

EM Abstracts for 63.2 (in order of publication)

Prefiguring as an Indigenous Narrative Tool in Nigerian Cinema: An Ethnomusicological Reading

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Abstract. Prefiguring entails the use of music to predict dialogue and scenes in film. It is prevalent in the cinematic productions of both the ethnic-based film industries in Nigeria and mainstream Nollywood. Theoretically, prefiguring is a function of indigenous storytelling practices—the appropriation of which conjures up layers of meaning for the local practice, practitioners, and audiences. Relying on in-depth textual analyses, composers' accounts, and relevant literature, I argue that prefiguring is a concept of major theoretical importance to the study of music in Nigerian cinema, not least, because its existence and efficacy strongly support notions of a localized film music practice.

Captains and Priestesses in Afro-Brazilian Congado and Candomblé

Genevieve E.V. Dempsey

Abstract. Afro-Brazilian communities that practice the religious traditions of Congado and Candomblé not only consider the significance of the sacred in their lives but also the importance of female enfranchisement. This paper explores how practitioners, known as Congadeiros and Candomblécistas, have increasingly shaped and reshaped the roles of men and women in ritual music to reflect a growing consciousness of gender equality. In the broadest sense, this article plumbs the gendered conditions of possibility in Congado and Candomblé to help us more fully comprehend how the multivalent voices of the self and the body social emerge from within these communities. This article is valuable because it brings together the social, political, and cultural at the locus of the sonic and the somatic. Furthermore, by exploring how women harness music and dance in ritual contexts, it makes legible how modern Congadeiros and Candomblécistas strive for goals such as equitable treatment and sensitizes the wider public to the dignity and dimensionality of marginalized communities. As practitioners of Candomblé and Congado continue to illuminate their musical cultures of gender equality, they succeed in amplifying both their visible identities and their voices.

Resumo: As comunidades Afro-Brasileiras que praticam as tradições religiosas do Congado e do Candomblé não consideram apenas o significado do sagrado em suas vidas, mas também a importância da emancipação feminina. Este artigo explora como praticantes, conhecidos como Congadeiros e Candomblecistas, têm moldado e remodelado cada vez mais os papéis de homens e mulheres na música ritual para refletir uma consciência crescente da igualdade de gênero. No sentido mais amplo, este artigo examina as condições de possibilidade de gênero no Congado e no Candomblé para nos ajudar a compreender melhor como as vozes multivalentes do indivíduo e do corpo social emergem dessas comunidades. Este artigo é valioso porque reúne aspectos sociais, políticos e culturais no lugar dos sonoros e somáticos. Além disso, ao explorar como as mulheres aproveitam a música e a dança em contextos rituais, reflete sobre como os modernos Congadeiros e Candomblecistas lutam pelo tratamento equitativo e sensibiliza o público em geral para a dignidade e a dimensão dessas comunidades marginalizadas. Na medida em que os praticantes do Candomblé e do Congado

continuam a iluminar a igualdade de gênero em suas culturas musicais, conseguem ampliar suas identidades visíveis e suas vozes.

The Music Box: Songs of Futility in a Time of Torture

Steven M. Friedson

Abstract. Two musical moments on the edge: At a black site in Thailand, Abu Zubaydah, the first high-value detainee in the “Global War on Terror,” is placed inside a confinement box less than three-feet square, all the while music—from death metal to Barney the Purple Dinosaur’s “I Love You”—blasting unpredictably, unrelentingly. Not only in the box, but day and night Zubaydah was subjected to a musical assault that was inescapable, nailing him to an existential hell, with no future, no past. Adzo, an elderly fishmonger, regularly gets possessed by the mother of a pantheon of deities from northern Ghana. At shrine celebrations, she is no longer herself but a dancing god being praised by drum and song. As long as the mother is there, Adzo is away. One musical experience is the ontological inversion of the other. For the Brekete shrines of the Guinea Coast, musical experiences are energy producing, life-affirming, a being-with-others through the sacrifice of the one possessed; while in detention cells, whether in Thailand or Guantánamo Bay, they are life-diminishing, isolating, sacrificial, though not a sacrifice of the sacred kind. American torture and African trance, as delimited here, meet at the boundaries of musical experience, and in so doing, refract each other in a mirrored play, a ring dance of being-there and being-away. What follows is a talk of extremes, of musical experience at the margins, on the edge, limit-experiences where selves are torn asunder and thrust into musical existences not of their own making.

Singing for Justice: Ateetee, an Arsi Oromo Women's Sung Dispute Resolution Ritual in Ethiopia

Leila Qashu

Abstract. This explores how singing and ritual can constitute justice. Specifically, I look at how Arsi Oromo women in Ethiopia use ateetee, a sung indigenous women’s dispute resolution process, to protect, defend, promote and assert their rights. I use thick descriptive ethnography, narratives and experiences from fieldwork, musico-poetic analyses, and the voices of Arsi Oromo community members to explore how the sung ateetee ritual is a necessary and effective means for Arsi women to claim their rights in rapidly changing social environments.