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*La Musique comme valeur sociale et symbole identitaire:
L'exemple d'une communauté afro-anglaise en Colombie
(île de Providence) (review)*

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MARISOL RODRÍGUEZ MANRIQUE. 2008. *La Musique comme valeur sociale et symbole identitaire: L'exemple d'une communauté afro-anglaise en Colombie* (île de Providence). In French, with photos, charts, maps, diagrams, appendices, discography, and webographie. Paris: L'Harmattan, 375 pp. ISBN 978-2-296-05227-7. 37 €.

Marisol Rodríguez Manrique, a student of Monique Desroches (whose own research has concentrated on the French Antilles, specifically Martinique), received the doctorat in ethnomusicology in 2007 from University of Montréal. Throughout *La Musique comme valeur sociale et symbole identitaire*, Manrique discusses in analytical terms the musical tastes, choices, and practices on a small island, Providence, which is approximately 700 kilometers Northwest of Colombia and which has a population of 6,000 people, 70 percent of whom are of Afro-English origin. Culturally, Providence stands in stark contrast to its neighbor Colombia on at least two prominent counts: its English language practice and its pervasive Protestant religious beliefs.

Early in the book Manrique makes an observation that processes of identity formation have been central in current ethnomusicological works. She evokes the need for a rethinking and redefining of “identity” itself, a result in large part of the worldwide effects of varied forces of globalization. She emphasizes that music must be viewed as a process rather than a product, that it comprises a vibrant symbolic social system. Manrique thus calls for an interdisciplinary ethnomusicology that draws, in a combining fashion, on the approaches, for example, of anthropology and sociology. As illustration of such a multidisciplinary schema, she employs in her introduction a Merriam-like diagram that she describes as “triangle en miroir,” in which “sound,” “society,” “memory,” “function,” and “values” are interspersed as varied geometric forms in apparent tangential relation to one another. Manrique then turns to an ethnographic observation that remains a central topic and interpretive feature of the book—on Providence living musical traditions are to be found primarily when performed as part of touristic displays at festivals. Prevalent throughout the island (and throughout its past) is a preference for, as well as consumption and reproduction of commercialized musics from outside of Providence, especially among the island’s youth.

Chapter 1 is comprised of historical information about Providence and its relationship throughout the past in particular with Colombia and the United States. Manrique explains Providence islanders’ resistance to processes of “colombianisation” in the 1930s, embodied prominently in refusals to speak Spanish and to practice Catholicism (the islanders retaining, respectively, their English language and Protestant religious practice). In Chapter 2 Manrique discusses the musical traditions, genres, styles, and

instruments of Providence. She delineates three Providencien genres: religious music (comprised largely of choral music), “danses de salon” (such as pasillo, mento, and calypso), and popular music (exemplified by reggae and soca). Manrique emphasizes the prominence of musical métissage in particular in the danses de salon. She concludes this chapter, “En effet, les jeunes musiciens insulaires construisent leur identité aussi sur des rythmes plus divertissants comme le soca, le zouk, le reggae dub, une musique plus moderne et plus propice à la fête et à la danse” (110) [“the young island musicians construct their identity through popular dance rhythms such as soca (from Trinidad), zouk (from the French Antilles), reggae dub (from Jamaica), all modern musics more favorable at festivals and for dancing”].

In Chapter 3 Manrique details varied current musical performance contexts on Providence (public and private, for example), and she evokes the “touristisation” of music on the island (“mise en tourisme”—she elaborates upon this concept and practice in the following chapter). She states that her goal here is to illuminate the principles that give rise to the creation of a musical tradition in a “profane milieu” (111–12), and she then elaborates her theoretical stance in a section entitled, “*L’anthropologie du tourisme*” (112). Manrique evokes earlier “dependence theories” to attempt to explain the notion of “reciprocity” (133), a constructive strategy, she contends, by which Providenciens may attempt to profit from their interactions with tourists.

In the following chapter, in focusing upon music reception on Providence, Manrique queries: “En d’autres termes, notre question n’est pas de savoir ‘comment l’écoute affecte les auditeurs?’ mais plutôt, comment les habitudes d’écoute prennent forme dans des espaces particuliers et comment agissent-elles sur la construction identitaire d’une société?” (143) [“In other words, our question is not to know ‘how listening affects listeners?’ rather, how habits (practices) of listening take form in particular spaces and how they affect processes of identity formation in a society?”]. Manrique discusses radio and other mediated dissemination of musics, then turns to the significance of the amplification of music in particular in public contexts on Providence. Manrique uses the term “pickopisation” to refer to the practice on the island of deploying, transmitting and listening to pre-recorded musics at public festivals. She portrays musical choices and tastes on Providence as manifestations of collective social values on the island (not solely as aesthetic factors). At the end of this chapter, Manrique draws the conclusion that a preference for loudly amplified prerecorded musics (from elsewhere) pertains to a “global conscience” among Providenciens (youth in particular) as well as to their “local conscience” (174). Through “pickopisation” involving these other musics, Providenciens actively and socially construct their own identity, and “revalorisent leurs origines africaines et manifestent leur appartenance à une diaspora qui partage la même

vision du monde" (175) ["revalue their African origins and manifest their belonging to a diaspora that shares their vision of the world"].

In subsequent chapters Manrique discusses processes of musical transmission on Providence, the "cultural politics" inherent in specific musical choices and interests, particular festival contexts (in Chapter 7—the most ethnographic chapter), "ideologies" (in Chapter 8, which includes discussion of the cultural, historical, and religious complexities of a Providencien collective identity), and in the final chapter (Chapter 9), Manrique evokes the significance of facets of nationalism and insularity.

Manrique effectively uses numerous graphs and diagrams throughout the text to illuminate her narrative. In latter parts of the text she begins to incorporate segments of her own field notes to illustrate particular ethnographic moments. It is in latter chapters as well that Manrique includes with regularity quotation of the Providenciens whom she discusses throughout the book.

On occasion Manrique makes an assertion that begs explanation or culture specific elaboration. For example, in discussing the social and identificatory reasons for the public use of loud sound systems in Jamaica (Chapter 4), she states, "C'est dans ces *volume-defined spaces* que surgit un discours particulier sur l'identité 'noire' ou black identity. C'est probablement ici, dans ce contexte même, que la black identity fut inventée" (154) ["In these volume-defined spaces looms a particular discourse on black identity. It is likely here, in this same context, that "black identity" was invented"]. In reading this passage, one may desire to hear more explanation of what this broad sounding "black identity" is, and how, for example, its usage and conceptualization here conform to or exemplify Manrique's early insistence in the book that "identity," as conceptual construct itself, be reformulated in a current, complex global milieu.

One of the book's assets is Manrique's incorporation of a variety of multidisciplinary sources, concepts and theories, as well as a cross-cultural mix of these sources (there are numerous citations in either English or French, for example). Manrique effectively illuminates processes of musical/social identity construction within a cultural group previously under-researched in the scholarly literature. *La Musique comme valeur sociale et symbole identitaire* valuably combines ethnographic, historical, political, religious and social facets of Providencien experience to represent a culture "constantly at a crossroads" (309).

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