
REVIEW ESSAYS

CULTURAL INTERACTION IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MUSIC*

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- MUSIC AND BLACK ETHNICITY*. Edited by Gerard H. Béhague. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1994. Pp. 335. \$18.95 paper.)
- SAMBA: RESISTANCE IN MOTION*. By Barbara Browning. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. 190. \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.)
- RUMBA: DANCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY CUBA*. By Yvonne Daniel. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. 196. \$29.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.)
- CARIBBEAN CURRENTS: CARIBBEAN MUSIC FROM RUMBA TO REGGAE*. By Peter Manuel, with Kenneth Bilby and Michael Largey. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1995. Pp. 272. \$49.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)
- BACHATA: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF A DOMINICAN POPULAR MUSIC*. By Deborah Pacini Hernández. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1995, Pp. 267. \$49.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)
- MUSICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF 1492: ENCOUNTERS IN TEXT AND PERFORMANCE*. Edited by Carol E. Robertson. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992. Pp. 486. \$62.00 cloth.)
- MOVING AWAY FROM SILENCE: MUSIC OF THE PERUVIAN ALTIPLANO AND THE EXPERIENCE OF URBAN MIGRATION*. By Thomas

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Turino. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Pp. 324. \$49.95 cloth, \$21.00 paper.)

Music's power to evoke time and place, its emotive force as both an individual experience and a representation of community fellowship make it a preeminent symbol for collectivities such as nations, ethnic groups, and subcultures. The supposed timelessness of musical traditions coupled with a mythical belief in the uniqueness of a given musical expression can lead to musical forms being deemed representations of the genuine essence—the identity—of particular groups. But claims for the purity of music or any symbol or tradition are unfounded. Neither identities nor traditions are static. Both change with changing circumstances and with the continuous interaction of peoples.

This review will focus on musical interaction and the continual modification of symbols and traditions. The seven books to be discussed here are revealing examinations of music and dance in Latin America and the Caribbean. Each provides a knowledgeable picture of its subject, and each takes into account the social role of music as a marker of collective identity.¹ Several of the books include detailed musicological analyses. All of them survey historical developments relevant to the music in question, address aspects of race in Latin America, and confirm the significance of music as popular expression. Additionally, each study demonstrates to a greater or lesser degree interaction among musical forms and the resulting incorporation of external elements into traditional styles.

Musical Repercussions of 1492: Encounters in Text and Performance, an edited volume based on a 1988 symposium organized by the Smithsonian Institution, begins with an overview of the musical styles and instruments of Christopher Columbus's time in the Americas and in Moslem, Jewish, and Christian Spain. Having clearly delineated the existing musical base, the book lives up to its title in presenting contributions that chart various effects of the events of 1492 on the musics of the Old and New Worlds. Several essays examine the possible effects on European musical exploration of the new understanding of space generated by geographical exploration; the successes and failures of European missionaries' attempts to supplant Native American musics; the appearance of the New World as a topic in European operas and nativism in Latin American operas; and the incorporation of myths and tales of the encounter with Europeans into music and rituals throughout the Americas.

Musical Repercussions of 1492 is beautifully prepared, featuring photos, illustrations, and musical scores. Some sections are technical, but there is still much to interest lay readers, and the detail gives the nonspe-

1. See Duany (1996) for a review of seven books on Caribbean music (including three discussed here), stressing the importance of music as a component of Caribbean cultural identity.

cialist a glimpse into the realm of musicology. Altogether, from its title onward the book makes the fundamental point that cultural encounter can affect musical styles in diverse ways.

The mix of musics generated by the encounter of Old and New Worlds was augmented by new elements brought by the slave trade. *Music and Black Ethnicity*, edited by Gerard Béhague, focuses on the African influence on Caribbean and South American music and the ramifications of this heritage in the present day. The essays in this uneven collection approach the central question of “the relationship of music expressions and black ethnicity” (p. vi) from different angles, keeping it in focus to varying degrees. Contributions on aspects of the music of countries with large black populations (such as Haiti and Brazil) as well as those with less-prominent black populations (such as Ecuador) reveal links and divergences between far-flung musical forms. The book’s lack of an index, however, can frustrate attempts to trace these connections. Overall, *Music and Black Ethnicity* affords a wide-ranging look at the blending of musical traditions across continents and centuries.

Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae, by Peter Manuel with Kenneth Bilby and Michael Largey, succeeds in its aim to be “a readable guide to Caribbean music” (p. ix). The volume offers discussions of the region’s musics and their contexts for a nonspecialist audience. In places this book has the feel of an undergraduate text, and indeed, classroom use is one of its stated purposes. The attendant desire to draw in reluctant readers may be the reason for the distracting personal anecdotes that appear throughout the book. Nonetheless, the scope and depth of *Caribbean Currents* make it valuable for anyone interested in the topic. The volume includes chapters on the musical fare of the larger Caribbean islands, “international pan-Latin salsa” (p. 78); the music of “the other Caribbean,” particularly the Indo-Caribbean communities in Guyana, Surinam, and Trinidad; and themes in Caribbean music. The availability of a companion compact disc, allowing the reader to be a listener as well, is commendable.

As with the other books considered here, the subject matter of *Caribbean Currents* necessarily concerns much more than music. The thorough reviews of historical and social settings presented in each chapter convey the tremendous diversity of the region. Yet linking elements connect Caribbean musical styles, for although cultures, histories, and languages of the region differ, the islands share “a set of basic sociomusical attributes”: African cultural elements, pan-Caribbean traditions such as Carnival, certain genres of Creole dance music, and “a history of musical syncretization” (p. 233). The creolization and syncretization highlighted throughout *Caribbean Currents* point again to the significance of interaction and cultural borrowing in the development of musical styles.

In contrast to the three survey volumes, the remaining four books

each focus on a single country. Each studies a genre that originated in communities of low social status and later achieved wide acceptance nationally and internationally: Dominican bachata, Peruvian panpipe music, Cuban rumba, and Afro-Brazilian dance. *Bachata: A Social History of a Dominican Popular Music* tells the story of a musical form that has been immensely popular among the Dominican lower classes since the 1960s but has received recognition in other strata of society and internationally only in the 1990s. Bachata is defined by its use of acoustic guitars and vernacular language in lyrics that focus on romance, its emotional singing style, and its distribution (until recently) through the informal economy. Developed by poor rural migrants to Santo Domingo, bachata gained a huge following in the city's shantytowns, where thousands of records were sold in stalls on street corners. But until successful mainstream musicians began to adopt bachata style in the early 1990s, bachata remained "a musical pariah" (p. 1), scorned by the rest of society, which had come to view the *merengue* style as the true representation of the Dominican Republic. Deborah Pacini Hernández's masterful analysis yields a detailed examination of an unduly neglected genre, placing bachata in its social, political, economic, and musical contexts. Combining elements of Mexican, Cuban, Colombian-Ecuadorian, Puerto Rican, and Dominican genres, bachata exemplifies the syncretization of styles characteristic of popular music.

A Caribbean island would seem to have little in common with the Peruvian altiplano. Yet despite the differences in social and musical history, Thomas Turino's study of an Andean region merits juxtaposition with *Bachata* because both focus on Latin American musical styles from which poor rural migrants to urban areas derive a sense of community. *Moving Away from Silence: Music of the Peruvian Altiplano and the Experience of Urban Migration* is an ethnography of Peruvian highland panpipe music. It includes musicological detail—technical descriptions of instruments and playing styles—as well as a profound sociological examination of the construction of group boundaries through music. Turino, an ethnomusicologist, spent some twenty months as a participant-observer with musicians from the Lake Titicaca community of Conima and its environs. Each village in the Puno region has a musical ensemble, open to any man who wishes to take part. Turino followed the path of this music from the village to the district capital of Puno and eventually to Lima, as villagers joined the rural-to-urban migration that has burgeoned since the 1950s.

In Lima homesick students from Puno established a social club in 1970. Deciding that panpipe music was the best way to express their regional identity, they taught themselves to play and formed a musical ensemble. This initiative sparked the development of panpipe groups among other groups of rural migrants in Lima as well as back home in Puno. With increased migration, these clubs flourished, and the various urban and rural groups influenced one another and the evolution of musical styles.

The familiar panpipe music now heard in the United States and Europe is a Westernized version of Andean highland music, developed by urban ensembles like those described in this book. Turino has pieced together the story of the increasing respect accorded highland music in Lima. Once stigmatized as a product of lower-class rural indigenous culture, this music has become a significant symbol of Peru to Peruvians and others as well.

Moving Away from Silence is a sensitive and poignant narrative, probing the ambiguities of participant-observation research and evoking the rhythms of rural life; the sense of membership in a tight community; and the experiences of long bus rides, late-night music sessions, and tinny loudspeakers in town plazas. In a stunning climax to a beautifully shaped narrative, Turino describes a meeting between members of a Lima panpipe ensemble and the Conimeño ensemble from which much of their repertoire had been adopted. The migrants to Lima addressed the group in Spanish, the Conimeños in Aymara. Language choices as well as differences in body language, attitudes toward elders, and handling of protocol illustrate strikingly the changes wrought by urban life. Turino's clear and nuanced exposition of how Peruvian panpipe music was adapted to changing circumstances provides insights into processes of musical transformation.

The final two books concern dances and the musical genres that are inseparable from them. Yvonne Daniel participated in an established dance group in Cuba, as did Barbara Browning in Brazil. Both have written accounts of their experiences that go beyond their personal stories.

The noise and abandon of local festivities are well captured in *Rumba: Dance and Society in Contemporary Cuba*, which analyzes the set of Cuban dances called rumba as well as rumba performance, formal and informal. Daniel's participant-observation research took the form of nearly a year as a dancer with Cuba's Conjunto Folklórico Nacional. Her book contains specialized technical descriptions of rumba's steps and rhythms as well as sociological and historical material. The movements of the dance are explained and charted in complex "labanotation" diagrams. The social role of dance in Cuba is also elucidated in Daniel's review of the history, performance, and cultural significance of rumba and its relatives.

Daniel recounts the development of rumba from its origins as disguised slave protest in the late eighteenth century through its nineteenth-century appearance as a dance form that was urban, lower-class, and predominantly black. As Daniel explains, "Poor Cubans, both dark- and light-skinned, created a music and dance of their own, neither totally African nor totally Spanish, that utilized singing, drumming, and dancing in specific configurations and within specific rules" (p. 19). Rumba has expanded and been codified and is now institutionalized and commodified with regular public performances by state-sponsored troupes as

well as workshops for tourists and students. Three professional dance companies, each having specified emphases and tasks, operate under the direction of the Ministerio de Cultura. The ministry provides dance training at professional academies and neighborhood cultural centers, sends trained teachers to promote dance in schools, and organizes theatrical performances.

Of the many popular dances in Cuba, rumba has been selected, promoted, manipulated, and appropriated as a cultural symbol by the Cuban government. Daniel suggests that the reason is that because of its African roots and working-class origins, rumba "announces the class equality that the Revolution has sought to implement" (p. 145). In delineating the trajectory of rumba and other Cuban dances and showing how one genre has come to eclipse the others, *Rumba* illustrates the shifting fortunes of cultural symbols.

Barbara Browning studied Afro-Brazilian dance at the Universidade Federal de Bahia and also learned Brazilian dances from friends, through observation, and in community classes in Brazil and New York. Although *Samba: Resistance in Motion* includes some technical information and diagrams, its purpose is neither instruction nor documentation. Rather, the book is a poetic evocation of the force and prevalence of dance in Brazilian community rituals. In Browning's view, "The body says what cannot be spoken" (p. 9). A scholar of dance and literary theory, she set out "to try to heal the body divided from its intellect" by conveying through the medium of printed words the joy, absorption, and transcendence that dance can induce.

The book's subtitle, *Resistance in Motion*, is a subject that is loosely and sporadically treated. *Resistance* here refers to racial matters, a theme that is never far from the core of the book's narrative. Descriptions of Brazil's racial relations over time are linked to the evolution of samba, candomblé, and capoeira and the interrelations among the three forms. Browning characterizes samba as a "story of racial contact, conflict, and resistance" (p. 2). Based on African rhythms and sung in Portuguese, this dance form expresses opposition to domination, a point that Browning repeats but does not develop. Candomblé, a syncretic Yoruba-Catholic religion, places dance at its center. The predominant variant of candomblé "allows black Brazilians to express their Brazilian nationalism while rejecting the existing social stratifications within their nation" (p. 25). Capoeira too originated in resistance. A choreographed Afro-Brazilian blend of martial arts and gymnastics set to drumming and music, capoeira was developed in the nineteenth century. Although it is called both a game and a dance, word choice "has never detracted from the fact that Africans in Brazil developed it with the potential to disarm whites, whether through literal blows or through the subtle art of seeming to be in meaningless motion while actually reinforcing a circle of cultural and political race consciousness" (p. 100).

Browning's lyrical musings draw the reader into the exuberant world of carnival, the athleticism of capoeira, and the intricate choreography of candomblé, "when the design of motion is ascribed to divine sources" (p. xxiv). *Samba: Resistance in Motion*, with its evocative, almost wistful personal style, its descriptive power, and its unabashed subjectivity, imparts a feel for Brazil that cannot be gleaned from a textbook. Its elucidation of the ways in which Afro-Brazilian dances have diverged and converged over time illustrates the mutability of forms of symbolic expression.

In describing and analyzing music and dance, these books go beyond their immediate subjects to illuminate larger issues. Implicitly and often explicitly, they affirm that popular culture is inseparable from other social forces. The depth of historical material presented as explanatory background is notable. These seven works establish music as a potent carrier and marker of identity, whether it is imposed as an "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), as with some aspects of Cuban rumba, or diffuses upward from lower social strata, as with bachata or Peruvian panpipe music, or moves laterally across social groups, as in Brazil. These studies also roundly demonstrate that because of innovation and exchange, no musical form remains constant.

Music and Society

The inability to explain musical styles and changes without considering their social and historical contexts underlines the interwovenness of popular culture with society. In *Musical Repercussions of 1492*, Anthony Seeger makes a strong argument for the links among music, politics, history, and economics: "If we are to understand music, we must understand the processes of which it is a part. If we are to understand those processes, we would do well to look to the music" (p. 459). All the authors under review adhere to this tenet.

Daniel's *Rumba*, for example, is premised on the "interconnections of an aesthetic system to other arenas of social life" (pp. 136–37), specifically the hypothesis "that social change can generate change in dance, and, conversely, that change in dance can be identified, analyzed, and understood in terms of social currents and societal conditions" (p. 1). Daniel supports this hypothesis in her conclusion that Cuban rumba "has emerged as a dance structure that coincides with socialist perspectives, a cultural symbol of social relations" (p. 141).

In *Bachata*, Hernández asserts that "style is intrinsically related to the social context in which music or any other expressive event takes place" (p. 18). Among many examples of this relationship, she cites a move away from romantic themes toward crude sexual allusions in bachata songs of the 1980s. Hernández attributes this shift to the economic crisis

in the Dominican Republic, which hurt the poorer social sectors that gave rise to bachata performers and audiences. The change of emphasis in bachata song lyrics reflected the deterioration of social and family life caused by economic hardship (pp. 153–54).

Another illustration of how the patterns of popular culture reflect social values is supplied by Turino's observation on Peruvian highland ensemble playing: "When Conimeños say that a good ensemble is one that 'plays like one instrument' and that no individual's instrument should 'escape' from the dense, integrated fabric of the ensemble's performance, they are talking about sound, but they are also articulating a certain version of the relationship between the individual and the community. In Conimeño musical ensembles there is no place for highlighted soloists; in general, people are no more anxious to draw attention to themselves during music making than they are in any other public setting" (p. 55).

Music and Identity

Identity has become a prominent theme in contemporary society, and music can be a prominent component of it. Simon Frith has argued, "Music seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective" (Frith 1996, 110). Certainly, music has long been a constituent of the "mythico-cultural apparatus" of national identity (Schlesinger 1991, 168) and a vehicle for collective identity in general. Exemplifying this situation, Malena Kuss observes in *Musical Repercussions of 1492*, "From the earliest years of the Encounter, musical expression took center stage in the mediation and interplay of cultural identities." By the late nineteenth century, Latin American operas were "a medium through which composers built the complexities of the American experience into their musical codes" (p. 299).

Popular music codes of more recent times reflect identity in numerous ways. In *Caribbean Currents*, Peter Manuel notes that because of Puerto Rico's unsettled relationship with the United States, "Latin music and, especially, indigenous genres have taken on a special role in Puerto Rican culture as symbols of an independent national identity" (p. 53). Manuel also credits music in Cuba with playing a key role in forming a "national cultural identity that would unite the entire population" (p. 35). This theme is developed well by Daniel in *Rumba*. In *Music and Black Ethnicity*, Jorge Duany asserts, "merengue is recognized as an essential part of Dominican identity" (p. 80). In the same volume, José Jorge de Carvalho discusses the changing self-image of Afro-Brazilians and how "competing models of identity are shaped by the different song genres and singing styles" that they choose (p. 187).

Community distinctiveness in the Lake Titicaca region of highland Peru is primarily expressed through recognizable panpipe styles and tun-

ings. According to Turino, in regional musical contests, subtle variations express each village's identity "in situations of competition among communities of basically equal social power" (p. 70). When members of these villages moved to Lima, the locus of their musical identity extended from the village level to the ethnic group. The charter of the Federación de Sikuris y Sikumoreños de Residentes Puneños en Lima y Callao begins by asserting that their music "is the creation of our ancestors. It is a free and natural manifestation of community that expresses the living history of our Quechua and Aymara nations" (p. 188).

These examples indicate that the bond between music and identity relies neither on static music nor on static identity. As Seeger points out in *Musical Repercussions of 1492*, "the music through which a group establishes its identity can easily change from situation to situation and will do so in systematic and intelligible ways" (p. 456). Such change is not abrupt as it takes established musical tradition as its point of departure. But because music can be such a powerful symbol of group identity, even incremental musical change may spark fears that group identity is being jeopardized. The result is tension between tradition and innovation.

Musical Innovation

The importance of innovation in musical development is a recurring theme in these studies. Kenneth Bilby points out in *Caribbean Currents* that in Jamaican music, "stylistic experimentation continues and novelty is as valued as ever" (p. 179). Hernández reports in *Bachata* that bachata musicians experiment with "new instruments, performance strategies, recording techniques, and other innovations" (p. 230). Innovation built on tradition contributes to the continuity of musical forms even as they change. According to Browning, the prestige of Brazilian musicians who are recognized as particularly knowledgeable about Brazilian dance forms "may be determined by a combination of a grasp of the tradition, an ability to interpret or theorize it, and a personal capacity for innovation" (pp. xi-xii). Even the self-consciously traditional Peruvian panpipe ensembles and their audiences value originality in composition and performing. Perhaps their seemingly contradictory dedication to the original within the traditional feeds the myth that their music has been unchanged for generations. Eric Hobsbawm noted that emergent, invented, constructed, or imposed social practices can take root very quickly (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 1). In the case of Peru, Turino points out that "in contrast to notions about the 'ancient,' static character" of rural Andean musical traditions, these traditions are in fact dynamic. As an example, he cites a certain panpipe harmonic sound that, despite its relatively recent adoption, is regarded "as the 'traditional' Conimeño style" (p. 136).

Innovation is self-generating. Change ceases only if it is artificially

impeded and wells up if externally checked, emerging as circumstances permit. For example, to protect Cuban traditions, any alteration in the standard rumba performances of the state-supported Conjunto Folklórico Nacional is forbidden. Amateur public performers, however, are not bound by these strictures. Daniel points out that by combining “bits and pieces of popular, secular, and religious material,” these dancers “create the mixtures that originally spawned rumba” (pp. 99–100).

Institutional damping of musical change was experienced in the Dominican Republic during the thirty-year dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. The Trujillo family’s control of the economy, the media, and the music industry inhibited musical exploration. A musician credited by Hernández with being one of the Dominican Republic’s most innovative began performing a reworked version of merengue on the dictator’s death in 1961. Speaking of the importance of external stimulus, he commented that after the “closed situation” that ended when Trujillo died, “we can’t forget how significant it has been to merengue as a popular music to have come into contact with the popular music of other countries” (pp. 78, 79).

These books all illustrate signally the folly of regarding any musical form as a pure and unadulterated cultural tradition. Human creativity, social change, and social interaction continually yield new variations on established styles. In Peru, for instance, Turino reports that highland migrants to Lima formed musical associations to preserve ties to their rural communities, but the experience of living in the capital altered the ways they “think about, create and perform music” (p. 170). According to Hernández, throughout a century and a half of existence, Dominican merengue “has undergone repeated and profound transformations in sound, instrumentation and social context” (p. 134). After only thirty years of existence, bachata is changing, and the growing popularity of bachata-merengue hybrids “represents a truly significant turn of events in the evolution of both genres” (p. 27). Such reshaping and blending of genres is a recurring theme in examinations of Latin American music.

Musical Interchange

The notion of cultural hybridization has featured prominently in recent Latin American cultural theory. Néstor García Canclini has highlighted the “diverse intercultural mixtures” found in modern society across geographical borders but also among traditional and modern, high, popular, and mass cultures (1995, 11, n. 1). *Hybridization* is in a sense the descendant of other descriptors such as *mestizaje*, *transculturalization*, and *syncretization*, terms whose longstanding use in Latin American social analysis speaks to the inexorability of cultural mixing. The interchange of musical elements, as these books indicate in myriad ways, is an inevitable consequence of contact between groups.

In *Musical Repercussions of 1492*, Seeger notes that in the Americas, musical interchange dates back to pre-Columbian societies, which “traded with one another, conquered one another, massacred one another, and learned to perform one another’s songs” (p. 453). In *Music and Black Ethnicity*, Duany points out that merengue, like the population and culture of the Dominican Republic, blends African and Spanish elements. Ronald Smith makes a similar point about Panamanian music in the same volume. Also in *Music and Black Ethnicity*, John Schechter describes African-Ecuadorian music in a region of highland Ecuador inhabited for over 250 years by Spanish-speaking mestizos, Quichua-speaking indigenous residents, and descendants of African slaves. The now-traditional *bomba* music combines African rhythms and improvisations, indigenous words and musical forms, and Spanish language and verse structure. *Tan* singing in Indo-Trinidadian weddings, discussed by Peter Manuel in *Caribbean Currents*, is a similarly complex mixture of “old folk songs from the Bhojpuri-speaking area of Northern India, somewhat garbled elements of North Indian classical music, and some features unique to Indo-Caribbean culture, all reinterpreted by local musicians who stress original composition and creation” (p. 215). According to Manuel, Cuban mambo is a 1940s “fusion of Afro-Cuban rhythms with the big-band format adopted from swing jazz” (p. 38).

Blending of cultural elements is not limited to musical traditions. Raymond Sokolov’s comments about culinary traditions could be applied to music with a few word changes: “Cuisines evolve almost instantly when two cultures and their ingredients meet in the kitchen, and old cuisines never die, they add new dishes and ingredients to old recipes and slough off the losers” (Sokolov 1991, 15). Cultural hybridization has accelerated in the twentieth century. García Canclini has suggested that traditional cultural forms are not disappearing but are being reformulated in response to social and technological change (1992, 31). Urbanization, modern transportation, and electronic media ensure that the age-old process of musical mixing is happening faster and with fewer intermediaries than ever before.

The massive migration of rural Latin Americans and Caribbeans to metropolitan areas has given rise to musical genres that combine multiple sources. Bachata is one example. *Cumbia andina* or *chicha* is another. Turino explains that the Lima-born children of Peruvian highland parents invented this combination of electric rock instruments, highland-mestizo *wayno* melodies and phrasings, and the rhythm of the Colombian *cumbia* (pp. 178–79). Hernández points out that Brazilian rural migrants to São Paulo revamped their traditional music by introducing electric instruments and elements of popular Mexican and Paraguayan styles (p. 234).

Travel between countries by exiles, refugees, migrant workers, immigrants, and tourists abets cross-border musical blending. New York is

recognized as the birthplace of salsa, defined by one musician as “the musical fusion of New York with Puerto Rico, with Cuba and with Africa” (Manuel, p. 74). But the city’s importance to Latin American and Caribbean music extends still further. In *Caribbean Currents*, Bilby cites the example of Jamaican music: “The most obvious foreign influence on Jamaican music in recent years has been from hip-hop. The latest series of exchanges between urban African-American and Jamaican musics arose spontaneously out of contacts between black American and Jamaican communities in New York and other U.S. cities” (p. 179).

Urban areas have always been sites of cultural interaction. Many traditional Cuban rhythms, for example, derive from contact in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Havana among freed slaves, French fugitives fleeing the Haitian Revolution along with their servants and slaves, various Caribbean refugees, and settlers from different parts of Spain. Nineteenth-century Cubans did not travel in jet planes, however. Twentieth-century musical absorption of influences from all over the world is not limited to the interaction of groups or individuals gathered in one place. According to Bilby in *Caribbean Currents*, Jamaican musicians exemplify this trend as they “travel across the world, listening to all kinds of music, and return with new ideas that eventually make their way onto the local music scene” (p. 179).

Musical ideas also spread through mass communications. From MTV Internacional to the circulation of homemade cassettes, more cultures now have increased opportunities to be exposed to new musical ideas. Manuel in *Caribbean Currents* credits “the mass media, together with interaction of migrant communities in New York and elsewhere” with facilitating “all sorts of musical cross-fertilization and fusions. Some of these products, like Latin rap and Garifuna punta rock, mix local languages and styles with Yankee influences. Others are purely Caribbean fusions, like the Trinidadian and Puerto Rican adaptations of Jamaican dancehall style” (p. 234).

While many musicians and music lovers value the stimulation of contact with other musical currents, some fear that external influences will lead to the loss of the distinctive identities that musical styles and other symbols are felt to carry. The access to other cultures provided by modern technology has spurred recent attention to hybridization, not to mention alarm over it.

Jesús Martín Barbero, for example, has expressed concern about “cultural decentering,” when cultures lose their distinctiveness by becoming overly market-oriented and absorbing too many outside influences (1997). Such concern is occasionally perceptible in these books. In *Bachata*, Hernández notes that when merengue ensembles adopted aspects of rock and roll performance—moving toward an energetic and showy style, standing up to play rather than remaining seated in orderly

rows, and dressing in flashy clothes—older Dominicans “were deeply disturbed by the intrusion of foreign elements perceived as incompatible with a more nationalistically defined image of Dominican identity” (p. 79). In Jamaica, according to Bilby in *Caribbean Currents*, “there is much talk of the potential threat that fusions such as ragga-hip-hop might pose to the integrity of Jamaica’s local popular music should the process go too far” (p. 179).

Such fears seem to overlook the nature of musical development. As *Caribbean Currents* demonstrates, Jamaican popular music is itself a startling blend of a “rich fund of ancestral cultural resources” (p. 146). This blend includes African drumming, Afro-Protestant Revivalist hymns, European ballroom dance, Caribbean calypso and rumba, and (from another tributary of African influence) U.S. rhythm and blues.

Some styles of capoeira, a resolutely Afro-Brazilian genre, evidence elements of boxing and other non-Brazilian martial arts. According to Browning, “the apparent contradiction” of the inclusion of foreign elements “is resolved by the fact that the very strategy of appropriating extrinsic movement is intrinsic to capoeira” (p. 103). Extended beyond capoeira, this portrait of appropriation is a useful way of looking at the dynamism of culture and identity. The appropriation of extrinsic elements characterizes any meeting of cultures, and what is today considered intrinsic was once extrinsic. In this way, traditions evolve as they meet up with new influences.

Moreover, cross-cultural influences are not unidirectional. While some Jamaicans worry about losing their local style, anyone who listens to Top-40 radio stations can attest that reggae has swept the world. José Jorge de Carvalho notes the “strong influence” of Jamaican reggae on young black musicians in Brazil in *Music and Black Ethnicity* (p. 199). In the Southwestern United States, according to Joann Keali’inohomoku in *Musical Repercussions of 1492*, Native American youths “admire the reggae groups that visit and perform at the Hopi Community Center” (p. 448).

The multidirectionality of musical interchange can be seen in African music, which has had a pervasive impact throughout the Americas. Latin American music, in turn, has affected Africa. John Storm Roberts pointed out twenty years ago that in Africa, “the roughly coincidental arrival of the guitar and of recordings by Cuban guajiro groups . . . brought about the birth of an entire new family of popular styles” in the 1930s and 1940s (Roberts 1979, 217). *Musical Repercussions of 1492* delineates early cross-influences of European and American musics. Contemporary Latin American music has also had enormous influence in the United States and Europe, as is amply demonstrated by Roberts (1979).

The fecundity of the world’s cultural forms owes much to this ongoing interaction. Their continued evolution and at the same time their rootedness in their own cultures are illustrated by Manuel’s comments in

Caribbean Currents: “musics like salsa, reggae, and zouk have taken on lives of their own outside the Caribbean, becoming truly international. This process, however, does not signify a global co-optation of Caribbean music, for the region itself and its émigré musicians continue to be sources for the most dynamic innovations. For the most creative artists, Caribbean music now involves combining international sounds and Caribbean cross-fertilization, while often reaching deep into local traditions for inspiration” (pp. 242–43).

The seven books reviewed here demonstrate that innovation and cultural borrowing, overlaid on a foundation of tradition, are integral parts of artistic creativity. They provide no evidence to support the notion that alterations in traditional musical forms will lead to a loss of cultural identity. Rather, they provide many examples of robust traditions assimilating new elements and adapting to new circumstances while remaining recognizably linked to their communities. Fears of the effects of musical change on identity arise out of the unwarranted supposition that culture is immutable. The world changes, social conditions change, identities change, and music changes along with them. The interaction and adventurousness of innovative musicians expand the storehouse of elements of musical expression, nourishing vibrant cultural identities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and beyond.

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