

Friday March 27, 2009

8:00 REGISTRATION

8:30-10:30 ROUNDTABLE 1: INTO THE FIELD

The purpose of this roundtable is to discuss techniques, ethics, dilemmas and advice about *the field*. Ethnographic narrative is the desired product of most ethnomusicological study, but succeeding in *the field* can be one of the most emotionally tasking processes in any ethnomusicologist's life. This roundtable is intended to shed light on what *the field* is, and how researchers navigate their way through ethnographic work. The panelists have been chosen to represent a diverse spectrum of fieldwork preparation perspectives. Participants will share insights and generate discussion on: how to enter *the field*, how to find essential resources such as informants or lodging, and how personal relationships with informants affect research. Panelists will also share field techniques they find most useful, including those less commonly taught in the classroom. Short presentations by the panelists will be followed by an open discussion.

Panelists:

Mrs. Elizabeth Whittenburg Ozment, University of Georgia (Chair)

Dr. Rebecca Sager, Independent Scholar

Dr. Jean Kidula, University of Georgia

Dr. Welson Tremura, University of Florida

Dr. Gavin Douglas, University of North Carolina Greensboro

Dr. James E. Cunningham, Florida Atlantic University

10:30-11:00 BREAK

11:00-12:30 SESSION 1: PERFORMING "NATIONAL IDENTITIES"

Chair: Leslie C. Gay Jr., University of Tennessee.

11:00-11:30 "Aviv Geffen and Gad Elbaz: Representing the Wise Son in Israeli Popular Music." David M. Schiller, University of Georgia.

This paper presents a close reading and a thick description of two videotaped popular-music performances: Aviv Geffen and Jonathan Geffen performing *Hanasich hakatan* (The Little Prince) in 1996, and Gad Elbaz and Benny Elbaz performing *Kol hachayalim chotzrim habaita* (All the soldiers are coming home) in 2008. Both performances have been videotaped, and both are currently available on the Israeli YouTube website.

While Geffen and Elbaz have both been nurtured by their equally creative fathers, they are widely perceived as representing opposite poles in Israel's political-cultural spectrum: Aviv and his father Jonathan Geffen are secular, leftist, and of Ashkenazic heritage; Gad and his father Benny Elbaz are religious, rightist, and of Misrahi heritage. Yet my close reading of the musical and visual texts of these two performances reveals some intriguing similarities between them.

In exploring the cultural contexts of the performances, I develop the idea that these similarities may be understood as competing representations of the scriptural and religious “Wise Son” alluded to in my title: “A wise son makes a glad father (Proverbs 15:20); and “What says the wise son?” (*Passover Haggadah*). Within the context of contemporary Israeli culture, both artists are also engaged in competing representations of “Israeliness,” as defined by Regev and Seroussi (2004), *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*. In these performances, the personal affective bonds between father and son resonate with Israel's societal valorization of male friendship and bonding, especially in the Israeli Defense Forces and in the Haredi (“ultra-Orthodox”) communities. Finally, within the context of Israeli politics and security concerns, both performances speak directly to the tragic realities of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

11:30-12:00 “Noel Rosa and the Modern Samba: Not Just Words.” Irna Priore, University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Noel Rosa (1910 - 1937) was one of the most influential Brazilian popular composers of the first half of the twentieth century. His influence disappeared by the 1940s, but it was rescued first by bossa nova artists and then carried on through composers such as Chico Buarque and a host of others.

Noel's influence is acknowledged by most Brazilian scholars; however, few works exist addressing his musical language. Most often, studies on Noel Rosa focus on the lyrics of his songs. This is not without cause: Noel had a keen sense of the problems facing the bourgeois society of the 1930s. He brought samba to the middle class by “whitening” the lyrics and “blackening” the rhythm. Noel composed sambas that would be suitable for middle-class salons, while at the same time using the instrumentation and rhythms of the School of Sambas, something that had not yet been done. Antonio Tota stated: “Noel was responsible for freeing samba from its maxixe's rhythm, giving it a more elaborated punctuation that was in sync with the urbanization process that was taking place in Brazil” (Tota, 2001).

I will analyze several of Noel's compositions, including *Com que Roupa* (1929) and *Feitiço da Vila* (1936) and compare them with a few songs performed by his group *Bando de Tangarás* and two sambas from his rival Wilson Batista (1913-1968): *Lenço no pescoço* (1933) and *Mocinho da Vila* (1934). This stylistic analysis will show how Noel's profound influence on Bossa Nova and the traditional sambistas thereafter went beyond the famous words of his lyrics.

12:00-12:30 ““Danish Subjectivities, Multiculturalism, and the Boundaries of Rytmask Musik.” Leslie C. Gay Jr., University of Tennessee.

Danes' acceptance and appropriation of African and African American musics into their lives under the rubric *rytmisk musik* (“rhythmic music”) shows black music as more than just a “foreign import” into Denmark's soundscape. The influence of this concept over the last seventy years has profoundly shaped Danish musical practices. As a “meta-genre” that encompasses North American popular forms, as well as African, Brazilian, and Afro-Cuban drumming and dance, it offers an alternative to the British-American concept of popular music. Today *rytmisk musik* informs all levels of Denmark's music educational system and media programming. As Danes' personal subjectivities are steeped in experiences of African diasporic music, *rytmisk musik* defines Danish identity as fundamentally cross cultural.

Rytmisk musik also reveals the limits of this multicultural ideology. While it re-inscribes black music as Danish, it excludes other musics within Denmark. Noticeably marginalized are Denmark's traditional musics, and the cultural expressions of "new Danes," growing communities of Turkish guest workers and Somali refugees. As the phrase "new Dane" suggests, such immigrant communities are incorporated into notions of Danish identity (as "Danes"), yet remain separate ("new"), often retaining their own language and musical practices.

While contemporary African populations remain marked by difference in Denmark, this is not the case for African diasporic musical forms. Gradually embraced as part of Danish ideology and nationhood since the 1930's, the notion of *rytmisk musik*, once exoticized as characteristic of social freedom, today constitutes an essential element of what it means to be Danish.

12:30-2:00 LUNCH

2:00-3:20 SESSION 2: MUSICAL COMMUNITAS AND RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES

Chair: Alison Arnold, North Carolina State University.

2:00-2:40 "Of Krishnas and Christians: Music as Catalyst for *Communitas* at a Utah Hare Krishna Festival." Sara Brown, Florida State University.

The Hindu practice of *kirtan*, or the musical performance of sacred chants, has often been a socially conscious and strikingly egalitarian practice, allowing members of otherwise separate social groups to embrace each other in a state of *communitas*, what Victor Turner calls that "essential and generic bond, without which there could be no society" (Turner 1969:97). The practice of *kirtan* has found a place in America's musical culture through Hare Krishna chant. One particularly fascinating venue for *kirtan* performance is the Sri Sri Radha Krishna temple in Spanish Fork, Utah, where festivals and other events invite members of highly contrasting religious communities into an often close relationship. This paper will focus on musical performances at the annual Festival of Colors, during which as many as ten thousand festival participants—most of them Mormons from the surrounding community—gather to sing Hindu chants in a mass rock-style *kirtan* while blanketing each other in colored paint, a gesture intended to erase social distinctions. In the process, participants embrace liminal personalities and share an exhilarating experience of *communitas*. In this paper I will explore the philosophical underpinnings of *kirtan*, its manifestation in contemporary American culture, and ways in which *kirtan* singing has shaped the intriguing relationship between religious groups in this Utah community. I argue that these performances have powerful implications for the potential of music to act as catalyst in bringing together communities otherwise marked by difference.

2:40-3:20 "Singing, Transcendence and the Musical Construction of Morality in Haitian Vodou: From Local Culture to the National Stage?" Rebecca D. Sager, Independent Scholar.

Within Haitian vodou cosmology, transcendent experience (often achieved through singing) is of utmost value because it is a nexus of human contact with the supernatural realm

and spiritual power that directly affects daily living. In this presentation I explore this nexus first by focusing upon conversations with a *manbo*—a vodou ritual specialist and family leader—about her private devotions called *respè*—respect—as well as during an intimate *kraze tab*—breaking down the table—ritual. This portion of my inquiry is grounded in two recordings: the first is of the spirit Jean Dantor, mounted upon the manbo, officiating the *kraze tab*; the second is of a subsequent conversation in which the same manbo and I listened back upon the *kraze tab* recording while discussing the meanings of Jean Dantor’s actions, singing and speaking. Deeper insights into how Vodou spirits’ interactions with devotees impacts upon the exigencies of daily life are shared by this manbo who personally found moral focus through living with the spirits’ songs.

After presenting the processes of this musical construction of morality in this specific local context, I next consider if and how this philosophy of *respè* could impact national public cultural policy. To this end, I will report on discussions with Eddy Lubin, current Haitian Minister of Culture, who is steeped in the same vodou song and philosophical tradition, about the potential influence of this local cultural tradition upon Haitian society at large.

Break: 3:20-3:30

3:30-4:30 KEYNOTE ADDRESS: "Ethnography and Music Space-time: Musical Performance in Ethnomusicological Practice and Theory." J. Lawrence Witzleben, Professor, Musicology & Ethnomusicology Division, University of Maryland.

Before joining the University of Maryland faculty in 2007, J. Lawrence Witzleben taught ethnomusicology and Chinese music at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for nearly two decades. He has studied Chinese music theory and performance in Taipei, Honolulu, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, and is the author of *Silk and Bamboo Music in Shanghai: The 'Jiangnan Sizhu' Instrumental Ensemble Tradition* (Kent State, 1995), which received the 1996 Alan Merriam Prize from the Society of Ethnomusicology. His current research centers around long-term changes in Chinese instrumental performance, including presentation, repertoire, gender issues, popularization, and both intra-cultural and cross-cultural hybridity. Dr. Witzleben has served on the Executive Board of the Society of Ethnomusicology, and as the Co-Chairman of the Hong Kong Anthropological Society. He is currently the Vice-Chairman of the Musics of East Asia Study Group of the International Council for Traditional Music, and is the incoming Editor of the journal, *Ethnomusicology*.

4:30-5:30 RECEPTION (hosted by UNCG School of Music)

5:30-7:30 DINNER (on your own)

7:30 SHANGHAI HUAI OPERA TROUPE

Saturday March 28, 2009

8:00 REGISTRATION

8:30-10:00 SESSION 3: THE DIY OF LOW-FI, INDY, AND PUNK

Chair: James E. Cunningham, Florida Atlantic University.

8:30-9:00 “It Takes a Village to Raise an Andy: A Low-Fi Portrait.” Peggy Hall, University of North Carolina Greensboro.

This paper examines the role of Andy Mabe, a local Winston-Salem musician and icon, in the transmission of qualities that characterize the low-fi DIY scene. An understanding of a community's identity emerged; informed by my relationship to Andy and the local arts collective. Andy's iconic status, I will argue, exists because he is a symbol to the DIY subculture of the authentic, independent artist, able to access and employ alternative channels (rather than established forms of distribution) to share his music. The value of an “Andy” archetype suggests a community created around common values. This study exposes the role of subversion, a need to express one's personal complexity, and reciprocity within the community, centering on the need for independence. From who do the indie artists gain independence? As self-identified outsiders, they easily see the contradictions within the mainstream and engage in behaviors suggesting they want to be apart from it. For the community, independence exists by being separate from the mainstream. Yet, unable to turn their backs completely on the mainstream, Andy and the community around him, must engage in a series of tradeoffs. Therefore, a contradiction emerges. How can a community be independent and still interact with the mainstream? Autonomy creates itself on a personal front and a “low-fi” culture of homemade and self-produced alternatives surface. Andy's significance and success in the Winston-Salem DIY low-fi community means that his trade offs are lower than most. (audio and video playback)

9:00-9:30 “Where is the Line?: Embodied Expression and the Construction of Difference in the Music of Björk.” Jonah M. Chambers, University of Tennessee.

The 2004 album *Medúlla* by pop music icon Björk challenges gendered norms by emphasizing the human body as a performative nexus for transgressing conventional western binaries such as nature/culture, mind/body, and self/other. The album's core sonic material consists exclusively of voices, variously subjected to technological manipulation, while at the same time distinctly human. The title *Medúlla*, Latin for “bone marrow,” reflects Björk's heightened sense of bodily awareness at the time of the album's production, which she attributes to having recently birthed her second child.

Recognizing the significance of the body for Björk in making this album, I analyze *Medúlla* utilizing musicologist Suzanne Cusick's concept of a performance-centered feminist music theory. Western music theory traditionally conceives of music as a masculinated “mind/mind” exchange of ideas between composer and listener—and in doing so ignores the very bodies that perform those musical ideas. Feminist music theory alternatively re-emphasizes the role of embodiment in musical performance.

Inspired by Cusick's methods and incorporating the theoretical approaches of feminist

writers Donna Haraway and Judith Butler, I explore how Björk challenges “regimes” of gender and sexuality through her radical (often technologically mediated) vocal performances. I also show how Björk positions the human voice as a privileged medium through which individuals construct subjectivity and define the border between self and other. Ultimately, I argue that Björk re-envisioned the post-modern world as a place where borders of gender, sexuality, race, and nationality do not exist *a priori* of human construction. In doing so, she highlights the political nature of human agency in (re)negotiating such borders of difference. (PowerPoint and audio compatible A/V equipment)

9:30-10:00 “Blackfire: Contemporary Punk Rock Music as a Platform for Social Criticism.” Katherine Wahlberg, Florida Atlantic University.

Punk-rock music provides the Navajo band, Blackfire, with a platform for social criticism and a way to mediate the conflict between their traditional world and the modern world. Through punk rock music, Blackfire presents a critique of society, addressing Indian and human rights issues on a local and global level. Why punk? The ideology of punk rock music is based on a history of dissent and rebellion, a philosophy that embraced collectively generated chaos as an ethos, and allowed disaffected youth to gain a voice. Yet, recent changes within the contemporary punk subculture provide an even better fit with the values of Blackfire. With the commodification of punk rock by the culture industries, punk has come to stand for individualist, anti-institutional politics, emphasizing the ability and opportunity to speak out freely, uninhibited by convention or dogma. This new political perspective, a very different interpretation from the earlier punk philosophy, fits precisely into the sensibility of the Benally siblings (Blackfire), who have an intense belief in music as a tool to effect change. The band has immense appeal to the punk rock subculture because they embody its values as “outsiders” from mainstream society. A review of the content of Blackfire’s latest album, *Silence is a Weapon*, videos of performances and a number of interviews in which the band expresses their beliefs, reveals how musicians can speak and act effectively in support of a social movement. (computer projector, audio)

10:00-10:15 BREAK

10:15-11:45 SESSION 4: POLITICAL, AESTHETIC, AND SOCIO-CULTURAL “REALITIES”

Chair: Revell Carr, University of North Carolina Greensboro.

10:15-10:45 “Political Influences on the Development of Bulgarian Folk Music.” Kalin Kirilov, University of Massachusetts.

This paper traces the relationship between politics and music by comparing two periods of Bulgarian folk music revival separated by a period of rejection of traditions and cultural values. This study engages in current discourses regarding state-imposed nationalism and traditions, village culture and modern life, and the role of Bulgarian folk music in the construction of modern cultural identity. The paper also reflects on my experiences as a performer and my personal interactions with Bulgarian folk musicians residing in Bulgaria and the United States.

The socialist period (1944-1989) had a tremendous impact on the musical traditions of Bulgaria. Following the nationalist model of the Soviet regime, the Bulgarian communist party considered “authentic” music a principal tool for uniting the nation, a source of ancient Bulgarianness, and a national cultural treasure. Enormous funds were directed toward collecting and preserving folk melodies and organizing state-sponsored festivals featuring “authentic” folklore.

After four decades of state support, the folk music of Bulgaria faced a post-socialist transition which began in 1989. A primary characteristic of this period of change in social, economic, and political spheres was a rejection of previously established cultural values. Most folk-based music genres suffered a massive audience withdrawal due to their association with the socialist regime. The post-socialist period gave birth to a new genre, *chalga* which promoted female sexuality and materialism. *Chalga* began to decline after the year of 2000 which marked the beginning of the second revival of Bulgarian folk music as a symbol of Bulgarian national identity. (PowerPoint Projector).

10:45-11:15 “Battling for Survival: Hip-Hop, Competition, and the Preservation of ‘Old School’ Aesthetics.” Tim Storhoff, Florida State University.

Competition has been an important part of hip-hop culture since it began in the South Bronx in the 1970s, and it played a major role in the popularization of hip-hop while also functioning as a non-violent, post-gang alternative to settling disputes. As hip-hop and its four main elements of graffiti writing, dancing, rapping, and DJing have spread and changed, competition has remained a central cultural value, and it has largely been through competition that the traditions of “old school” hip-hop culture have survived and remained viable in the face of the hegemony of commodified, popular rap music.

This paper, based primarily upon interviews and field research, will look at how organized hip-hop competitions, specifically the World Series of Hip Hop rap battles and the All Targets Leveled breakdancing competition, intentionally promote traditional or “old school” hip-hop ideologies and modes of performance often in opposition to the dominant representations of hip-hop commonly found in the media. While meticulously crafted rap songs dominate the charts and tightly choreographed breakdancing routines can be found on television and stage, these representations are far deviations from the often improvisational and highly individualistic forms that originally characterized hip-hop culture. These competitions intentionally help to legitimize practices like freestyle rapping and breakdancing, but these intentions can be negated and inverted by scandal such as in the World Series of Hip Hop, which makes the prospect of encouraging new people to participate in these art forms and carry the traditions forward more difficult. (laptop projector)

11:15-11:45 “*Candombe* in Uruguay and Argentina: The Musical Reflection of Socio-Cultural Realities.” Sakinah A. Davis, Spelman College.

This paper analyzes *candombe*, a musical dance genre of the Afro-descendant communities in Argentina and Uruguay. These music traditions are influencing identities and their social contexts within their respective communities. I compare practices and perceptions of *candombe* in Argentina and Uruguay and examine *candombe* as a form of social activism.

Though the few texts available concerning this tradition serve as valuable historical resources, they tend to fall short as appropriate sources of cultural analysis. This academic disadvantage further emphasizes the effectiveness of ethnographic research as the main constituent of this study. These communities are still highly marginalized within their respective nations. Historical documentation of their treatment is scarce and oftentimes the truth is distorted by racial prejudice within scholarly texts. Participant observation and numerous interviews and were conducted in order to understand the situation of those individuals who currently practice *candombe* and who are active in promoting its cultural value.

I argue that the musical traditions of *candombe* in both Uruguay and Argentina inevitably convey those socio-cultural truths that are either ignored or hidden within academia as well as in their general populations. These realities include racism and suppressed cultural identity within and outside of the Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan communities. (computer [USB and audiovisual capabilities] and projector)

11:45-12:00 BREAK

12:00-1:00 ROUNDTABLE 2: OUT OF THE FIELD

As students in ethnomusicology, we are introduced to the emic-etic positioning of the ethnographer vis-à-vis the "field" as the "most basic of all ethnomusicological issues" (Nettl 1983, 140). Following graduate coursework, we depart from the classroom and embark upon our fieldwork, armed with seemingly clear distinctions between insider/outsider, native/foreign, and home/abroad. While these dualisms seemed to work logically within the classroom, we have found that they often make little sense in the field. As young ethnographers, we find ourselves lost in the field, seeking ways of redefining ourselves in relation to the field, the people, and the music that serve as the subjects of our research. In this roundtable, four doctoral students will share their fieldwork experiences within Bulgarian pop music, blues tourism in Arkansas, cyber-ethnomusicology, and music and the Rwandan genocide. Collectively, these experiences raise questions concerning the concept of the "emic-etic dichotomy" and will facilitate discussion of entering into and interacting within the field.

Panelists:

Trevor S. Harvey, Florida State University (Chair)

Robert W. Fry III, Vanderbilt University

Plamena Kourtova, Florida State University

Jason McCoy, Florida State University

1:00-2:00 SEMSEC BUSINESS MEETING/LUNCH

All interested parties are invited to attend.

2009 Program Committee:

James E. Cunningham, Florida Atlantic University (Chair)

Alison Arnold, North Carolina State University

Gavin Douglas, UNCG School of Music

Ben Koen, Florida State University

Local Arrangements Committee:

Revell Carr, UNCG School of Music

Gavin Douglas, UNCG School of Music

Special Thanks:

John Deal, Dean, UNCG School of Music

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