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The Ennobling of a “Folk Tradition” and the Disempowerment of the Performers: Celebrations and Appropriations of Bāul-Fakir Identity in West Bengal

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Abstract. This paper explores the ways in which Bengali Bāul-Fakirs are imagined and celebrated by affluent audiences, for whom they form a powerful, if contested, sign of Bengali cultural heritage and identity. I argue that as Bāul-Fakirs become increasingly important symbols in affluent Bengalis’ constructions of identity, it is increasingly difficult for individuals to live up to idealized notions of what it means to be Bāul-Fakir. More broadly, I argue that the celebration or ennobling of a low-status “folk tradition” by the affluent classes can be ultimately disempowering to the poor and working-class individual practitioners of that tradition.

শারাংশ। এই প্রবন্ধটিতে আমরা দেখব, কিভাবে ধনি বাঙালি পরিবারে বাউল-ফাকিরদের রূপ কল্পনা করা হয়, আর কিভাবে তারা বাংলার সংস্কৃতর ক্ষমতায়নের চিহ্ন হয়ে ওঠেন। আমি দেখাতে চাই যে, বাউল-ফাকিরদের সম্পর্কে আদর্শবাদী ধারণা জতই দূচ হয়ে উঠেছে, ততই সে “আদর্শ” বাউল-ফাকির হতেই গিয়ে অসুবিধায় পড়ছেন দরিদ্র বাউল-ফাকিররা। আমি জানাতে চাই, বড়লোকদের পৃষ্ঠপোষকতায় একটি লক-শিল্পির ধারাকে বড় করেই দেখানতেই, শেষ পর্যন্ত সেই সিল্পের দরিদ্র মানুষের ক্ষতি হয়।

Birdsong and a Song about a Bird: Popular Music and the Mediation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Northeastern Brazil

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Abstract. The mid-twentieth century songs of popular singer Luiz Gonzaga include lyrics about northeastern Brazil's traditional ecological knowledge. For individuals who predict rain and drought based on natural patterns in the region's semi-arid backlands, Gonzaga's music continues to lend credibility, clarity, and local significance to the practice known as rain prophecy. Through cultural history, lyrical and musical analysis, and ethnography, this article examines the process through which Gonzaga's voice became a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge about the weather, suggesting that music produced through a profit-driven industry has played a role in the maintenance of local ecological knowledge.

Resumo. As músicas do cantor popular Luiz Gonzaga, datadas da metade do século XX, incluem em seu repertório letras que remetem à sabedoria ecológica popular da região Nordeste do Brasil. Para os "profetas da chuva", indivíduos que preveem como será a quadra chuvosa no sertão semiárido a partir da observação dos sinais dados pela natureza, a música de Gonzaga continua a oferecer credibilidade, clareza e significado local a esta prática. Com base nos aspectos histórico-culturais e a partir das análises lírica e musical e da etnografia, este artigo analisa o processo pelo qual a voz de Gonzaga se tornou um veículo de transmissão de conhecimento sobre o meio ambiente, sugerindo, assim, que a música comercial tem desempenhado um papel na manutenção dessa sabedoria ecológica regional.

To "Enlighten And Beautify": Western Music And The Modern Project Of Personhood In Albania, c. 1906-1924

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Abstract. Between 1920 and 1924, self-described progressives began importing and promoting western concert music in order to "civilize" Albania's population. Questions of sovereignty, civilization, and government came to be intermeshed in their plans "to enlighten and beautify the soul of the individual." This article demonstrates how progressives introduced into Albanian politics the modern project of personhood through their concern for the individual. In doing this, I suggest how ethnomusicologists' concern with the construction and

performance of nominalist categories of identity may be extended in order to critically historicize the emergence of the modern project of being.

Abstrakt: Nga viti 1920 deri në vitin 1924, muzika klasike perëndimore filloi të promovohet nga të vetëquajturit përparimtarë me synimin për të “civilizuar” popullatën e Shqipërisë. Çështjet e sovranitetit, qytetërimit dhe qeverisjes u bënë pjesë e skemës së tyre për të “ndriçuar dhe zbukuruar shpirtin e njeriut.” Ky artikull shpjegon se si përparimtarët futën për herë të parë në politikën shqiptare projektin modern të konceptit të qenies duke nxjerrë në pah interesimin për individin. Nëpërmjet këtij punimi, unë sugjeroj se si interesimi i etnomuzikologëve për ndërtimin dhe performancën e kategorive nominaliste të identitetit mund të shkojë më tej në trajtimin kritik të anës historike të shfaqjes së projektit modern të të qenit.

Moninkim: A Symbiotic Performance of Ritual, Music, and Dance by the Ejagham People of Nigeria and Cameroon

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Abstract. Among the Ejagham of southeastern Nigeria and Southwestern Cameroon, the performance of the *nkim* or *moninkim* ritual marks the passage of a young girl to womanhood. This transition begins when the girl--moninkim--is secluded from the general community and placed in the *nju nkim* (fattening house or fattening room) where she is pampered, instructed in the Ejagham values, and taught how to dance the *nkim* dance. This article discusses the ways in which ritual, music, and dance interplay to construct a holistic art form, and examines how *moninkim* dance performance serves as a hermeneutic site for illuminating the Ejagham culture.

Standing Out while Fitting In: Genre, Style, and Critical Differentiation Among Panamanian Conjunto Musicians

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Abstract. This article examines the idea of style within the Panamanian *conjunto* tradition, focusing specifically on its critical intersection with notions of genre, nationalism, and regional identity. Among its most significant attributes, style is understood by performers to be central to achieving the all-important goals of maintaining genre identification and distinguishing oneself from one's peers and professional competitors. Framed on the duality of "tradition" and "innovation," this article considers the way conjunto styles are developed and modified during the course of professional activities with the intention of informing our own usages of the terms "genre" and "style" within ethnomusicological discourse.

Abstracto. Este artículo examina la idea de estilo dentro de la tradición del conjunto panameño, centrándose específicamente en su intersección crítica con las nociones de género, nacionalismo, e identidad regional. Entre los atributos estilísticos que los músicos más valorizan están aquellos que ellos consideran fundamental para lograr los objetivos importantes de mantener la identificación de género al mismo tiempo que establecer una distinción entre sí mismo y sus compañeros y competidores profesionales. Enmarcado dentro de la dualidad entre la "tradición" y la "innovación," este artículo considera los modos en que conjuntos desarrollan y modifican estilos en el transcurso de sus actividades profesionales. Ultimadamente, la intención de este estudio es de evaluar la utilidad y limitaciones de términos como "género" y "estilo" tal como son usados actualmente en discurso etnomusicológico.