UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Music and Dance Research of Southwestern United States Indians. By Charlotte J. Frisbie.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5xg976fm

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 3(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Lee, Dorothy Sara

Publication Date

1979-06-01

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Akwesasne's Voices From Wounded Knee 1973. Finally, Ortiz allows the hearing judge, Warren Urbom, to enmesh himself in mental gymnastics which comprise his decision to disallow the Lakota contention of sovereignity being implied through the 1868 treaty. In effect, Urbom reduces the rather awkward argument that existing legislation must be submitted to the Supreme Court for clarification if it has not been enforced for some time and/or may conflict with the desires of the status quo. At this point the repression of the South Dakota ranchers may be seen as a mere reflection of the repression of U.S. juridicial posture.

Other than the introductory segment, the entire text is composed of transcript material and excerpts from other available documents. That such typically "dry" source data has been transformed into a coherent and absorbing manuscript testifies amply to the author's literary/editorial talents. Ortiz's success is remarkable in that she has created at once a concise historical record and an immensely readable book.

The Great Sioux Nation is an indispensable volume for anyone wishing to penetrate the veneer of U.S. relations with the Lakota. While the book is essentially tribal specific in content, the implications to be drawn from it are much broader in terms of potential application to other U.S.-tribal relationships. As to the author, it is to be hoped that Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz follows up this tour de force with more of the same.

Ward Churchill University of Colorado

Music and Dance Research of Southwestern United States Indians. By Charlotte J. Frisbie. Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography, Number 36. Detroit: Information Coordinators, Inc., 1977. 109 pp. \$9.75

This review paper represents another important addition to the prestigious Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography series and serves as a compact introduction to music and dance scholarship on Native Americans in the Southwest. The paper has three stated aims: to critique the orientations, methodologies and concerns of past research; to delineate contemporary research interests and approaches; and to suggest problems and areas for future research. The author has organized the references historically, starting with the final twenty years of the nineteenth century and pro-

Book Review

ceeding by decades until the present. The last section is devoted to identifying current problems and trends. Music and dance are treated separately within each decade.

Appendixes include listings of major discographies and phonorecording companies which cover the Southwest and holdings of Southwestern Indian music in four major archives: the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music; the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress; the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley; and the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. The author's line drawings of dance figures, masks and musical instruments are interspersed throughout the text.

Evaluations of the cited references are concerned more with the descriptive content of the works than with their underlying theoretical and methodological assumptions. The history of music and dance research in the Southwest parallels, to a large extent, the history of the discipline of ethnomusicology. One finds such pioneers as J. Walter Fewkes, J. G. Fillmore and Washington Matthews recording Hopi, Tigua and Navajo music respectively during the late 1800s. Their use of the phonograph, as well as their sympathetic descriptions of music and dance, provide invaluable documentation of Native American music of the era. Chronicles and diaries by casual travellers, journalists and government officials of the time contain much valuable, although culturally biased, descriptions of music events. Subsequent decades saw the beginnings of research by scholars specializing in Native American music, such as Frances Densmore, Alice Fletcher and Natalie Burlin, as well as an increasing interest in music among such anthropologists as Franz Boas, Clyde Kluckhohn and Gladys Reichard. During the 1930s, George Herzog and Helen Roberts attempted to identify music style areas for Native America and to incorporate American Indian materials into theories concerning broader ethnomusicological issues.

The present decade has seen an increasing emphasis on the systematic study of dance in culture which combines both the social sciences and the humanities. Encouraging too is the trend towards the classification, comparison and synthesis of data. Detailed studies of the specific aspects of Southwestern ceremonialism have also multiplied during the seventies.

In the concluding section on future trends, the author makes some provocative suggestions concerning the state of music and dance research in the Southwest—suggestions which can be further applied to the entire discipline of ethnomusicology. In addition to identifying certain gaps in our knowledge of the area, the author addresses the larger questions of the role of individuals in performance, the definitions and nature of context, and the importance of studying both emic and etic systems of classi-

fication. She emphasizes the need to study the effects of change on Native American music styles and forms, and confronts the often neglected issue of ethics in American Indian research. Mentioned too are changing research methods and approaches which employ several disciplines, such as linguistics and archaeology—implying that future research needs might best be served through team efforts.

The usefulness of this review paper as a reference tool is limited by the lack of subject and culture group indexes. Researchers wishing specific references for comparative work must re-read the listing of references cited. It is hoped that subsequent printings of this book will include a system of indexes to the material.

The bibliography includes not only works whose primary focus is ethnomusicological, but also references to music and dance in ethnographies and publications on Southwestern religion, kinship and material culture. The concentration of diverse references makes this paper a useful introduction to the literature for survey courses in Native American musics.

Dorothy Sara Lee Indiana University

Fig Tree John: An Indian in Fact and Fiction. By Peter G. Beidler. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977. 152 pp. pap. \$4.95

Juanito Razon was a Cahuilla Indian who lived northwest of the Salton Sea in the California desert until his death in 1927. He probably lived in that area most of his long life—perhaps a hundred years—and he achieved local fame as a kind of character who was willing, for a fee, to pose for tourists' cameras in an army tunic and a top hat which he always wore "in town." For various reasons his reputation among his white neighbors was ambivalent. He was reputed to have found a secret gold mine and to have served as a scout for Fremont. Various rumors about a murderous past circulated along with true stories about his frequent kindnesses to lost travelers. And because he maintained an orchard of fig trees, he was known to everyone as Fig Tree John.