

tional possibilities. The analysis of texts as timeless words in a notebook alone cannot expose playful tensions between melodic formulae and lexical connotations, ironic musical quotes, or a ripe emotion that a lengthened syllable at the end of a melodic phrase might evoke.

Attention to and including musical sound would also have resulted in more pleasure and connection for readers. I yearn to hear the songs, the sounds that so clearly impress and motivate both the Tupuri people and this American anthropologist. I regret the institutional or logistical factors that muffled the sound in this presentation of Tupuri song, and hope that Ignatowski can augment her excellent work through partnered research with consultants capable of musical analysis in the future.

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*Baakisimba: Gender in the Music and Dance of the Baganda People of Uganda*. Sylvia A. Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2005. 294 pp., 13 figures, 19 plates. New York: Routledge (Current Research in Ethnomusicology Series). Jennifer C. Post, series editor.

*Baakisimba* is a style of choral dance music from Uganda that involves male and female performers. It appears to have originated from communal festivities, and its name derives from a phrase which refers to the cultivation of bananas, a staple food from which beer is also made.

This book describes the interaction between gender, musical culture and various political and social patterns. In particular, the material, musical and behavioural components of *baakisimba* are shown to participate in the shaping of gender relations. Ultimately, they are revealed as affirming as well as contesting patriarchal culture.

A lengthy introduction posits theoretical frameworks that link music and dance, and address issues of gender identity. Methodological concerns also receive attention. The author in particular analyzes her status as cultural insider. Her conclusion is that this status is contradictory. It obviously offers a form of nuanced insider knowledge. Nannyonga-Tamusuza not only is a performer and teacher of *baakisimba*, but, as a Luganda speaker, also has relatively easy access to her informants. These informants are allowed to speak for themselves, and their observations provide valuable insight into the complexities of social behaviour and its ideological foundations. However, the obvious challenge to such insider knowledge is that it does not necessarily ensure insight. The author consequently explains her need to bridge the distinction between knowing and understanding. Interaction with cultural outsiders forced her to acknowledge and then consider the actual sexual significance of *baakisimba* music. Thus, "It was [...] by distancing myself from my culture and using a different lens to understand *baakisimba* that I could think critically about this dance in relation to issues of gender and sexuality" (p. 35). In addition, her status as Christian impacted on her relations with informants as well, especially in the sense that it impeded her in gathering information about older

religious forms. Her ethnic and gender status in turn barred her as researcher from sites of ruling and male power, but ironically not when she acted as interpreter for Austrian ethnomusicologist Gerard Kubik. These and other experiences lead her to argue for collaborative research by insiders and outsiders.

This book is an endeavour in activist, emancipatory scientific research. Its frank addressing of sexual mores (including homosexuality) is courageous, given the many strict proscriptions that control public discourse in this regard. Nannyonga-Tamusuza's primary focus on female status "is critical not only for the achievement of economic development and to genuine democracy, but also as a matter of social justice and social transformation" (p. 236). She undermines the normative cultural construction of female identity that is based on an assumption of physical weakness by pointing to women's domestic duties that require strength and endurance. These physical qualities also are shown to characterise women's musical performance. Citing an interview with a female drummer, the author notes that "She is claiming her right to co-exist with Baganda men. The right to self-identification, empowerment, and pleasure are symbolically derived from beating the drum and its sound. Since the drum is central to the identity of both women and men, beating the drum is to be a Muganda. By beating the drum, women rediscover and thus redefine themselves" (p. 147). Similarly controversial, the author opposes those Catholics who find links between the older performance practice of *baakisimba*, and its use in Christian churches. Some priests support the dance because its ancient association with feasting correlates with the aims of holy communion. To them, it also represents the relationship between God and the faithful. For the author, however, the sexual significance of *baakisimba* is at odds with the spiritual essence of religious worship.

This book is particularly effective in describing how *baakisimba* instruments, dance movements, costumes and musical and behavioural patterns shape gender. It shows that performance practice has, for the most part, been shaped by a patriarchal ideology. This is essentially evident in the fact that men normatively are the drummers, while women dance. These role allocations are related to the notion that men are powerful and required to control women who are weaker and submissive. Accordingly, "Because the drum music defines the type and length of the dance motifs, men, as the drummers, control the women's dancing" (p. 161).

The dance movements of *baakisimba* reflect the daily domestic routines of women, especially those related to food production. The basic movement is centered on a mobile waist. This movement is erotic, and it helps to objectify women's sexuality and gender. Their sexuality also is reflected in revealing costumes. Although such display of sexuality often is frowned on, it in fact is an important site of female power. Nannyonga-Tamusuza cites a male informant as stating that a "soft" (that is, gyrating) waist is "exciting" to men (p. 155). Also, the intricacies of certain movements and the physical demands of extended dance sessions point to women's actual bodily power.

*Baakisimba* also is shown to shape gender identity in religious and homosexual terms. While female drumming is frowned upon, this does not apply to its Catholic performance practice, since the church aims at “the erasure of basic Kiganda customs” (p. 182). Also, nuns stand outside the conventional power struggle between men and women because of their celibacy. Similarly, the dance enables male homosexuals to “assert their identities in the restrictive and conservative Kiganda culture. *Baakisimba* forms one of the few spaces where homosexuals have survived with little challenge” (p. 236).

*Baakisimba* performance inside royal courts is a site of political power and deference. Accordingly, one of its movements involves a posture of deference while dancers never are to turn their back on the king. The king’s mother formerly had her own dance troupe, while the dance was performed for certain ruling class men and women. Whereas *baakisimba* performance outside the palace involved free participation, the king’s status was enhanced by the appointment of a class of semi-professional *baakisimba* musicians.

This book is based on the author’s Ph.D thesis. While allowances in terms of style and coherence may be made at the latter level, stricter criteria arguably apply to published ethnomusicological works. This otherwise valuable contribution to African ethnomusicology often assumes an anecdotal, conversational style that jars with formal theorising. The book would have benefited from stricter intervention by the series editor/publisher on both the presentation of content and unconventional headings as well as the myriad of grammatical, punctuation and typographical errors.

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*Updating the San: Image and Reality of an African People in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Robert Hitchcock, Kazunobu Ikeya, Megan Biesele & Richard Lee, editors. 2006. Senri Ethnological Studies no. 70, Osaka, Japan: National Museum of Ethnology. ISSN 0387-6004; ISBN 4-901 906-43-7 C3039. v. 304 pp., maps, figures.

Those known externally as the San (Bushmen or Basarwa) are peoples currently living in six southern African countries: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Collectively, they are a people who are viewed and stereotyped by the outside world in contradictory ways: as some of the last human inhabitants of a Garden of Eden existence, or as the victims of apartheid’s worst policies and practices and of postcolonial state marginalisation. They number about 100,000 people – a number that is far outweighed by the amount of literature produced in the popular and academic presses – about their lifestyles, struggles, and knowledge.

*Updating the San* is a volume published in Japan, which has gathered together the work of some of the San’s most enduring researchers and activists, and others who are relatively new to the field of “Bushman Studies”. The volume contains a truly global