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Flamenco Deep Song [Book review]

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and self-determination after its hasty creation in April 1792.

According to Eyck, music was (and still is) important in providing the most evocative words and phrases of each anthem with their "ultimate effect." Nevertheless, words outweigh music in the nationalist agenda. In a tone reminiscent of the aesthetic debates waged during the eighteenth century, Eyck argues that music is the handmaiden of poetry. "The notes [are] empty shells without the words to which they resound. Verbalization rather than vocalization bestows the national imprint upon an anthem" (p. xv). In this regard it is important to know that the author is a historian, and his book is devoid of music examples or incipits. *The Voice of Nations* is thus the historical and literary European counterpart to the standard *National Anthems of the World*, edited by W. L. Reed and M. J. Bristow, now in its eighth edition (London: Cassell, 1993).

Having established the supremacy of poetry in the introductory chapter, Eyck presents the case histories of the anthems of seventeen European countries. Each anthem "story" traces a historical-cultural journey from poetic inception to governmental adoption, and identifies the main authors, composers, politicians, and other key players involved in the creative process and subsequent ratification proceedings. Included where relevant is a discussion of contextual political events. The book makes it abundantly clear that anthem making is a male endeavor; few women figure in these stories, although greater exploration of the role played by the "resistance" in France, Poland, Portugal, and Ireland (chapters 4–7) and anthem "singers" may have exposed their involvement.

Several anthems are excluded from the volume. Those of Austria, Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria are omitted because they did not arise spontaneously or are no longer in current use, and those of Finland and the Czech and Slovak republics are also dismissed. No mention is made of the neutral nation, Switzerland. Thus, the book's focus on the current fifteen members of the European Union (EU) and several states now seeking admission leads Eyck to question the efforts of the EU to impose a supranational anthem—the "Ode to Joy" theme from the finale of Ludwig van

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, set to poetry by Friedrich von Schiller. Despite its "illustrious parentage," the European anthem, according to Eyck, lacks two essentials—national tradition and popular usage—and that existing anthems will prove hard to displace (p. xix). My own investigation of the EU anthem debates and eventual adoption of forty-eight measures of Beethoven's instrumental music only (i.e., without Schiller's German-language text) reveals the problem as not one of tradition but of evolution. The architects of European union seek not to displace national identity but, rather, to harmonize it, in which case Beethoven's musical tribute to universal brotherhood has much to recommend it (see "Confronting the Ninth: Beethoven's 'Ode' as European Anthem," paper read at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society, Minneapolis, November 1994).

The Voice of Nations is useful as both a reference tool and as a reminder of the links between music, history, and politics. Occasionally the author's tone slips into the romanticized rhetoric expressed in many anthem texts, and a glaring error exists in the British anthem (omitted is the fourth line, "Send him victorious" [p. 14]). The book, nevertheless, represents a timely historical perspective to the study of national anthems.

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Flamenco Deep Song. By Timothy Mitchell. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. [vi, 232 p. ISBN 0-300-06001-7. \$28.50.]

The idea that traditions are invented has been explored by many scholars in the fields of history and cultural studies. Since Eric Hobsbawm coined the expression in his essay "Inventing Traditions" (*The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983]) it seems that researchers have become suspicious of historical accounts of traditions, customs, heritages, and popular beliefs and folklore. Many scholarly studies have thus taken a course that involves not only a process of

correcting sloppy research and hasty conclusions in order to revise a theory—which, after all, are indispensable steps in all investigation—but also a direction whose main objective is to demystify the object of study and expose and lay open the biases that supported its assumptions, thus “undoing” its official history. Timothy Mitchell's *Flamenco Deep Song* certainly is not a flamenco handbook describing the genres, forms, instruments, and biographies of flamenco music, but a critical study questioning the accounts of flamenco (its histories, one could say) that have been set forward by historians, anthropologists, folklorists, and even flamenco artists themselves.

Mitchell's method draws on a variety of research fields encompassing sociology, psychology, and flamencology. Indeed, part of the book's value lies in its ability to combine apparently dissimilar fields of study in order to illuminate new theories about the object being investigated. Mitchell reviews the work of sociologists such as Remi Clignet and Pierre Bordieu and their studies about the relationship between taste and social distinction; he also bases some of his insights on J. L. Moreno's studies and his concept of psychodrama. Finally, the contribution of many flamencologists is also examined. One of Mitchell's goals is to scrutinize the ideology and method of these flamencologists. Flamencology is a field of research that involves ethnography, anthropology, and folklore studies, but (especially in the past) there has been a great deal of literary writing passing itself off as science, which has resulted in a romantic and mystified image of flamenco.

Broadly speaking, the theories about flamenco fall into two categories: on the one hand, we have the accounts influenced by Antonio Mairena; on the other, some studies follow Luis Lavour's ideas. Of course, within each group there are many different nuances. Mairena was one of the most revered singers in flamenco's history. In his *Mundo y formas del cante flamenco*, written with Ricardo Molina (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1963), as well as in his autobiography, *Las confesiones de Antonio Mairena* (Seville: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1976), the famous *cantaor* explained at length his ideas and experiences as a flamenco singer. He also attempted to give an account of the style's

origins and history, thus providing the foundation of what has been termed Mairenismo. Briefly put, Mairena believed that the history of flamenco is not the history of the creation of Andalusian popular music, but the history of the corruption of ancient gypsy musical styles. Mairena emphasized the purity, secrecy, and what he called the “razón incorpórea,” or “incorporeal reason,” of ancient gypsy singing. The crux of his argument was the binary set purity/pollution and it is not difficult to see that Mairena associated early gypsy singing with purity, whereas the new forms of flamenco were identified with corrupted versions of gypsy music. Thus, the origins of flamenco were thought to be ancient, obscure, and probably Oriental (with Jewish and Arab influences). Mairena, in short, was giving an idealized and primitivist account of flamenco, one that still holds sway in the media and among extremely partisan aficionados.

On the other hand, the theories of Lavour can be described as demystifying. In his *Teoría romántica del cante flamenco* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1976), Lavour stated that flamenco as we know it is the result of romantic, revivalist ideologies and that, to a certain extent, flamenco had been the creation not of the gypsies, but of young Andalusian aristocrats (the kind known as *señoritos*) who, rejecting operatic styles in vogue in the nineteenth century, encouraged new, fashionable tastes and promoted the popular music of the Andalusian proletariat. The *señoritos*—a mix of playboy, art lover, and philanthropist frequently engaging in “good causes”—arrived at Andalusian music by what one might call a “radical chic” shift in taste: according to Clignet and Bordieu, elites tend to engage in a process of continuously changing their taste in order to differentiate themselves as well as avoid imitation by the masses. By declaring their affinity for flamenco, the *señoritos* were eluding the voracious imitative appetite of the bourgeoisie, which at the time had already assimilated opera and its Spanish popular versions (especially *zarzuela*, *tonadilla*, and *sainete*).

Mitchell takes Lavour's ideas as a point of departure, but complements them with a psychological perspective. Whereas Lavour's theory takes into account almost

solely sociological factors, Mitchell's contribution includes the notion of flamenco as psychodrama. By that, he means that flamenco performances are used, with the help of large amounts of alcohol, to induce a sort of catharsis among the performers as well as the audience (ideally everyone is a performer). Mitchell summarizes his main point as follows: "The so-called gitano style, marked by alcoholic vocal effects, mock hysterics, and fatalistic lyrics, is, among other things, the aesthetic result of the codependency syndrome that prevailed between power-abusing, substance-abusing libertines and their singing, dancing, guitar-strumming menials" (p. 215).

Thus, flamenco music is a multilayered phenomenon that cannot be reduced (just to give an example) to its Oriental influences (the scales are indeed similar to those of North African music and the *cante* can be compared with synagogue chanting) and the primitivist, unscientific approach of belletrists (even when they are first-class poets like Federico García Lorca). Flamenco is the result of the interaction of gitano music (he considers the gitanos different from the gypsies) and the *señoritos* and literati who, infatuated with the *españolade*, shifted their taste from the concert hall to the tavern, from *zarzuela* singing to the excruciating chanting of marginal social groups in Andalusia. At any rate, Mitchell's ideas are enticing and they are presented quite convincingly. This book is an important contribution to flamenco studies; one can only hope it will soon be translated into Spanish so it can permeate the many mystified views of flamenco.

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My Music Is My Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and Their New York Communities, 1917–1940. By Ruth Glasser. (Latinos in American Society and Culture, 3.) Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. [xxiv, 253 p. ISBN 0-520-08122-6. \$30.00.]

Writing as an "ethnic historian," Ruth Glasser has fashioned a remarkably detailed and often moving account of the role of music in the Puerto Rican ethnic expe-

rience in New York City. While chronicling the contributions of artists who remain little known outside Puerto Rican circles, Glasser provides the best general description to date of the gamut of traditional and popular Puerto Rican musical forms, and she argues convincingly for the "subjectivity and plasticity of ethnic identity and its cultural components" (p. 5).

The question, "What's a nice Jewish girl from Brooklyn doing studying Puerto Rican music?" (p. xv) opens a preface devoted to the possibilities and pitfalls of cross-cultural musical ethnography. Glasser draws on issues and questions about ethnic identity and authenticity of ethnic cultural expressions that arose out of her previous work with an ethnic music festival. The author engages in a subtle polemic with scholars who dismiss Puerto Rican popular music as inauthentic for reasons such as its reliance on Cuban musical forms, its obvious commercialism, or the pandering by musicians to exotic stereotypes of "Latin" culture. Glasser embraces the commercial aspirations of professional musicians and frames amateur and professional musical production within the context of the struggle by musicians to make a living. Glasser seriously treats the involvement in music not only of performers but of audiences, composers, club owners, record producers, local merchants, and a group that she dubs "ethnic intermediaries." Anyone reading this book should be struck by the vividness of the voices of these participants, culled from a very impressive set of interviews by the author.

Some of the most memorable passages are the anecdotes that Glasser recounts. Far from simply adding "color" to her music history, these anecdotes help to clarify issues of identity and authenticity for the reader. The introduction begins with a vignette: in a Depression-era recording studio in New York City, a central figure from a later chapter, Manuel "Canario" Jiménez Otero, records a song (written in the style of a Cuban bolero by another of the book's central figures, Rafael Hernández) that will soon become an unofficial Puerto Rican anthem. The song, "Lamento Borincano" (Puerto Rican Lament), mourns the passing of a simpler era and of Puerto Rican peasant culture and society in the face of American colonialism, modernization, and the