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*Cantemos al Alba: Origins of Songs, Sounds, and Liturgical
Drama of Hispanic New Mexico* (review)

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Book Reviews

JESÚS F. DE LA TEJA, EDITOR

Cantemos al Alba: Origins of Songs, Sounds, and Liturgical Drama of Hispanic New Mexico. By Tomás Lozano, translated by Rima Montoya, foreword by Anthony Cárdenas. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007. Pp. 752. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, 2 music CDs. ISBN 978-0-8263-3874-7. \$100.00, cloth.)

This well-illustrated, bilingual volume by Tomás Lozano, a folklorist and professional musician originally from Spain, traces the roots of Hispanic New Mexican music, dance, and drama. The author set out to locate the origins and historical character of Spanish folk traditions in modern New Mexico by tracing music, dance, and drama from Europe to Mexico, to the northern Spanish frontier. In doing so, he compares current practice with historic manuscripts, and finds the roots of many performances in medieval Europe. Lozano also emphasizes that the significance of Hispanic music has been largely underappreciated in larger studies of the folklore and music of the United States. Two compact discs provide helpful musical examples of the music discussed in the volume; most tracks were recorded within the past ten years in New Mexico.

The volume may be grouped into three major sections. The first eight chapters concern liturgical drama and dance drama, with texts (in Spanish and Latin) and music following concise introductions. Portions of the scripts of plays depicting the biblical stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and the betrothal of Joseph are included, most reproduced from nineteenth-century Spanish sources. Next, European, then New Mexican forms of the nativity story, ranging in date from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century contain different views of the shepherds' visitation by the angels and the adoration of the wise men. In chapters six through eight, Lozano focuses on the *Moros y Cristianos* and *matachín* dances, providing the history of these forms which reenact the triumph of good (Christianity) over evil.

The second section, chapters nine through eleven, concerns romances, games, and liturgical music—some used for recreation, and others used as part of the education programs of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Franciscan missions. Lozano's juxtaposition of romances from Renaissance Spain, Spanish oral tradition, Sephardic tradition, and New Mexican oral histories is fascinating, and it provides fruitful ground for further research. His conclusion about music in the Franciscan missions of New Mexico could well be extended to the eighteenth-century missions of Texas. Despite the lack of extant musical manuscripts from these

missions, Lozano believes that documentation of the musical skills of the friars and Indians indicates that such manuscripts may have been produced as part of the rich liturgical music of the missions.

The final six chapters cover instruments with European origins, from church bells and percussion instruments, to woodwinds, organs, and animal bells. Some, such as the *chirimía*, a double-reed aerophone, were brought by the Muslim conquerors to Spain in the Middle Ages, then used in processions and liturgical music. The instruments in this section were widely used throughout Hispanic New Mexico, and Lozano locates them in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents. The text is well illustrated, with drawings and paintings from the Renaissance and colonial New Mexico paired with modern photographs. For readers interested in the music of Spanish Texas, this section will provide valuable information.

Overall, the volume is a rich collection of material related to Hispanic folk traditions in New Mexico, and lay persons, musicians, and performers will appreciate the background it provides. Lozano hints at the wider implications and importance of the traditions he documents, and historians and anthropologists will likely build upon his work to further investigate the functions of these traditions within New Mexican communities.

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Native American Life-History Narratives: Colonial and Postcolonial Navajo Ethnography.

By Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007. Pp. 288. Notes, works cited, index. ISBN 978-0-8263-3897-6. \$34.95, cloth.)

One has to wade through a lot of postmodern jargon and speculation to get to the basic thesis of this book: that a reader needs to take a critical stance when reading an "as told to" autobiography of an indigenous person, especially when the story is filtered through a translator, as in the case of the *Son of Old Man Hat* (1938), the text Brill de Ramírez attempts to deconstruct. While that thesis is well supported by many critics of ethnographers, one needs to be as equally critical of Brill de Ramírez's specific claims about how "ethnographers erred by misreading conversively complex stories as discursively factual narratives" (p. 74).

Brill de Ramírez's extensive use of jargon, including "ratiocinative," "paralinguistic," "discursive facticity," "conversive symbolism," and "heteroglossic text," gets in the way of anything useful in this book. Many of her interpretations and "corrective readings" are highly speculative and there are numerous questionable contentions. For instance, she writes of the power of the ethnographer to misinterpret and distort Navajo culture, but then notes how the *Son of Old Man Hat* may have been an accomplished liar taking the ethnographer for a tall tale ride.

One glaring error in the book is the mixing up of the non-Native anthropologist William Morgan with linguist Robert Young's longtime Navajo collaborator William Morgan. The two are treated in the text and index as one person. Young recalled in an interview in the Winter 1996 issue of the *Journal of Navajo Education* how he met "Willie" Morgan in 1936 when he went to work as a laborer at the Sheepbreeding