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*Abidjan USA: Music, Dance, and Mobility in the Lives of Four Ivorian Immigrants* by Daniel B. Reed (review)

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Family, the orixás are interrelated and familial, one of several attributes that made it translatable into Catholic theology. Flávio brings to bear his artistic creativity and sensitivity to the wall murals just as he would to his Catholic art; he sees both through the eyes of devotion.

In the following chapters, the authors interview artists whose work is distinctly Afro-Brazilian Candomblé. The social stigma of the past on peripheral beliefs has changed in Brazil. Notably, one artist states that “[today] Candomblé is well respected. . . . There is no more prejudice” (p. 292). Many of Glassie and Shukla’s participants identify deeply with their African roots but translate them into the context of Brazilian cultural awareness and aesthetics. Their art displays multi-layered meanings, revealing the complexity of the socioreligious blending of several ethnic groups. One of the popular painters of the orixás, Francisco Santos, whom the authors interviewed over 3 years, is proud of his *cultura Afro-descendente*, or African culture and descent. He says, “The figures of the orixás have a certain beauty, an immeasurable beauty” (p. 432), all of which is displayed through the vitality and rich colors of his sacred paintings.

As we near the end of chapter 14, Glassie and Shukla deliberate on Brazilian sacred art through the visual and conceptual integration of the sacred. What was once thought of as naive by Western scholars of art, the authors reason, is now in line with the world masters of modern conceptual art. Worrying less about realistic depictions, the creators of religious objects in Bahia and Pernambuco work from the premise of bringing forth the “vital essence” in their creations. As Edival indicates, “you have to learn how to feel it” (p. 48). It becomes as much about intuitive knowing as it is about craftsmanship. Through the beauty of form and representation, the believer is able to meet the deities face-to-face and to see and be seen by the spiritual controlling forces in their lives. The authors maintain that all—both Candomblé and Catholic artists—work at “the spiritual center of world art” (p. 457). This center is alive and well in northeastern Brazil, where creativity materializes the sacred.

Overall, this is an insightful and in-depth ethnography on the sacred creativity of Brazilian art. The text and striking photography com-

plement each other. The authors’ sensitivity for their subjects (and subject) comes through with thoughtful observation and commentary. The appreciation that they ascribe to their collaborators is evident through their attentiveness to each individual’s unique relationship with his or her sacred art and the intimate connection these individuals have to their heritage and lived beliefs.

It is a lengthy book, but it is the kind of work that invites the reader to page through, looking at the photographs and stopping to read the affiliated chapters. It asks you to take your time, with the realization that you will be going on a journey with the authors through a rich, multifaceted world of sacred meaning. There are only a few things that would have enhanced the work. First, I would have appreciated a short, generalized chapter at the beginning of the book, on Catholicism and Candomblé in Brazil from a sociocultural perspective, in order to provide a contextual base for the rest of the work. Also, a glossary would have helped the reader to navigate through the many names and Portuguese and Candomblé terms.

This book will appeal to readers interested in ethnography and the material culture of religion, including folklorists, art historians, religious scholars, and material culture specialists. As a folklorist, I would recommend this book for use in courses that focus on material culture, vernacular religion, and religious folk art. Finally, this book is a must for those interested in sacred materiality, vernacular art, and the creative and imaginative blending of two diverse but congruent belief systems.

**Abidjan USA: Music, Dance, and Mobility in the Lives of Four Ivorian Immigrants.** By Daniel B. Reed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. Pp. ix + 309, preface, acknowledgments, notes on language, glossary, notes, bibliography, index.)

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*Abidjan USA: Music, Dance, and Mobility in the Lives of Four Ivorian Immigrants* by Daniel Reed recounts the life stories of Vado Diomande, Samba Diallo, Sogbety Diomande, and Dr. Djo

Bi Irie Simon through their relationships to, and performances of, West African ballet. Reed argues that these life stories “offer individual, ethnographically grounded perspectives on life in an interconnected world—where transnational economic and political networks interlay transnationally circulating discourses such as globalization, the New African Diaspora, and cosmopolitanism” (p. xix).

*Abidjan USA* recounts how Vado, Samba, Sogbety, and Dr. Djo Bi each began their relationships with Ivorian ballet as children in their home villages in Côte d’Ivoire, mastering the dances and drum rhythms of their respective ethnic groups. This education provided entry into the competitive ballet market in Abidjan, forming the basis of their professional careers as performers for the Ivorian national ballet, named the Ballet National de Côte d’Ivoire (BNCI), and other troupes. The rigorous training they received in these troupes became the means for transnational performance opportunities and, eventually, emigration to the United States, where the four continue to form immigrant communities that coalesce around performance opportunities across the eastern United States.

The first chapter outlines Reed’s two theoretical approaches—life story and performance—and situates this work within the body of scholarship concerning immigration and ethnomusicology. As a way of connecting life story and performance, Reed utilizes the metaphor of an island, stating that “performance is the visible . . . surface that one can see above the water, and life story is the foundation below, generally not visible or known to the American public” (p. 4), but that informs what surfaces onstage. Performances are locations at which many discourses converge, and in “diasporic settings, performers are often the most visible and audible community representatives to the multicultural society around them; African immigrant performers can function as the face of the New Diaspora, symbolically representing ‘Africa,’ ‘West Africa,’ and/or ‘Ivory Coast’” (p. 26). This framework allows for a broader range of analysis, which thinks “not only in terms of individual artists’ lives and performance practices but also in terms of broad social formulations (such as diaspora, transnationality,

nationality, ethnicity)” (p. 19) and their interconnections.

Chapter 2 provides a history of West African and Ivorian ballet. Here, Reed also unravels the multiple discourses inherent in Ivorian ballet and examines the components of the repertoire of prearranged pieces that performers have to master. The author also discusses how ballet provides performers with access to the international labor market as tours provide “chances to defect and/or make contacts to facilitate later immigration” (p. 65). West African ballet emerged as a new genre in the 1940s, when Guinean Fodeba Keita formed the first African ballet ensemble Les Ballets Africains (LBA). At Guinea’s independence in 1958, President Sekou Touré utilized the troupe in the nation-building process, redefining the LBA as “anti-colonial and nationalist” (p. 39). According to Reed, Touré “sought to represent to the world an image of his new nation and the continent itself as one of great cultural and artistic achievement” (p. 39). As the LBA travelled, so did the idea of African ballet, and West African nations began creating their own troupes.

Reed devotes chapters 3 through 10 to the analysis of the performances and life stories of his consultants, concretizing the theoretical framework of the first chapter and personalizing the historical background of the second. Each consultant is dedicated two chapters. The first chapters describe and examine a performance staged by each consultant. Reed analyzes event names, promotional items, stage backdrops, performers’ demographics, dance and musical compositions, and instrumentation. The second chapters recount the consultants’ life stories, highlighting their performance histories and their experiences as immigrants as foundational to the discourses that emerge onstage.

Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to Vado Diomande. Chapter 3 analyzes the components of *Kekene*, an event performed in New York City in 2009 by the Kotchegna Dance Company. This analysis highlights Vado’s desire to “spread a message of unity through music and dance performance” (p. 76) and the intersection and collision of this unifying discourse with the expectations of audiences and the community’s historical context. Chapter 4 recounts Vado’s life story and highlights his performance his-

tory as a stilt mask performer of the Mau people and his relationship to the stilt mask spirit—Gue Pelou—which he dances. It outlines his entry into the BNCI in 1974 at the age of 17, which afforded him opportunities for transnational travel and eventually renowned expertise as a choreographer, which he continues in the United States. Vado's prestigious career also led to illness resulting from the competitive nature of ballet and mask performance. This chapter also discusses his health issues, as Vado's primary reason for emigrating to the United States was access to quality health care.

Chapters 5 and 6 are dedicated to Samba Di-allo. Chapter 5 examines the production of *Akoya*, an event performed in Atlanta in 2009 by Samba's troupe Attoungblan. This event highlights Samba's promotion of "a discourse of unity" (p. 130), but unlike Vado, Samba limits "his representations of unity to people of African descent in order to cater to audience members' expectations of Africa on stage" (p. 139). Chapter 6 tells Samba's life story. Samba, unlike the other consultants, does not identify clearly in terms of ethnicity due to his interethnic upbringing in the multicultural city of Sikensi. In Sikensi's environment of shared music and dance, Samba learned various ethnic dance forms, gaining "a rich, multiethnic, informal experiential education" (p. 147). Upon moving to Abidjan, Samba eventually joined the BNCI, and, in 1994 after a BNCI performance in the United States, Samba opted not to return to Côte d'Ivoire. The rest of the chapter recounts the difficulties Samba encountered as an immigrant living in Atlanta. These difficulties were mitigated by the help of a white couple Samba now considers family, yet this relationship nevertheless placed Samba "at the center of a decades-long discursive controversy about race in American life" (p. 165) through an adapted performance of the racially controversial *Song of the South* in which Samba performed as Uncle Remus.

Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to Sogbety Diomande. Chapter 7 examines the performance of the dance troupe Sogbety Diomande's West African Drum and Dance at the Lotus Festival in Bloomington, Indiana, in 2008. This performance, involving 11 performers from diverse places across the United States, demon-

strates "the role of ballet experience and training in providing a base of knowledge and practice that enables a group to appear as if they regularly perform and tour together" (p. 186) and highlights *jembefication*—"the transposition of non-*jembe* rhythms into *jembe/dundun* instrumentation" (p. 189). Chapter 8 recounts Sogbety's life story. Like his uncle, Vado, Sogbety is an initiate of the stilt mask spirit Gue Pelou, who features prominently in his performances. However, Sogbety's relationship to Gue Pelou differs from Vado's in that Sogbety's is based on adapting his performances to the context of a performance and audience expectation: "His intention is not simply to preserve an a priori authentic version of the traditions he performs. . . . He assumes that he will adapt a performance according to context, and [comes] *expecting to find something new* as opposed to preserving something old" (p. 220). As Reed points out, Sogbety's adaptation to different contexts has become a marker for his mask and drum performances.

The final chapters are devoted to Dr. Djo Bi Irie Simon. Chapter 9 analyzes the formal and informal performances at Dr. Djo Bi's wedding in west central Indiana in 2008—a weekend-long event named "Open Village." This chapter highlights what distinguished the formal performance—the wedding celebration—from staged performances, and it examines what the informal performances reveal about immigrant life and ballet discourse offstage. Here, ballet functioned as a "shared background and affinity, more akin to an ethnic identity" (p. 241). Chapter 10 recounts the life story of Dr. Djo Bi, who as a child demonstrated prodigious talent as a drummer. His story, however, differs from the other consultants in that Dr. Djo Bi never joined the BNCI, but rather developed a long and illustrious career as a drummer in various contexts around Abidjan and then Europe before emigrating to the United States. Arriving in New York in 1997, Dr. Djo Bi encountered many difficulties, but his vast musical experience afforded him more options than "conventional ballet-informed representations of Africa" (p. 269), and he eventually creatively diversified. In 2006, he opened a studio teaching *jembe* and African dance classes in Bloomington, Indiana, drawing from the "rhythms,

the songs, the breaks, the dance routines” (p. 271) mastered as a result of years of transnational experience and, importantly, innovation. Specifically, Dr. Djo Bi’s band Asafo demonstrates his musical creativity and innovation in compositions, which, as they “build on and extend beyond ballet” (p. 274), make him unique.

In chapter 11, Reed provides an accessible summary and reframing of his arguments in light of the life stories and performances analyzed in the previous chapters.

This study’s attention to the intersection of lived experiences with wider historical events and social formations, as well as the author’s careful analysis of Ivorian ballet and the dances and drum rhythms that constitute the genre, make *Abidjan USA* an important intervention in ethnomusicology and folklore. Reed also connects his work to the wider body of literatures and debates across multiple academic fields on immigration and diaspora, thus contributing to the fields of diaspora studies, cultural studies, African studies, and the social sciences, with a focus on immigration. While this book is targeted to an academic audience, its blending of theory with lived experience makes it accessible to non-academics with scholarly sensibilities. Reed writes: “If the book succeeds, readers will know something of these four men and, through them, something of the experience of late twentieth- through early twenty-first-century migration, a new diaspora, the relationships of Africans to their music and dance, and their encounters with American conceptions of African music in their lives as immigrant artists” (p. xx). This book certainly succeeds.

**Global Tarantella: Reinventing Southern Italian Folk Music and Dances.** By Inconronata Inserra. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017. Pp. x + 210, acknowledgments, introduction, notes, works cited, index.)

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*Global Tarantella* provides “U.S. academic and cultural audiences with a local perspective on *tarantella*, one that takes into consideration the place-specific knowledge and community values embedded in this folk dance tradition” (p.

178). Inconronata Inserra examines *tarantella* through its history and global circulation and, in doing so, challenges the stereotypical image of Italian culture in favor of an immersive journey into “the historical, cultural, and linguistic complexity of Italy” (p. 178).

As explained in the introduction, *tarantella* is an umbrella term, which refers to a body of music and dance performances connected with agricultural and healing rituals that originated from various regions of Southern Italy. These region-based performances include the *pizzica* (spider dance from Apulia), *tammurriata* (Campania), *tarantella siciliana* (Sicily), and *tarantella calabrese* (Calabria), and have been used since at least the seventeenth century as a way to articulate the cycle of life of some of those regional communities. These traditions of Southern Italian folk music and dance went through two revival phases, the first during the 1970s and the most recent in the 1990s.

Focusing on the post-1990s revival, Inserra guides the reader through a multilayered analysis of the social, political, and musical dynamics involved with *tarantella*. By exploring the global circulation of *tarantella* outside of its regional and national boundaries and the changes to this Southern Italian phenomenon, Inserra is “able to locate the ways in which Southern Italian groups are constantly redefining their local culture and identity in relation to the larger context of Italy . . . as well as in relation to [the] Mediterranean, United States, and international cultural scene” (p. 20).

In chapter 1, Inserra offers a brief overview of the 1970s folk revival based on the work of Italian scholars who have studied *tarantella*, its subgenres, and Italian traditional culture in general. This includes the works of Ernesto De Martino, Antonio Gramsci, Franco Cassano, Roberto De Simone, Diego Carpitella, and Alan Lomax, all of whom have made valuable contributions in raising interest for the Southern Italy sonic universe and folklore. Moreover, the author explores “the scholarship surrounding the post-1990s *tarantella* revival” (p. 47) and how this revival addressed *tarantella* tradition. Inserra avoids reducing the revival to its merely entertaining aspects and instead relates it to the peculiar history of Southern Italy and its ongoing ability to inspire the cultural politics and identities of those local communities today.