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*La “invención” de la música indígena de México:
Antropología e historia de las políticas culturales del
siglo XX (review)*

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Piazzolla's "operita," *María de Buenos Aires*, a dense and semiotically complex work in its own right, has proven perhaps the composer's work that is most amenable to traditional musicological methods of score analysis. Several examples of this approach appear in this volume, including an analysis of harmony and form by Ulrich Kramer, a section of Sonia Alejandra Lopez's dissertation (originally in German) on the use of fugue techniques in *María*, and Bernardo Illari's multifarious hermeneutic reading of the work as operetta, as ritual, as "carnavalesque inversion," and as a "motor for and symbol of change."

Space does not permit a complete examination of all the articles in this volume, but I should also mention that a comprehensive bibliography by Leandro Donozo and a discography by Mitsumasa Saito will be of great utility to future researchers. Overall, I found the diversity of approaches and concerns to be a benefit rather than a distraction, a necessarily incomplete but broadly reaching important step in filling a lacuna in musical analysis of Piazzolla's oeuvre. I do believe that the reader could have benefited from a more synthetic introduction to the volume, exploring common themes and concepts—in short, García Brunelli's own article was astute enough that I found myself wishing he had promoted himself from the more modest position of mere "compiler" to full-fledged editor—but regardless the book represents a mandatory addition to the library of Piazzolla scholars. Furthermore, it amply demonstrates why Piazzolla's music exemplifies many of the problems inherent in analyzing music and musicians who straddle, cross, and render meaningless boundaries of genre.

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Note

1. Translations are mine.

MARINA ALONSO BOLAÑOS. 2008. *La "invención" de la música indígena de México: Antropología e historia de las políticas culturales del siglo XX*. Buenos Aires: Editorial sb. 156 pp.

La "Invención" de la música indígena de México, Marina Alonso Bolaños's first book-length monograph, is based on her Master's thesis in Anthropology at the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. It follows more than a decade of research and publication of articles and phonograms in the field of Mexican Indian music. Its authority is further bolstered by the author's close association with two of the principal Mexican cultural institutions the book treats, including the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and the Comisión

Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, the latter having evolved from the former Instituto Nacional Indigenista. A thorough, inside understanding of these agencies places her perspective very close to the historical sources and policies of her inquiry.

The book examines the institutional and scholarly discourse that informed Mexican society's mainly "top-down" treatment of and engagement with Mexican Indian (and mestizo) music during the period 1924–1996, a "período en que se construyeron los grandes proyectos institucionales y se desarrollaron estudios sobre la música indígena. . . ." (21). Post-revolutionary Mexico was a time of nation-building, which often took the form of selecting pieces of Mexico's ethnographic past, evaluating their cultural worthiness, and defining them (or not) into the emerging canon and paradigm of Mexican national identity. As one might imagine, those individuals and institutions doing the selecting, evaluating, and defining had the upper hand in this process, and a major axis of the book concerns issues of authority and control in the relationship between indigenous communities, on one hand, and the Mexican state and the voice of cultural elites, on the other. Alonso tracks the policies and practices of the national educational system and agencies charged with documenting and caring for the cultural welfare of Mexico's diverse Indian groups and critiques the intellectual attitudes that drive these policies and practices. Baseline attitudes were couched in an abiding sense that Indian culture, debased by the colonial experience, was inferior to European and, in any case, was destined to become part of the inexorable process of *mestizaje* that created Mexico's unique cultural identity. This privileged position of the *mestizaje* in the construction of Mexican identity justified interventions and "improvements" of Indian culture, exemplified by the introduction of European and mestizo musical genres, instruments, and institutions such as wind bands and music schools. Against this background, the author follows countervailing approaches that progressed from an uncritical reverence for perceived cultural survivals from Mexico's past, to well meaning but paternalistic ethnographic interpretations of Indian culture, to the rise of a more deferential, context-sensitive anthropological ethnomusicology in Mexico, to an increasingly collaborative spirit (often achieved through contention, such as that surrounding the Zapatista movement) between state and Indian communities. Alonso leads us toward two goals: 1) understanding how many Indian musical traditions were "reforzadas, reconstruidas y simbolizadas por el Estado para formar parte del acervo cultural de la Nación" (21), with particular attention to the 1920s and 1930s; and 2) historicizing Mexican intellectual attitudes and approaches in order to achieve "una nueva lectura crítica de la tradición científica en torno a la música de los grupos indígenas y actualizar el interés de las instituciones públicas por la música" (22).

Two large sections shape the 156-page work: “Los grandes proyectos institucionales” and “Los protagonistas.” The former opens with the Chapter 1, “La ‘reconstrucción’ e ‘invención’ de la música popular a través de las políticas culturales posrevolucionarias (1924–1934),” in which Alonso goes beyond official articulations of cultural policy by tapping the words and works of the principal actors in implementing policy—“maestros, misioneros, recolectores de música popular” and “músicos locales que intentaron construir una identidad musical y que estaban en contacto directo con los pueblos” (37). These were the individuals who played out the policies in institutions such as rural schools, cultural centers and evening music schools. We owe Alonso a vote of gratitude for trolling the mounds of official correspondence to bring the long neglected voices of these front-line actors to the fore, offering a refreshing critical examination of practice versus policy. Chapter 1 concludes that local and ethnic pluralism were ignored in the service of building new expressions of regional identity which, in turn, were disseminated nationally as regional symbols of the collective national identity.

Chapter 2, “El indigenismo musical,” explores audio recording of Mexican Indian music and how historically significant recording projects were embedded in the reigning attitudes toward Indian culture. A thumbnail overview glosses the early search for musical survivals in Walter Jesse Fewkes’s recordings of Passamoquoddy songs from the northeastern (not Northwestern, as stated on p. 57) United States, Karl Lumholtz’s late 19th-century recordings in West and Northwest Mexico, and those of Frances Densmore, Helen Roberts, George Herzog, Henrietta Yurchenco, José Raúl Hellmer (Joseph Raul Hellmer), and others. Special attention is given to the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia’s pioneering and monumental recording series *Testimonio musical de México*, launched in the late 1960s. The series, now boasting fifty volumes, was widely distributed, inspired folk music revival movements and became the point of reference for many other traditional music recording projects that followed. Alonso notes that the selection of repertoire for its Indian music recordings favored collective “marcadores de indianidad” (62) over more individualistic, creative musical expressions, critiquing this approach as symptomatic of a prevailing paternalistic view in understanding and supporting Indian culture. In contrast, the multiple recording series that began in 1979 by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista were carried out with varying degrees of collaboration by Indian institutions. While a paternalistic, top down philosophy privileged music connected to ritual and pre-Columbian styles, the particular series of recordings made with the *Sistema de Radiodifusoras Indigenistas* sometimes included more contemporary musical hybrids such as cumbias and rancheras, signaling “formas muy incipientes de participación indígena” (65) in their making. The period 1994–1996 closes the

study's period of inquiry by following the impact of the Zapatista indigenous rights movement and the heightening of Indian self-determination in their own cultural projects. This presages a shift in cultural authority and, for scholars, a reminder of the importance of cultural context in reflecting on notions of cultural "purity."

Part II, "Los Protagonistas" reviews the works of several music scholars who mark major intellectual trends in 20th-century Mexican history. Music historian Gabriel Saldívar y Silva receives much deserved consideration in a chapter of his own. Alonso explores how Saldívar in his *Historia de la música en México (épocas precortesiano y colonial)*, published in 1934, moved the scholarly perspective from that of rescuing musical survivals for the sake of using them in contemporary nationalistic musical composition to the "reconocimiento de la música mexicana como resultado de un proceso histórico de mestizaje en el cual era posible detectar sus diferentes componentes: lo indio, lo hispano y lo negro" (82). Saldívar searched for Mexico's *alma nacional* in musical expression and in doing so offered Indian music a place of respect in the process of mestizaje. Chapter 4 treats the work of Vicente T. Mendoza, E. Thomas Stanford, and Henrietta Yurchenco. The author positions Mendoza and Stanford as protagonists and markers of important scholarly trends in Mexican musicological study. Mendoza applied the musical and folkloristic scholarly tools of his time to the systematic study of Indian musical traditions, elevating their status as worthy of methodical research. He notated, analyzed, and classified Indian music by function, genre, scale, rhythmic motif, and so forth, claiming that many Indian traits showed clear pre-Hispanic origins, characterizing them as part of a treasure of musical traditions from the time of Moctezuma (and thus important to Mexican identity). Alonso credits North American ex-patriot E. Thomas Stanford for being a pivotal figure in bringing "una nueva investigación musical" (110) to Mexico. In contrast to his "evolucionista e hispanicista" (110) predecessors in Mexico, Stanford introduced North American-style ethnomusicology through his teaching, recording and fieldwork. He visited more than four hundred Mexican communities and produced an enormous number of field recordings. His attention to in situ ethnographic documentation sought to produce a faithful record of local music—much of it from Indian communities. His ethnographic approach, his attention to the relationship of music to the society for which it symbolizes cultural identity, and the many ethnomusicological disciples he trained, earn Stanford a key position in the evolution of Mexican musical scholarship. The chapter closes with a reverential nod to North American Henrietta Yurchenco in recognition of her milestone recordings of Mexican Indian music in the 1940s and later, her detailed exploration and scholarly validation of Indian musical styles, and her abiding concern for the rights of Indian people. Yurchenco's seminal and longtime collaboration in

documenting and advocating for Indian music, earned her a place of honor as the namesake of the audio archives of the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas.

Chapter 5, “Consideraciones finales,” calls for the recognition of the social, cultural, and intellectual underpinnings of ethnomusicology in Mexico. Alonso posits that this process of taking stock of the past is necessary to forge a new approach to the applied study of Mexican Indian music, one that fully recognizes the living, constantly evolving nature of Indian cultures, as opposed to seeing Indians as static keepers of cultural antiquities. She looks to disengage past perspectives that shackle public policies and practices and scholarly approaches to outmoded and deleterious attitudes of cultural “purity” and externally imposed notions of authenticity. She calls for an anthropology of music that explains music in its cultural context and treats “informants” as interlocutors in the research process. She closes with a definite statement: “Aún falta mucho por hacer” (141).

Marina Alonso breaks new ground in mining historical records to reveal on-the-ground practices of Mexican cultural policies during its critical era of post-Revolution construction of national cultural identity. Her broadbrush conceptual history of musical scholarship in the 20th century goes well beyond música indígena in its usefulness to understanding intellectual attitudes of the time. While her principal intended audience seems to be her Mexican cultural colleagues, her historical analysis and her call for a more collaborative approach in scholarship carry relevance far beyond the boundaries of Mexico.

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MENDOZA, ZOILA S. 2008. *Creating Our Own: Folklore, Performance, and Identity in Cuzco, Peru*. Durham: Duke University Press, 234 pp.

Reading Zoila Mendoza's pithy study of folkloric performance in early 20th-century Cuzco, I was reminded of an incident that I experienced in 1999, while living there. The scholarly JALLA congress (*Jornadas Andinas de Literatura Latinoamericana*) coincided with my stay, and the organizers had arranged a folkloric showcase at a local theater. It featured performers associated with *Inti Raymi*, an annual spectacle meant to celebrate the city's Inca roots. As young women danced in a fantasy version of Inca attire, and an actor representing an ancient emperor declaimed a stentorian welcome to foreign visitors, audience response became noticeably bifurcated. From the front rows, where local dignitaries and intellectuals had gathered, bursts of fervent applause filled dramatic pauses in the peroration. These contrasted starkly with the sounds emanating from visiting scholars at the