa; and a duo from Ta'ez, composed of one singer and *ûd* player, Hasan al-Zabîdî and his brother Sâlem on the *derbûka*. The music played is, respectively, the *sanaani* and popular repertoires from the Sanaa region, and the *lahjî* repertory from the South. These two main repertoires are not presented separately, but alternate across the two discs. This may have been due to aesthetic considerations, or perhaps political ones: at the time, Yemen was politically divided in two parts, the North and the South, and this presentation may have been aimed at blurring this separation.

In CD 1 Track 1 and CD 2 Track 4, the Kawkabânî brothers show their ability to innovate, being the first to introduce *qânûn* in traditional music in Sanaa. The urban repertory, specifically *sanaani*, is represented by CD 1 track 2, “Wâ sîd anâ lek min al-khuddâm” (“O Lord I am among your servants”) and CD 2 track 5, “Wâ mugharrid bi-Wâdî al-Dûr” (“O singer [a bird] in the Valley of Dûr”). This last poem in particular is sung in an elegant way under two different forms: the non-measured *mutawwal* and the *das'a* cycle, an aksak one with 11/8 beats. These two poems belong to the semi-classical or semi-dialectal genre, the *humaynî*, and they have the same author, ‘Alî al-‘Ansî (d. 1726). CD 1 Tracks 1 and 6, and CD 2 track 2, are popular songs, based on traditional melodies drawn from the double-reed repertory, the *mizmâr*. CD 2 Track 4 is an interesting suite of religious wedding songs, *zaffa*, accompanying the ritual procession of the bridegroom who is coming out from the mosque and going back to his father’s house, on Thursday night after prayer (though here only four of these songs are presented out of a dozen usually sung).

For his part, Hasan al-Zabîdî sings songs belonging to the *lahjî* repertory (CD 1 tracks 3 and 4). The lyrics of this last song are from the great poet and prince of Lahej, Ahmed Fadl al-'Abdalî (1881-1943). The composition of the melody is attributed to Fadl Muhammed al-Lahjî, a musician who was living as part of the prince's entourage. CD 2 track 3 is also of the *lahjî* repertory. CD 2 Track 2 belongs to the '*adani*' genre, as shown by the mention of the village of Sheykh 'Uthmân (now a suburb of Aden). '*Adani*' is a new genre which emerged in the second part of the nineteenth century. Generally, the '*adani*' and *lahjî* genres are singled out by their rhythms, often polyrhythmic, which are quicker than those in Sanaa region.

The presentation of these recordings may be a little outdated, given all we now know about Yemeni music. Nevertheless, at a time when Yemen faces a cruel civil and external war, we have to be thankful to Sub Rosa to have made these recordings accessible to the public again, and hope that they will contribute to a better sonic image of this country.

JEAN LAMBERT

EAST ASIA

Japon. Teruhisa Fukuda, Maître de Shakuhachi. Offrande Musicale / Japan. Teruhisa Fukuda, Shakuhachi Master. Musical Offering. 2018. Archives internationales de musique populaire, Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, and Disques VDE-GALLO, MEG-AIMP CXV/ VDE-CD-1501. Recorded, edited and mastered by Renaud Millet-Lacombe and HUSH Sound. Annotated by Teruhisa Fukuda and Madeleine Leclair. Produced by Madeline Leclair. 24-page booklet with notes in French and English. English translation by Isabelle Schulte-Tenckhoff. Colour photographs, map. CD, 7 tracks (70:46). Recorded in 2015.

Teruhisa Fukuda (b.1949) is a performer of traditional and contemporary music for the *shakuhachi* (end-blown bamboo flute of Japan). His training on the instrument has been eclectic and includes learning from two main performance schools, Tozan-ryū and Kinko-ryū. This CD adds to the performer's existing solo recordings and presents seven tracks sourced from the music of the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism. The Fuke musical style forms a traditional core of the *shakuhachi* repertory of *honkyoku* ("original pieces") and links the instrument directly to a school of musical and spiritual thought that stresses the value of meditation in

a context of ritual behaviour. This style of music acts as a source for many later traditions of *shakuhachi* music and has much significance today in terms of its heritage and historical authenticity.

The pieces on Fukuda's latest album are characterized by their long form, blowing techniques, intense ornamentation and protracted musical phrasing. The longest piece presented is "Kokū" ("Empty Sky"), which lasts for over 13 minutes (only three of the tracks last for less than 10 minutes). From the opening piece, "Ajikan" (contemplating the letter "aji" from Sanskrit), to the closing piece, "Takiotoshi" ("Waterfall"), the overall quality of the album is exceptional, both in musical performance and sound production.

The album's liner notes include several colour photos of the performer and the *shakuhachi* (several different types are shown), each of which helps show the listener the physical features of the instrument and its performance practice. While a succinct written background to the instrument, its music and the performer are provided, the description of each track is particularly short and there is no description of the exact type of instrument being used (the *shakuhachi* is made in various sizes and has a range of different designs). The album offers a valuable addition to the recordings of an intriguing instrument of Japanese musical culture.

HENRY JOHNSON

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Laos. Musique des Khmou / Laos. Music of the Khmu. 2017. Archives internationales de musique populaire, Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, and Disques VDE-GALLO, MEG-AIMP CXIII/ VDE-CD-1490. Recorded and annotated by Véronique de Lavenère. Produced by Madeline Leclair. 40-page booklet with notes in French and English. English translation by Isabelle Schulte-Tenckhoff. Colour photographs, map. CD, 27 tracks (72:47). Recorded in the field between 1998 and 2015.

The Khmu (Kmhmu, Kammu, Khamu) people speak related Austro-Asiatic languages and live in the highlands of Northern Laos, where they comprise the largest of the many ethnic minority groups in the country. There are also smaller populations of Khmu in neighboring regions of Thailand, Myanmar, China and Vietnam, and communities in the state of California in the U.S. While any new recording of music from the upland minorities from mainland Southeast Asia is a welcome addition to an under-studied field, Khmu music has

been comparatively well-documented in scholarship by Kristina Lindell, Håkan Lundström, and Damrong Tayanin (also known as Kam Raw), on recordings by Frank Proschan (Proschan 1999) and on seven tracks on a multi-ethnic CD recorded by Véronique de Lavenère, the ethnomusicologist who recorded the present CD (de Lavenère 2004).

This new recording features high-quality field recordings made in Laos, generally close-miked with minimal background noise, and extensive notes describing musical genres and instruments. Most welcome are large colour photographs of the musicians and the instruments, each carefully labelled to correspond to the particular tracks on which they are heard.

The tracks are grouped into songs (most accompanied by mouth organ), “intimate music” which are all instrumental solos, and ensemble ritual music. The latter category is represented by four recordings in which the music is strikingly well-balanced and recorded while being in the context of active social events.

The music in the first two categories clearly illustrate the basic characteristics of Khmu melody, including a four-note scale spanning one to one-and-a-half octaves, sometimes with a fifth auxiliary tone, and an elaborately ornamented style that is consistently rendered by voices and by wind instruments. A most striking illustration of the continuity between vocal and instrumental music is illustrated by a side-blown flute performance in which the player also sings, sometimes in rapid alternation with blowing into the instrument and sometimes singing and playing simultaneously, producing a seamless and richly ornamented vocal-instrumental line with a complex variation in timbre.

The mouth organ, *sngkuul* (*‘khene khmu’*, or Khmu *khaen*) heard on thirteen of the tracks is a fourteen-pipe raft-type free-reed mouth organ which is the same as the mouth organ of the lowland Lao but omitting the two highest pitches from the most common sixteen-pipe version. However, the manner of playing is distinctly Khmu, combining the aforementioned melodic style with intermittent harmonizing pitches (not the fixed drones typical of Lao *khaen* playing).

The music of upland minorities can feel very distant and inscrutable, and this CD does an excellent job at mitigating this sense of cultural distance with extensive discussion of context, partial translations of sung texts, beautiful photographs and high-quality audio, a wide variety of instruments represented, and a clear and sensible organization. Especially noteworthy is the inclusion of three tracks of music by the Phray (Prai, Htin), a sub-group of the Khmu with a distinct musical style. These may be the only published recordings of Phray music to date. Also, noteworthy is the inclusion of a flute ensemble music for warding off evil spirits.

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OCEANIA

Crying Bamboos: Ceremonial Flute Music from New Guinea Madang. 2018. Ideologic Organ/Editions Mego SOMA030. Recorded by Ragnar Johnson. Mastered by Dave Hunt. Annotated by Ragnar Johnson and Jessica Mayer. 16-page booklet with notes in English. B/W photographs. 2 CDs. CD 1, 7 tracks (50:35); CD 2, 6 tracks (48:33). Recorded in the field in 1979.

Traditions of interlocking bamboo flute performance are common in numerous Sepik–Ramu language communities of Papua New Guinea. The number of flutes, techniques of constructing a piece, and particular performance contexts vary, but common themes are also present. Practitioners often, for example, connect the sound of the flutes to the voices of spirits, leading to use in ritual functions—in particular, male initiation—rather than informal entertainment. Another common theme is an origin story in which women discovered the flutes, but men soon removed the flutes and declared them a secret, male-only tradition.

These themes are highlighted in Ragnar Johnson's notes for *Crying Bamboos*. What I observed in the East Sepik Province (during my time there over 2003–2006), Johnson also noted among villages along the Ramu River in Madang Province. Johnson's work is already familiar to many listeners. Another set of his Madang bamboo flute recordings, from 1976, was released as LPs in 1977 and 1978, on two CDs through Rounder Records in 1999, and again on vinyl and CD in 2016 by Ideologic Organ (see the 2017 *Yearbook for Traditional Music* for a review of that release). This 2018 release presents previously unpublished field recordings from November 1979.

The audio tracks, each featuring a pair of six-foot-long flutes playing a “cry,” were recorded away from the village and are extraordinarily clear and free of clutter. (No metadata about recording equipment is given.) The mastering

leaves some ambient sound present but far in the background. Three tracks include accompaniment on *garamut* (slit-drum) and one includes *kundu* (single-membrane, hourglass-shaped drum). What I most enjoy about the “cries” is the sensitivity in tonal flexibility. The limited pitch set available to each flute is enhanced tremendously by players’ use of subtle bends, vibrato, and fluctuations in intensity, along with the rhythmic ostinatos created through interlocking.

The booklet includes photographs, notes about each track, and a concise introduction to the area and its flutes. The notes appear to have been written around the time of the recordings. Even at that time, traditions were weakening, which Johnson attributes to changes in government and business, post-World War II aftermath, and Christian missions. Notes written now might consider those power relations and community decisions with more nuance. I would have appreciated an update about these flute traditions today and an indication of community members’ attitudes about this publication. Are people living in the area aware of this release, and did they have a voice in the presentation and distribution?

Crying Bamboos is a stylish edition of a model set of field recordings. Though the documentation omits some metadata, the recordings are a valuable example of a beautiful, disappearing tradition.

NEIL R. COULTER

Ngiya awungarra / I am Here, Now: Tiwi Voices Past and Present in New Musical Conversations. 2016. Rouseabout Records RRR75. Engineered by Bob Wheatley. Annotated and produced by Genevieve Campbell. 16-page booklet with notes in English. Colour photographs. CD, 20 tracks (73:46).

The album *Ngiya awungarra – I am here, now* is the result of ongoing collaborations between Tiwi Islander women musicians from northern Australia and non-Indigenous professional jazz and classical musicians from Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Instigated initially by Dr. Genevieve Campbell, an honorary affiliate with the University of Sydney, the musicians have been performing together for over a decade to create new versions of old Tiwi songs, linking past to present. Their latest album draws on reclaimed archival recordings of old Tiwi songs and innovatively blends them with the voices of the Tiwi Strong Women’s Group and improvisation by non-Tiwi musicians on brass, bass, strings and drums.

The liner notes include informative details of the twenty tracks with Tiwi text and English translations as well as explanations of the songs and photos of the collaborative group. For example, the track titled “Lullaby” includes an archival recording of a Tiwi woman singing from 1954 interwoven with violin, double bass and the vocals of Tiwi woman Calista Kantilla recorded live during a performance. Campbell states in the liner notes that “there were no rules – each musician reacted to what they heard and felt in the old recordings, its voice and its poetry.”

Joy and sorrow are interwoven through the album, with love songs featured as well as mourning songs lamenting the loss of individuals. The recordings are an important preservation of Tiwi music and demonstrate to younger generations the ways Tiwi song can be maintained, developed and continued. It could be used in university ethnomusicology courses to demonstrate collaboration in practice between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and the importance of relationships, respect, consultation and consent when non-Indigenous musicians work with Indigenous musicians.

KATELYN BARNEY

Barrtjap’s Wangga. 2016. The Indigenous Music of Australia CD 2. Sydney University Press. Recorded by Alice Moyle and Allan Marett, with supplementary recordings by A.P. Elkin, Ken Maddock and Linda Barwick. Annotated by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Lysbeth Ford. Produced by Linda Barwick and Agata Mrva-Montoya. 32-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs, bibliography. CD, 26 tracks (46:03).

Muluk’s Wangga. 2016. The Indigenous Music of Australia CD 3. Sydney University Press. Recorded by Alice Moyle, with supplementary recordings by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Alberto Furlan. Annotated by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Lysbeth Ford. Produced by Linda Barwick and Agata Mrva-Montoya. 32-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs, bibliography. CD, 20 tracks (55:41).

Manji’s Wangga. 2016. The Indigenous Music of Australia CD 4. Sydney University Press. Recorded by Alice Moyle and Allan Marett. Annotated by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Lysbeth Ford. Produced by Linda Barwick and Agata Mrva-Montoya. 24-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs, bibliography. CD, 14 tracks (26:16).

Lambudju's Wangga. 2016. The Indigenous Music of Australia CD 5. Sydney University Press. Recorded by Alice Moyle and Allan Marett, with supplementary recordings by Lamont West and Sally Treloyn. Annotated by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Lysbeth Ford. Produced by Linda Barwick and Agata Mrva-Montoya. 32-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs, bibliography. CD, 15 tracks (49:50).

Walakandha Wangga. 2016. The Indigenous Music of Australia CD 6. Sydney University Press. Recorded by Allan Marett, with supplementary recordings by Michael Enilane, Frances Kofod, William Hoddinott, Lesley Reilly and Mark Crocombe. Annotated by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Lysbeth Ford. Produced by Linda Barwick and Agata Mrva-Montoya. 40-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs, bibliography. 2CDs. CD 1 18 tracks (42:41); CD 2, 39 tracks (46:30).

Ma-yawa Wangga. 2016. The Indigenous Music of Australia CD 7. Sydney University Press. Recorded by Allan Marett, with supplementary recordings by Sally Treloyn and Mark Crocombe. Annotated by Allan Marett, Linda Barwick and Lysbeth Ford. Produced by Linda Barwick and Agata Mrva-Montoya. 32-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and B/W photographs, bibliography. CD, 15 tracks (32:20).

There is a long history of interdisciplinary collaborations for the study of Australian indigenous culture, especially amongst anthropologists and musicologists. In 1984, however, the anthropologist Margaret Clunies Ross criticized the lack of interest shown by linguists in Australian indigenous song. In recent years, there has been a flowering of projects and publications in Australia emanating from collaborations between musicologists and linguists, especially for music from the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

This set of CDs containing recordings from Belyuen and Wadeye in the Daly River area of western Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory is an excellent example of a most impressive interdisciplinary partnership amongst three researchers in the fields of ethnomusicology, archiving, and linguistics, all of whom have spent more than twenty years working with the music and languages of people in the area where the songs were recorded. Allan Marett and Linda Barwick have received numerous grants from the Australian Research Council to conduct musicological research in the Daly River area and have produced several books and CDs on this music. Barwick (along with her many professional affiliations), is Director of the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC) at the University of Sydney. The authors have painstakingly combed through several audio archives, locating all known

recordings of the *wangga* song genre from as early as 1952, and have included examples of these on this set of CDs. Lysbeth Ford has developed the spelling systems for the three endangered languages from the Daly region of western Arnhem Land—the Batjamalh, Marri Tjavin and Marri Ammu—that are represented in these recordings, and has transcribed and analyzed all of the song texts. The authors have provided the listeners with a resource that is of use to both academics and the communities from which the recordings were made.

Song is an important element in the transmission of Indigenous cultural knowledge and languages, and can maintain a direct connection with ancestral beings, both creator spirits and deceased members of a community. The singers of *wangga* receive their songs from ancestors, who use song texts in both recognizable language and “ghost language” to communicate emotive messages of longing, warning, a sense of place, and other topics. For example, one song, “Ya[garra] Nga-bindja-ng Nga-mi” (CD 2, track 7) shows a dialogue between a ghost and a songman, ending with the spirit exhorting the man to sing.

CDs 2-5 concentrate upon the songs of individual songmen, whereas the last two explore two different repertoires, the *Walakandha* (CD 6, 2 CD set), and the *Ma-yawa* (CD 7), both of which have been used for ceremonies at Wadeye. A total of 22 singers appear on the CDs with five of these performing on more than one CD. Ideally, the book *For the sake of a song: Wangga songmen and their repertoires* (Marett, Barwick and Ford 2012), should be read in conjunction with the CDs as it gives a detailed, track-by-track analysis of the song structure and the texts. Alternatively, the songs, along with part of the contents of the book can be streamed directly online (<http://wangga.library.usyd.edu.au/repertoires>).

By combining archival sources with more recent performances this set of recordings traces the process of song creation and the dynamics of change as the songs are transmitted through a period of time. The tracks are arranged in such a way that the listener can compare how specific songs have changed through the years and how different singers have manipulated the melodies and the texts. For example, on CD 2, the song, “Naya Rradja Bangany Nye-ve,” appears on four tracks, recorded respectively in 1952, 1964, 1988 and 1997. Three of the four different performers of this song—uncle, father and son—demonstrate how each interprets it within his own distinctive style. Six examples of the song, “Rak Badjalarr,” on CD 5 (“Lambudju’s Repertory”) are shown from 1961 to 2008. Twenty-three tracks of CD 5 were issued on another recording compiled by Marett, but are included in this series for completeness.

The booklets accompanying each CD contain photographs and commentaries giving contextual information as well as brief musical and linguistic comments. They provide enough information to educate the general listener; of course, those wanting more information can take the compilers’ advice to follow the analyses in their book.

Some technical comments follow. First of all, the songs have been edited from field recordings, which are incredibly valuable but often of variable audio quality. Although much work has been done on cleaning up the tracks, the texts can be very difficult to hear, especially with Alice Moyle's 1962 recordings and those of William Hoddinott. An attempt to follow the song texts increases one's respect for the team in transcribing them.

A map should have been included at the beginning of each booklet, especially for an international audience, and there are no durations shown for each track. Track lists appear twice, one showing track, song, title, source codes for the original recordings and singers, with a briefer listing on the back cover. Although the reader can figure out some of the source codes by reading the notes, a clear listing of the meanings of each code would be most useful.

A possible source of confusion for the reader arises with the booklet for CD 6, the *Walakandha*, which numbers the tracks consecutively on both CDs, starting at Track 1 on the first CD through to 39 on the second CD. When the second CD is played, the track numbers on a player revert to 1-19.

I am not aware of any compilation of recordings as comprehensive as this one on any other song genre of Aboriginal Australia. Marett, Barwick and Ford's deep involvement with the people of the Daly River area and their intimate knowledge of the songs, exemplified by Marett's becoming an accomplished performer of *wangga*, present us with a true labour of love and a great contribution towards interdisciplinary research.

GRACE KOCH

Reference Cited

Marett, Alan, Barwick, Linda and Lysbeth Ford.

2012 *For the Sake of a Song: Wangga Songmen and their Repertories*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.