ARTICLES

1  JUDITH KLASSEN
   You call that “Christian?” Language Use and Evangelism in
   the Music of a Mennonite Family in Mexico

26  CATHERINE GAUTHIER MERCIER
   Interpreting Brazilianness: Musical Views of Brazil in Toronto

47  BRUNO DESCHÊNES
   La Transmusicalité: ces musiciens occidentaux qui optent
   pour la musique de l’« autre »

71  SIJA TSAI
   Electric Picking, Ethnic Spinning: (Re)Defining the “folk”
   at the Winnipeg Folk Festival

95  RONALD LABELLE
   Reflections on the Passing of Allan Kelly: A Master of the
   Acadian Song Tradition

111  MICHAEL ASCH
   Folkways Records and the Ethics of Collecting:
   Some Personal Reflections
BOOK REVIEWS

128 HEATHER SPARLING

134 JAY RAHN
Review Essay: Anna Hoefnagels and Gordon E. Smith, eds., Folk Music, Traditional Music, Ethnomusicology: Canadian Perspectives, Past and Present

141 CHRISTOPHER McDONALD
Larry Starr, Christopher Waterman and Jay Hodgson, Rock: A Canadian Perspective

144 MARGARET WALKER
Mervyn MacLean, Pioneers of Ethnomusicology

FILM REVIEW ESSAY

148 JANICE ESTHER TULK
Jeremy Torrie, director, Powwow Trail [dvd series]

EDITOR / RÉDACTEUR EN CHEF
Gordon E. Smith
School of Music
Queen’s University
Kingston, ON K7L 3N6
gordon.smith@queensu.ca

EDITORIAL BOARD / COMITÉ DE RÉDACTION
Donald Deschênes
Beauport, Québec
William Echard
Carleton University
Leslie Hall
Ryerson University
Regula Qureshi
University of Alberta
Kati Szego
Memorial University of Newfoundland
MUSICultures (formerly the Canadian Journal for Traditional Music / La Revue de musique folklorique canadienne) is the scholarly peer-reviewed publication of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music.

MUSICultures publishes original articles in English and French on a wide range of topics in ethnomusicology, traditional music research, and popular music studies. The Journal welcomes articles on music in Canadian contexts as well as music in global and transnational contexts. The Journal also publishes reviews of books, and sound and visual recordings. Please contact the Editor about submitting reviews.

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

Submission Guidelines

1. The article text should be typed, double-spaced (including explanatory footnotes, quotations, song texts, Reference List, and captions for figures and illustrations) and submitted as an attached electronic file (Word format). Parenthetical quotations longer than three lines should be separate and indented on the left side of the page. Articles are normally between 5,000-7,000 words.

2. As each article is assessed by two anonymous referees, information identifying the author should appear only in the e-mail message to the Editor.

3. Parenthetical documentation for references should be used in the text, with full bibliographic references given in a list of References at the end of the article. Footnotes at the bottom of the pages should be reserved for explanatory material. The Journal follows the author-date format in the Reference list.

4. Musical figures, graphics, and tables should be in separate files with explicit indication of where they should be inserted in the article text. All figures, graphics, and tables should carry complete captions, including full identification of the item and all necessary credits and acknowledgements. The author of the article is responsible for obtaining permissions for the use of copyrighted materials, as well as permissions of other materials, where appropriate.
5. Authors should provide an abstract (up to 100 words) as well as biographical note (not more than 70 words), typed and double-spaced in separate files accompanying the article.

Submission Process

A manuscript is assessed first by the Journal editor, who determines if it is of sufficient interest to proceed to the next step, which is to send the manuscript to two external referees. The referees write evaluations and recommendations, sometimes with suggestions for revisions. These assessments are sent to the editor who either rejects the manuscript, postpones a decision while suggesting revisions, or accepts the manuscript in its present state. The referee’s assessments and recommendations are forwarded anonymously to the manuscript’s author, along with the editor’s decisions. The review process normally takes between four and five months.

Authors should also consult the “Publications” link on the Society’s website: www.yorku.ca/cstm

Publishers should submit books, videos, CDs, etc. for possible review to the Editor.

MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTIONS

A one-year CSTM membership includes:
Subscription to peer-reviewed MUSICultures (formerly the Canadian Journal for Traditional Music / La Revue de musique folklorique canadienne)
Subscription to Canadian Folk Music magazine
CSTM Mail Order Service Discounts
Access to the CSTM listserve

Membership Dues in Canadian dollars:

**Canadian Members:**
$60 Individuals
$25 Under-employed (includes students, seniors, and unemployed)
$85 Institutions

**Non-Canadian Members:**
$70 Individuals
$35 Under-employed (includes students, seniors, and unemployed)
$95 Institutions

Please send a completed membership (available on the CSTM listserve) along with Visa information, cheque, or money order to:

CSTM
c/o folkwaysAlive!
3-47 Arts Building, University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 2E6
From the Editor

This volume of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music Society’s refereed Journal, *MUSICultures*, represents several important changes. The new name *MUSICultures* (formerly the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*) is inspired by recent shifts and emphases in ethnomusicology. These changes are seen in the contents of this volume, which include six articles embodying varied fieldwork experiences, and a range of historical and current representational perspectives. The volume also contains five reviews on sources related to recent scholarship in ethnomusicology; three of these are review essays. *MUSICultures* is also presented in an exciting new Journal style format.

Certain thematic threads connect the articles in this inaugural issue of *MUSICultures*. Most prominent is that of change, and how music functions in shifting historical, political, cultural, and social frameworks. Drawing on their field experiences, Catherine Gauthier Mercier and Sija Tsai each articulate musical and cultural meanings within racialized urban spaces (respectively, current perceptions of Brazilian musical culture in Toronto; shifting ideas of “folk music” within the context of the Winnipeg Folk Festival). Ideas surrounding musical change and diasporic movements are also a major theme in Judith Klassen’s article, focused on the musical practices of a Mennonite family living in Mexico. Diasporic aspects and ideas of “transmusicalité” are explored further in Bruno Deschêne’s article in which his own experience as a shakuhachi performer serves as a starting point for discussion of three other case studies of musicians learning music from different cultures.

These four articles are complemented by the two articles by Michael Asch and Ronald Labelle, in which the authors describe the respective musical worlds of individuals. Invoking anthropological and folkloric models, Michael Asch reminisces about the extraordinary work of his father, Moses Asch, the founder of Folkways Records. Drawing on his own field experiences over a sustained period of time, Ronald Labelle presents an engaging account of the musical experience of Allan Kelly, one of the most prolific informants in the Acadian tradition. Versions of these articles were originally presented as keynote addresses at conferences of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music (Asch in Edmonton, November 2007; Labelle in Halifax, November 2008).

Along with texts on a wide range of ethnomusicological research, another aim of *MUSICultures* is to include texts in French as well as in English. As such, the forthcoming and succeeding issues of *MUSICultures*, will not only reflect the importance of the French-English nature of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music, but also present a distinctive publication in which voices articulating understandings from divergent linguistic cultural, and nationalist
models can be heard.

I take this opportunity to thank those who have assisted so generously with the publication of this new edition of the Society’s Journal: the Editorial Board and those individuals who provided assessments of the articles, and the Society’s Publication Committee, which assisted with important aspects of the changeover to the new name, format, and publication. In particular, I would like to thank Graham Blair (Memorial University), who designed the new format for MUSICultures as well as preparing the typesetting and layout. I would also like to thank Regula Qureshi and folkwaysAlive! (University of Alberta) for undertaking the printing of MUSICultures. We believe that this and succeeding issues of MUSICultures will be a source of pride for the Society and an ongoing scholarly inspiration for its readers.

GORDON E. SMITH

Mot du rédacteur en chef

Ce numéro de la revue de la Société canadienne pour les traditions musicales introduit plusieurs changements importants. Le nouveau nom, MUSICultures (autrefois La Revue de la musique folklorique canadienne), s’inspire des développements récents dans le domaine de l’ethnomusicologie. En effet, les auteurs des six articles présentent leurs expériences en ethnographie en utilisant un éventail de perspectives historiques et contemporaines. De plus, ce numéro inclut cinq comptes rendus, dont trois de plus grande envergure, sur les nouveautés en recherches ethnomusicologues. Enfin, MUSICultures se dote d’un nouveau format qui se veut plus attrayant.

Quelques liens thématiques unissent les textes de ce premier numéro de MUSICultures. Le plus important est l’idée de changement et du fonctionnement de la musique dans des contextes historiques, politiques, culturels, et sociaux. À partir de leur travail sur le terrain, l’article de Catherine Gauthier Mercier et celui de Sija Tsai étudient le rôle de la musique et de la culture dans le contexte du pluralisme racial des espaces urbains (par exemple, les préconçus qui entourent la culture musicale brésilienne à Toronto; les changements de position concernant la « musique folklorique » dans le contexte du festival folklorique de Winnipeg). Les notions de genre musical et de déplacement diasporique sont au centre de l’article de Judith Klassen qui présente la tradition musicale d’une famille mennonite qui habite au Mexique. Le phénomène diasporique et la transmusicalité forgent la structure idéologique
de l’article de Bruno Deschênes. Ici, l’auteur fait appel à son expérience comme joueur du shakuhachi pour servir de point de départ à l’étude de trois autres cas où les musiciennes et musicien ont appris à interpréter la musique d’autres cultures.


En plus d’articles scolastiques en ethnomusicologie, un autre objectif de MUSICultures est de publier des textes en français et en anglais. Cette décision démontrera la nature bilingue de la Société canadienne des traditions musicales, en plus de fournir une publication distincte dans laquelle différentes approches ethnomusicologiques – linguistique, culturelle ou nationaliste – seront mises en vedette.

Je tiens à remercier celles et ceux qui ont collaboré à la publication de ce numéro de la revue de la Société : le Comité de rédaction, les évaluateurs des articles soumis, et le Comité des publications de la Société qui ont tous participé à la conception et à la réalisation de ce numéro de MUSICultures. Je remercie tout particulièrement Graham Blair (Memorial University), responsable du nouveau format et de la mise en page du numéro. Également, nous sommes reconnaissants envers Regula Qureshi et folkwaysAlive! (University of Alberta) pour l’impression de MUSICultures. Nous sommes convaincus que ce numéro de MUSICultures ainsi que les numéros suivants seront une source de fierté pour la Société, ses lectrices et ses lecteurs.

GORDON E. SMITH
Notes On Contributing Authors

MICHAEL ASCH, FRSC, (Ph.D. in Anthropology, Columbia University, 1972) is the only child of Moses and Frances Asch, and is the host of Smithsonian Folkways: Sounds to Grow On, a radio series broadcast on CKUA, and podcast through the Smithsonian Folkways website. Dr. Asch is Visiting Professor of Anthropology at the University of Victoria and Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Alberta. He has published extensively on political relations between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state.


JUDITH KLASSEN is an ethnomusicologist, violist, and violin teacher who resides in Winnipeg, MB. She balances academic teaching and a studio of violin students with varied performing interests. Judith completed her Ph.D. at Memorial University of Newfoundland in 2008, where her doctoral research explored the musical practices of Mennonites in northern Mexico. Her other interests include puppetry and Hollywood musicals from the 1930s and 40s.

RONALD LABELLE completed doctoral studies in Ethnology at Université Laval. He worked at the Université de Moncton’s Centre d’études acadiennes from 1979 until 2005, and presently holds the McCain Research Chair in Acadian Ethnology and Folklore. His publications include The Acadians of Chezzetcook and Au Village-du-Bois – Mémoires d’une communauté acadienne. He was a long time editor of the journal Oral History Forum, and is currently the President of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada.

CHRISTOPHER MCDONALD lectures at Cape Breton University, and specializes in popular music, Celtic Music and music and social class. He has published on topics such as progressive rock, jazz and Celtic pop, and his book, Rush, Rock Music and the Middle Class: Dreaming in Middletown is due out in November 2009 from Indiana University Press.

CATHERINE GAUTHIER MERCIER is a Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral research concerns the Brazilian music scenes of Toronto and Montreal with a focus on the role of music in the relations between immigrants and people born in Canada. This research is funded by the SSHRC with a Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarship.
JAY RAHN is Professor of Music at York University (Toronto). His teaching and research interests span a wide range of topics in music theory, musicology, ethnomusicology and music cognition. His publications include numerous articles and two books: *A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark*, co-authored with Edith Fowke (University of Calgary Press 1994) and *A Theory for All Music: Problems and Solutions in the Analysis of Non-Western Forms* (University of Toronto Press, 1983). A former editor of the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*, he currently serves on the editorial board of the Society for Music Theory’s journal *Music Theory Spectrum* and is list manager for *Music Theory Online*.

HEATHER SPARLING is Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at Cape Breton University where she is establishing an ethnomusicology program. She specializes in Gaelic song in Cape Breton, about which she has written several articles, and also teaches Gaelic in the community. Her research interests include genre, cultural capital, relationships between language and music, competitions, and tourism. Her most recent article, “Categorically Speaking: Towards a Theory of (Musical) Genre in Cape Breton Gaelic Culture” appeared in *Ethnomusicology* (2008).

SIJA TSAI is a doctoral student in ethnomusicology and popular music studies at York University. Her research interests include genre, community, and transnationalism, particularly in a Canadian context. Her M.A. research examined related issues within the Winnipeg Folk Festival, and she continues to pursue her interests in contemporary Canadian folk/popular music. Additionally, she has carried out research on the Chinese erhu in Toronto, as well as karaoke in transnational settings.

JANICE ESTHER TULK is a SSRHC postdoctoral fellow at Cape Breton University. Her current research revolves around Mi’kmaw musical expressions and their relationship to the soundscape of Mi’kmaw’i. Her doctoral dissertation, titled “Our Strength is Ourselves”: Status, Identity, and Cultural Revitalization Among the Mi’kmaq in Newfoundland (Memorial University, 2008) explores the way in which contemporary music-making practices such as powwow are localized to express both Mi’kmaw identity and First Nations identity more broadly. She is the producer of *Welta’q – “It Sounds Good”: Historic Recordings of the Mi’kmaq* (2009), the fourth CD in the “Back on Track” archival series produced by the Research Centre for Music, Media and Place (MMaP) at Memorial University.

MARGARET WALKER is a graduate of the University of Toronto (musicology/ethnomusicology) and the Royal Conservatory of Music Professional School (piano performance and pedagogy). She completed her Ph.D. in 2004 with a dissertation titled *Kathak Dance: A Critical History*, which is an in-depth examination of the history of North Indian dance. She began training in kathak dance in 1997, and has since studied in Toronto, Ottawa, and Delhi. She has also done extensive fieldwork in India, and is currently assistant professor of musicology/ethnomusicology at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.
Folkways Records and the Ethics of Collecting: Some Personal Reflections

MICHAEL ASCH

Abstract: In this article, anthropologist Michael Asch recounts fascinating histories surrounding the genesis of Folkways Records, focusing on aspects of diversity, selection, and ethics. He illustrates the discussion by invoking pertinent anthropological and folklore paradigms.

Folkways Records and Service Corporation, unarguably the most unique recording company ever to exist, was founded in 1948 by my father, Moses Asch. In the 38 years of operation, between 1948 and 1986 when my father died, Folkways produced over 2100 albums, an average of more than one per week – a feat accomplished with a labour force that never exceeded a handful of people. Furthermore, he rarely took a record out of print, and then never for commercial reasons.

It was a record catalogue of staggering diversity and eclecticism. To give you a sense of the breadth of this collection, here are just a few of the familiar names found on the label: Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Jean Ritchie, Mary Lou Williams, Ella Jenkins, The Carter Family, Lucinda Williams, Janis Ian, Martin Luther King, Bertold Brecht, Margaret Mead, Langston Hughes, W. E. B. DuBois, and Bob Dylan (under the pseudonym Blind Boy Grunt). Significantly, Folkways also included a vast repertoire of lesser-known artists important to such genres as blues, bluegrass, old-time, and country, and contains many of the most iconic songs in the American folk repertoire: Guthrie singing “This Land is Your Land,” Seeger leading “We Shall Overcome,” and Lead Belly’s “Midnight Special.” The Folkways’ corpus also includes instructional, documentary and soundscape recordings ranging from learning folk guitar to self-examination of the breast; recordings of the sounds of birds, frogs, steam engines; sounds of the office and the junkyard;
and speeches, lectures and interviews, ranging from abolitionists such as Sojourn Truth to writers such as Henry Miller.

Folkways represents perhaps the largest catalogue of music from around the world on a single label – Bosnia, Cuba, Iran, Russia, Japan, Mali, and contains about 140 albums of Canadian material of which about 100 were produced by Montreal impresario, the late Sam Gesser (Dalen 2006: 2-3). These albums include the music of First Nations and of settlers from virtually every province and territory as well as children’s songs, electronic music, dramas, satire, and poetry (including that of Leonard Cohen). It is an inescapable fact that in every sense, Folkways is a collection – a unique collection – and the life

Figure 1. Album cover, Healing songs of the North American Indians (FE 4251, SFQ 04251) is reproduced here courtesy of the Moses and Frances Asch collection (Folkways Records), the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Collection.
work of a unique person, Moses Asch.

This contribution is an attempt to provide an account of the values – the ethics – that guided the development of this “collection” and the experiences of its founder and director that gave foundation and shape to those ethics. To set the context, I will begin by situating my father’s collection “ethics” in the context of the problematics of collecting, cultural relativism and cultural appropriation as discussed in recent scholarship.

The Problematics of Collecting

The current view of collecting in anthropology is articulated by James Clifford in the following passage from his oft-cited essay, “On Collecting Art and Culture”:

With Franz Boas and the emergence of relativist anthropology an emphasis on placing objects in specific lived contexts was consolidated. The “cultures” thus represented could either be arranged in a modified evolutionary series or dispersed in synchronous “ethnographic presents.” The latter were times neither of antiquity nor of the twentieth century but rather representing the “authentic” context of the collected objects, often just prior to their collection or display. Both collector and salvage ethnographer could claim to be the last to rescue “the real thing.” Authenticity … is produced by removing objects and customs from their current historical situation – a present-becoming-future. (1988: 228)

The ethic for collecting, Clifford implies, is the preservation of a dying piece of universal history for the benefit of posterity; and the image of the collector is that of the neutral, value-free documenter who searches for the authentic as though it could exist outside of colonialism and capitalism, and thus, in this telling, he is at worst complicit in these practices and at best ignoring the obvious.

It is fair to say that there were many collectors who adhered to this imperious point of view. However, I take issue with Clifford’s application of this characterization to Boas and those in his camp. For them, as I understand it, cultural relativism\(^2\) was squarely about demonstrating the equal worth of all societies with a particular focus on the disenfranchised and excluded, and with an eye to making clear their status as agents in their destinies. This is less obvious in their ethnographic work. But an exclusive focus on their
academic scholarship ignores the evidence from their more popular writings of their deep engagement with the major political issues of their times. For example, Boas, as is clear in his book, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1938), and other of his popular works, was determined to refute the so-called findings of the superiority of “whites” gleaned from the then respectable pseudo-science called “scientific racism” by demonstrating that African Americans were fully equal in standing to other “races.” Similarly Boas’ student, the anthropologist Paul Radin, was fierce in his determination to make clear that indigenous peoples in North America were fully actualized human beings who have lived in complex societies since before the arrival of Europeans. Thus, in his most popular book, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (1957), Radin refuted the so-called scientific conclusions advanced by such renowned scholars as Lucien Levy-Bruhl and Emile Durkheim that indigenous peoples were primitives who had yet to create sophisticated ways of life. A third example, of course, is found in the contributions of Margaret Mead, another of Boas’ students, who, as in *Sex and Temperament in Primitive Society*, persistently advanced the position that women in so-called less advanced societies did not need lessons on how to raise children.

Thus, in contrast to Clifford, I do not see the cultural relativists as neutral observers bent on recording the doomed ways of life of presumed losers to the invincible march of progress. Rather, I see them as politically committed to demonstrating through words, pictures and sounds the dignity and equality of standing of all cultures and especially those of the excluded; they intended expressly to repudiate any version of the narrative of Modernity that presumed the contrary. In this regard, their adoption of the ethnographic present was not a means to take these peoples outside of history, as Clifford suggests, but rather a technique to challenge any version of history that would portray the ways of Indigenous peoples and others as inauthentic, or relics of our past, or in some other way unworthy.

The frequently reproduced photograph shown on the cover of the Folkways album *Healing Songs of the North American Indians* evokes another dimension of importance to a discussion of the ethics of collecting: cultural appropriation (Figure 1). The woman in the photograph is the ethnographer and musicologist, Frances Densmore. She is shown seated beside an early recording device into which a Native American in full Plains regalia appears to be singing. It would appear to be a prima facie case of the appropriation of culture from an objectified, agent-less third party. But to conclude this requires us to make certain assumptions about the “Indian.” Who is he? Can we find out something about him or is he someone whose name has been long forgotten, if it were ever recorded? Fortunately, we do know something about him.
The man’s name is “Mountain Chief,” or Ninastoko. He is a renowned Blackfoot (Peigan) Elder and was their last hereditary leader. He was born in 1848 on the Old Man River in southern Alberta and died in Montana in 1942. In 1916, the year the photograph was taken, Mountain Chief was in correspondence with the U.S. Government regarding the status of an oil lease on their territories. Prior to that, in his late teens, Mountain Chief led war parties against the Crow and the Kutenai. He was the Chief who signed the Treaties of 1866 and 1895, the latter ceding the area that now comprises Glacier National Park, and met with US presidents McKinley, Taft, Theodore Roosevelt, and Wilson while working as a negotiator for his people. Clearly, this is a person who understood much about the world inhabited by Frances Densmore.

Another important piece of information is that Mountain Chief worked with General Hugh Scott for a number of years to record Plains’ Indian sign language. In fact, the photo itself comes from General Scott’s collection and is likely of Mountain Chief not singing, but listening to a recording and interpreting in sign language what he is hearing. This context indicates that Mountain Chief was willing to record aspects of his culture in terms that Western collectors could understand. Whether he was doing so on his own initiative or whether he shared in the motivations of Scott and Densmore or agreed to cooperate for other reasons, we cannot know from this scant evidence. However, the context of his life’s work in service to his people gives us a good indication that Mountain Chief was an active agent, someone who would likely see his collaboration with these collectors as part of a project of his own making.

My point is this: The presumption that this image unambiguously captures an act of cultural appropriation can be maintained only so long as we rely solely on the presumed motivation of one active agent, Frances Densmore, to determine the underlying ethic. However, as we learn more about Mountain Chief we realize that, even were Densmore’s attitude to be imperious and her objective to appropriate, this is not a complete reading of the encounter; for it emerges that Mountain Chief’s participation may well have furthered his own objectives. Certainly the playing field is uneven; there is a power differential between the parties. But does that fact alone make the act apparently captured in this image one of cultural appropriation no more, no less, or does the agency of Mountain Chief mitigate against this conclusion? It seems to me that at the very least the inclusion of information on Mountain Chief requires that our understanding of this encounter become much more nuanced.

My purpose in advancing this illustration is not to argue that cultural appropriation never occurred. We all know that it was and is still too common. But it does suggest that we cannot take for granted that this was the inevitable
consequence of such encounters. I am convinced that this caution must apply particularly in those cases where the collectors saw their work as in solidarity with the goals of those from whom they collected, and who carried with them the ethic of collaboration associated with Boas’ version of cultural relativism. That is the context within which I am situating my discussion of Folkways and the ethics of collection, for, if nothing else, my father saw the recordings in his catalogue as the consequence of collaboration between himself and the many artists, collectors, musicians and producers with whom he worked.

The Locus of my father’s political and social sensibilities

Family, geography and firsthand involvement with many of the monumental events and significant figures of the twentieth century forged my father’s political sensibilities. He grew up in a world of avant-garde artists many of whom were friends and colleagues of his father, the novelist Sholem Asch. His parents’ frequent trips abroad left him and his brothers in the care of his maternal aunt, Basha, who was a radical and friends with such notables as Maria Montessori.

As a young man, my father chose to train as a sound engineer in Germany where he took a particular interest in radio. When he returned to New York he became a radio technician. His interest in the phonograph record was stimulated by an opportunity to record singers for WEVD, a radio station in New York and, in his telling, by a prophetic conversation he had with Albert Einstein whom he met when recording an interview with my grandfather for later radio broadcast. My father, then a man in his thirties, asked Einstein for advice on the prospects of becoming a physicist, to which Einstein replied “you are too old.” Einstein then advised him to continue what he was doing: document the world through recordings.

My father came to maturity in the period between the two World Wars, and was influenced profoundly by what had happened to “common people” during the Great Depression. From that experience, he drew inspiration from Roosevelt and the New Deal, and in that sense he was a Democrat with a capital D, but no doubt supported the Progressive Party’s candidate, Henry Wallace, in 1948. That is, beyond being a New Deal Democrat, Moe was a “progressive,” part of a community composed of social democrats, socialists, communists and anarchists who, while certainly in profound disagreement about the precise shape of the future, were all committed to creating a world without hunger, discrimination or exploitation. They were equally united in their condemnation of the economic system that had led to the First World War and the Great Depression, as well as the growth of fascism in Europe and particularly of Nazism.
in Germany.

While my father did not broadcast his political location within this community (Goldsmith 1998), he made it clear to me that his principal sympathies lay with the form of anarchism associated with the Wobblies, the International Workers of the World. That is, like them, his vision of the future was:

\[\ldots\] plain folk running society for their own benefit – without bosses, without politicians, without a coercive State, Army, Navy Air Force or Marines. But without hatred and suspicion of ‘foreigners,’ or the frequently all-encompassing guilt that because we are rich, someone wants to take our riches away from us. The belief in freedom and internationalism makes the Wobblies just about the most American ideal possible.\ldots\ (Buhle 2005:2f)

Members of the progressive community included writers, scholars, artists, reformers, revolutionaries, and activists who, like the philosopher John Dewey, were influential at that time. One scholarly center for progressive activities was anthropology and included the aforementioned scholars and collectors, Paul Radin, Margaret Mead, and Franz Boas. Indeed, particularly during the Depression, collecting – especially from the rural south – was as much a political activity as an artistic expression for photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans and writers such as James Agee and John Steinbeck (e.g., Agee 2001).

Another factor that grounded my father’s values was where he lived. Progressive communities existed throughout the world, and among its principal centres were such major American cities as Chicago, San Francisco, and Philadelphia but I think it fair to say that its intellectual center was New York City. This was fueled by two factors. The first was that New York became the home to a very large proportion of intellectuals who fled Germany and other parts of Europe in the years prior to and during the Second World War. By settling in New York, these refugees made it the centre for anti-fascist politics and progressivist ideals.

Claude Lévi-Strauss gives us a sense of this remarkable time and place when, in a passage from his fascinating depiction of the city in his essay, “New York in 1941” (Lévi-Strauss 1985), he tells us that he was friends with such well known refugees as Dada artist Max Ernst, surrealist poet André Breton, and George Duthuit, art critic and son-in-law of Matisse, and rented an apartment in the same Greenwich Village building as another refugee, Claude Shannon, the inventor of the artificial brain. New York was a cosmopolitan centre in a world gone mad. This madness, he says, made it seem that not only people from
around the world, but “examples of the whole of humanity’s artistic legacy were present in New York” (262).

Lévi-Strauss also provides insight into the other fundamental characteristic that made New York a center for progressivism, and that is its particular cultural geography. As he says:

At the intersections of perfectly straight thoroughfares, which might have appeared to be jumbled up in a single geometric anonymity, the ethnic groups making up New York’s population had each chosen a niche: Harlem and Chinatown, of course, but also the Puerto Rican district (developing at that time around West 23rd Street), Little Italy (south of Washington Square), as well as Greek, Czech, German, Scandinavian, Finnish, and other neighborhoods, with their restaurants and their places of worship and entertainment. One changed countries every few blocks. (Lévi-Strauss 259)

Thus, as he saw it, “the social and cultural fabric of New York was riddled with holes. All you had to do was pick one and slip through if, like Alice, you wanted to get to the other side of the looking glass and find a world so enchanting that it seemed unreal” (261).

The final crucial factor in creating the ethic for Folkways was World War II, and particularly how progressives viewed it once the United States entered the War in 1941. As I understand it, while there were many reasons to support the war effort, singular among them was the desire to rid the world of fascism, racism, segregation and exploitation, and thus to create a world of peace, brotherhood, and equality; and all of this to be accomplished through collaboration with those many who, through their victimization by the existing world order, shared in this objective. This sentiment was well expressed in a verse from the song “Passing Through” penned by Richard Blakeslee in 1948 and used extensively in the Henry Wallace campaign:

I was at Franklin Roosevelt’s side
Just a while before he died.
He said one world must come out of World War II.
Yankee, Russian, white or tan
Lord, a man is just a man,
We’re all brothers and
We’re only passing through. (Seeger 1958a: 2)8
In short, the values that were to animate Folkways Records at its founding in 1948 derived from the firm belief in the equality of standing, and dignity of all peoples, with a special emphasis on those whom “society” most devalues and oppresses; a belief in a future world without poverty or discrimination; a place of peace and understanding between peoples achieved through working together, collaboratively, in solidarity. These values derived from my father’s lifelong association with progressives, and from the fact that the place in which he lived, New York City, with its juxtaposition of cultures and neighborhoods, exemplified in microcosm the kind of future world that they believed would emerge from the ashes of World War II.⁹

Folkways and the Ethics of Collecting

When my father founded Folkways Records in 1948, it was his third record company. The first was Asch Records founded in the 1930s, on which he released the first recordings of Lead Belly. The second was Disc Records, founded during World War II, on which, among many other important releases, appear the Granz’ Jazz at the Philharmonic recordings. While initially a success, Disc went bankrupt in 1947 when, as my father told me, he lost the anticipated Christmas sales due to a snowstorm in mid-December that delayed the release of a Nat King Cole Christmas album until after December 25th. Moe started Folkways with a loan of $10,000 from his father and the goodwill of his assistant, Marian Distler, who agreed to be the “front” person so that he could get going while still under bankruptcy.

From the earliest days of Folkways, my father sought to put into practice the spirit of collaboration for the production of “progressive” material in support of his values. At the same time, I believe that the Folkways catalogue represents my father’s adaptation to new circumstances that were developing, since from its first days these progressive values were under attack.

In the late forties and throughout the 1950s, the right wing, supported by the U. S. government was relentless and very successful in convincing the American public that the central values of pre- and post-war progressives, as exemplified in the song “Passing Through,” were those espoused by the Soviet Union and, thus, Communist propaganda. The implication was clear: anyone who supported such values was at best anti-American and at worst, a member of the Communist Party or a “fellow-traveler.”

It was the period of the Red Scare. People lost their jobs, their reputations, and even their freedom because they were associated or even presumed to be associated with Communists. The litany of assaults is well known, but
here are a few: The 1949 Peekskill Riot, where progressives who had gathered for a Civil Rights benefit and to hear Paul Robeson sing were attacked by a mob, supported by the police – this in upstate New York, not Alabama; the Hollywood Blacklist; the “loyalty oaths” required of school teachers, civil servants and countless others for employment; and most infamous, the red baiting House Un-American Activities Committee and Senator Joseph McCarthy. The Communist witch hunts instilled justifiable fear (as well as remarkable defiance) among those under attack and penetrated deeply and effectively in both the cultural and academic communities.

The case of the folk group, The Weavers, gives a glimpse of the impact of the Red Scare on progressive recording artists. The group was formed in 1948 through a collaboration of Ronnie Gilbert, Fred Hellerman, Lee Hays, and Pete Seeger. The Weavers’ popularity was such that in August of 1950 their recording of Lead Belly’s “Goodnight Irene” reached number 1 on the Billboard Hit Parade. In the same year, however, the FBI placed them under surveillance. As the entry on Wikipedia continues, “Right-wing and anti-Communist groups protested at their performances and harassed promoters. As a result of the blacklisting, the Weavers lost radio airplay and the group’s popularity diminished rapidly. Decca terminated their recording contract.” They disbanded in 1952.

Similarly, progressive academics were viewed with suspicion and felt the chill of the times. The period of the Red Scare, I believe, accounts for the excision of the values espoused by cultural relativism from academic discourse. In short, by the early 1950s, many artists and academics lost hope for a new world based on progressive values. Rather, it was a time of realization that the very attitudes against which many had fought during the Second World were taking firm root in the United States.

Folkways became my father’s response to these new circumstances, for through it he created a place where the equality of standing that lies at the heart of cultural relativism’s political message could live in safety – if not in real life, then at least, symbolically. However, my father did not see the principles of cultural relativism as value neutral. As he said: “I … came to own several tapes of songs by the Nazi SS troops, but I won’t issue them. I won’t issue propaganda or anything that is used against people.” In this he was following the sensibilities of the Wobblies as described above as well as advocating a view shared by many of his academic contemporaries in the field of anthropology. And, while the concept “against people” may be problematic as a universal lens with which to pass judgment, there is no question as to its applicability to the genocidal Nazi regime or to the perpetrators of the Red Scare. Thus, Folkways became the home for those who would “stand against”
those who “stand against” people.

This perspective is revealed in the Folkways catalogue in a number of ways. First, by the substantial number of albums with themes devoted to struggles against control by large corporations and/or the state. These run the gamut from union songs (Talking Union), songs of the Spanish Civil War, songs from Attica Prison, interviews with Angela Davis, Berthold Brecht’s testimony at the House Un-American Activities Committee and songs of the Civil Rights movement. Even the *Ballads of the American Revolution*, which might appear at first blush to run counter to this theme, in fact celebrates Americans for “standing against” those who would oppress. Second, there are the “urban” artists and collectors who appear on Folkways in the early years. Among the former are: Will Geer, Oscar Brand, Langston Hughes, Alan Lomax, Earl Robinson, Pete Seeger, and Tom Glazer, all of whom were blacklisted, many for refusing to name names in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee. In this way, Folkways was a place where those who were blacklisted could be heard and continue to be creative and political; a place for those “who stood against people.” Third, there is the name. In calling the company Folkways, a term that connotes recognition of and respect for the diversity of traditions that exist in the world, my father located himself as standing against those who sought to limit what was available in the market place to cultural expressions that conformed to the tastes and values of white, middle-class America as defined by Red Scare ideologues.

Put more broadly, Folkways represented a place where voices, otherwise silenced not only by political considerations but also by an economic system intent on maximizing profits to the exclusion of all else, could be heard. Hence, his proviso that he generally did not take on projects he thought had great commercial potential but gave serious consideration to worthy projects that, nevertheless, promised little commercial success. An album such as *Sounds of the Junk Yard* (FW 6143) demonstrates this value.

Of course, this implies that my father assumed that those who appeared on the label wanted their voices heard, and understood the economic terms of the association. He assumed that the recordings were not a product of cultural appropriation and were of limited commercial value. When materials were presented by a third party, as for example many of the recordings in the Ethnic Series or from the rural south, my father relied on the collector’s integrity as assurance that those recorded wanted to be heard and understood the limited economic benefits that would accrue to them. In those instances that I know of where this proved not to be the case, he removed the recording from the catalogue.

But how did he survive when other progressives fared so poorly? My
father’s explanation was simple – it is the genius of capitalism in a liberal state that, if you do not seek subsidies, but make your living exclusively through entrepreneurial success, the state cannot stop you. Given that he received sufficient income to survive through the sales of records, and given that he was not motivated by the maximization of profits, he could survive. And thus when confronted by an FBI probe, as he told me, he could protest in all honestly that he was merely a business man seeking success in business -and what could be more American than that? Of course it was more complex than this. Factors such as a loyal and enthusiastic customer base and mutually supportive economic relationships with other small-scale businesses played a significant role.²⁰

Conclusions

As Director of Folkways records, my father was, if you will, the ultimate collector. In the following Declaration of Purpose written shortly before he died, he articulated his role and the values that guided him:²¹

As Director, I have tried to create an atmosphere where all recordings are treated equally regardless of the sales statistics. My obligation is to see that Folkways remains a depository of the sounds and music of the world and that these remain available to all. The real owners of Folkways Records are the people that perform and create what we have recorded and not the people that issue and sell the product. The obligation of the company is to maintain the office, the warehouse, the billing and collection of funds, to pay the rent and telephone, etc. Folkways succeeds when it becomes the invisible conduit from the world to the ears of human beings.

I know well that this statement rings true, even with regard to the ownership of the company. My father did not believe in private property. In this regard, he was more aligned with the anarchists than the New Deal Democrats. For example, when a publishing company asked whether it could use the name “Folkways,” my father replied in the affirmative saying that “folkways” was only a word in the dictionary – he didn’t own it! And on another occasion, he defended himself against legal threats arising from his recording of the national anthem of the United States from a copyrighted radio broadcast with the argument that the anthem, the Marine Band that played it and the airwaves
that carried it belonged to the people of the United States and not a private corporation. His accusers backed down.

He believed that he ought to take home a salary for the work he did, and nothing more; the profits were to enable the further production of materials. That is how he was able to produce so much with so few resources. Indeed, it was not until very late in his life, when his health began to fail, that he wondered how he might live if he couldn’t work and first questioned whether he had obtained some credit in the company for the efforts he had put into it. Fortunately for my family’s financial survival, my mother did not agree completely with his economic philosophy. Over the years she accumulated some savings that, along with the money he received when the company was sold, would have provided for both of them, had he survived.

On the other hand, his statement of purpose elides a very important matter: His uncritical acceptance of his own role as the hand guiding what would be selected for inclusion in his catalogue. But here, too, he remained remarkably consistent in his ethics and to the tenets of cultural relativism, for he largely relied on the integrity of those he trusted to arbitrate what would appear on the label. Where he departed decisively from this principle was in what would be excluded; here he was hard edged, unforgiving. I think this represents the approach of someone who, having seen the holocaust and the anti-human currents that developed in its aftermath, was determined to ensure that his practiced politics, if nothing else, meant that those who have come under threat of cultural genocide or worse would never have to share the Folkways stage with those who threaten them.

It is in these decisions concerning what to include and exclude from the catalogue that we find the clearest expression of the ethics of collecting represented by and within Folkways Records.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Margaret Asch, Tony Seeger, Atesh Sonneborn, and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. This paper was first presented as a keynote address at the 51st Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music/Société Canadienne four les traditions musicales. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta November 2-4 2007. A version of this paper has been previously published in Canadian Folk Music (summer 2008, vol.42.2):1-8.

2. Recent research has questioned the conventional description of Boas and his students in the historiography of anthropology as cultural relativists (Saunders 2004). While I agree with this critique, I adhere to this term here because a
detailed discussion on this matter is beyond the scope of this text, and because the critique to which I refer does not apply to the aspects of this approach I discuss in it.

3. In this regard, Lewis says:

   It is remarkable that the lifelong vocation of Boas, Benedict, Herskovits, Mead, and so many others, to combat racism and ethnocentrism, once recognized as a central element in American anthropology’s legacy, is now either ignored or made to seem ignoble. (Lewis 1998:720)

4. March 1916 photograph of Frances Densmore and Mountain Chief from Harris & Ewing studio Washington D.C., the National Anthropological Archives collection, Smithsonian Institution.


6. According to Brown (2003:16), Mountain Chief is listening to a cylinder recorded by Walter McClintock in 1898. According to Smithsonian Archivist Daisy Njoku (2008), “he is not only listening to the recording, he is interpreting it in Plains sign language.”

7. For a detailed discussion of complexities in interpreting Frances Densmore’s motivations and the consequences of her activities, see Brown (2003:24-27)

8. Words from Seeger (1958b:2).

9. Lévi-Strauss seems aware of this conceptualization of the struggle over the future for he writes:

   Naturally, we sensed that all these relics were being assaulted by a mass culture that was about to crush and bury them — a mass culture that, already far advanced in America, would reach Europe a few decades later. This may be the reason so many aspects of life in New York enthralled us: it set before our eyes a list of recipes thanks to which, in a society becoming each day ever more oppressive and inhuman, the people who find it decidedly intolerable can learn the thousand and one tricks offered, for a few brief moments, by the illusion that one has the power to escape. (Lévi-Strauss 1985:267)

   However I would say that Lévi-Strauss’s belief that escaping the power of modernity is illusionary does not reflect the mood of that time, which, as I grew up within it, projected a sensibility that moving beyond it was a tangible possibility, a moment to work towards. In that regard, I think we have the Lévi-Strauss of 1985 speaking back to the Lévi-Strauss of 1941. But what in my view is profound in his telling is his identification of the sense that ways of life and particularly those of the excluded were under assault, and that New York was seen as the incubator for a way of living that would overcome “a society becoming each day ever more oppressive and inhuman.”

10. For more information see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Scare

fullcredits#cast.

12. At its height, academics avoided expressing the values of cultural relativism for fear of being fired as happened, for example, to anthropologist Gene Weltfish.

13. I know that the quote comes from an interview with my father. However, I have not been able to find the citation.

14. In 1947, the Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association issued a statement opposing the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (American Anthropologist 49: 539-543). As Sally Engle Merry describes it, the statement advocated a position quite similar to my father’s:

The statement itself obliquely alluded to this problem by claiming that in states that deny citizens the right of participation in their governments or seek to conquer weaker peoples, underlying cultural values may provide a brake on these activities. This does not resolve the problem of where the boundary should be drawn between tolerance and places where it is necessary to fight intolerance, but it does show that there was a clear recognition among anthropologists in the 1940s that tolerance for cultural difference could not be asserted to the exclusion of all other ethical concerns. The critical point is this: the anthropological position was not the defense of all cultural practices but a more nuanced recognition that tolerance of difference was one of several important ethical considerations, as well as one under siege at that historical moment. Indeed, the statement’s cultural relativism is based on an ethical assertion of both freedom and respect for cultural difference. (Merry 2003:57)

15. Merry (2003:58) argues that the belief that cultural relativism is incompatible with the notion of universal human rights “grows out of erroneous ideas about the concept of culture itself. If culture is thought of as a reified thing, as bounded and static, then cultural relativism means defending every practice and every belief at all costs.” “But,” she continues, “this is not the way contemporary anthropologists think about culture.”

16. And, likely from my father’s political perspective as expressed in the description of the Wobblies cited in the text, included bosses, politicians, a coercive State, Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines.


18. According to the Encarta dictionary, Folkways is defined as: “traditional culture: the traditional customs and way of life pursued by a particular group of people.” http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_561531851/folkways.html. The term itself comes from William Graham Sumner’s book by the same name. In his preface, Sumner (1907:iii) says: “I have tried to treat all folkways, including those which are most opposite to our own, with truthfulness, but with dignity and due respect to our own conventions.”
19. One could safely argue that this album would not have an appeal sufficiently broad to attract most record companies. Yet we must conclude that Moe issued it because he thought that the collector who recorded it had a compelling message to be heard and believed that it would attract an audience of sufficient size to ensure that over time he could recover his costs.


References

Njoku, Daisy. 2008. Personal Communication. Human Studies Film Archives,
National Anthropological Archives, Museum Support Center, Smithsonian Institution.


FILM REVIEW


BY JANICE ESTHER TULK

Pow Wow Trail\(^1\) originated as a documentary television series broadcast on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in 2001 (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0822639/). In 2004, eleven 48-minute episodes were released on DVD and make widely available through Arbor Records.\(^2\) Each episode combines vibrant new footage of powwows throughout North America and extensive oral history interviews with archival materials from institutions such as the Smithsonian.

In episode one (The Drum), viewers are introduced to powwow and its origins through the Anishnaabe story of Omaamikwe, who brought the drum to Aboriginal people. In The Songs (episode 2), the concept of oral tradition is introduced and issues of technology in transmission are addressed. Aspects of commercialization and the role of creativity and artistry in dance are considered in episode three (The Dances). The American Indian Movement (AIM) is discussed in episode four (The Grand Entry), and the relationship between powwow and the Wild West shows of Buffalo Bill is addressed. Grass Dance and Men’s Traditional (episode five) focuses specifically on two men’s dance styles, while the sixth episode, The Fancy Dance, centers on both men’s Fancy Dance and women’s Fancy Shawl. Pow Wow Rock (episode seven) presents a variety of musical styles and introduces the genre of protest song. Episode eight, titled The Women, is devoted primarily to Women’s Traditional and Jingle Dress Dance styles. The Pequot nation and their famous Schemitzun powwow are the focus of The Grand Exhibition (episode nine). As the largest competitive powwow in North America, issues of casino culture and commercialization move to the forefront in this episode. The White Man’s Indian (episode ten) focuses primarily on the representation of First Nations in film and the image of the “Indian” created in European culture. Concluding the series is Pow Wow Fever (episode eleven) which engages with issues of tourism and hobbyist powwows created and run by non-natives in North America and Europe.

The relationship between episodes is fairly straightforward. The first three episodes focussed on The Drum, The Songs, and The Dances could be considered the core of this set and serve as an introduction and overview for subsequent episodes. The remaining episodes unfold in a (mostly) logical manner: the episode on Grand Entry (the opening ceremony at a powwow) is followed by episodes devoted to specific dance styles (first men’s and then women’s, separated by a brief popular music tangent). The set then broadens out again to a more general consideration of powwow and a focus on specific histories and issues. It should be noted that given the interrelated nature of many of the elements of powwow, there is overlap or duplication of information to greater or lesser degrees across the series. For users picking
and choosing episodes and segments, this point is somewhat irrelevant. However, after watching the entire series, it becomes obvious through the reuse of interview clips across multiple episodes.

Two “tangents” stand out in the overall series. The episode on *Pow Wow Rock* introduces an important musical trend and the concept of the protest song; however it is not made clear if or how this music might be incorporated into the powwow event. Episode ten (*The White Man’s Indian*) initially seems out of place, given its focus on representation in film. However, by the end of this episode, it becomes clear that powwow is seen by some to be a way to repair the damage done by such stereotypical representations.

The production quality of this series is impressive; the cinematography is striking, capturing the spirit of powwow. Long shots of hundreds of dancers in colourful regalia are interspersed with close-ups of individuals and their footwork, as well as stunning overhead shots at large powwows – a bird’s eye view of the event that is not normally possible. Skilled camera work and lighting is combined with extensive oral history documentation to produce one of the best audio-visual powwow resources available. The sheer breadth of topics covered in this series makes it valuable for study and instruction, as it demonstrates the many interrelated aspects of culture, tradition, history, and innovation. However, breadth is not accomplished at the expense of depth. Rather, specific issues are selected for deep interrogation. A particularly good example of this is the discussion of the origins of Fancy Dance. Several individuals are interviewed on the creation and emergence of this dance, sometimes detailing complementary versions and sometimes suggesting alternative sources.

That said, the many variants of powwow itself are missing in this collection. There is a focus on competition powwows with little consideration of traditional powwows, and regional and local variations in the powwow event itself are largely not addressed. For those teaching Aboriginal students or teaching in an area with Aboriginal populations, it will be productive to encourage students to compare what they are seeing and the stories they are hearing with those of their own (or the local) First Nation. Indeed, many issues of recent interest in academic study of powwow, such as distinctions between northern and southern singing styles (see, for example, Hoefnagels 2004; Goertzen 2005; Keillor 2006; Browner 2009), distinctions between contest and traditional powwows (Desjarlait 1997; Tulk 2006; Scales 2007), layout of powwow grounds (Browner 2002: 96-98; von Rosen 1998: 24), regalia styles (Browner 2002), or the role of the emcee (Gelo 2005; Mattern 1998, 1999; Tulk 2007) are not directly addressed in this series. However, topics such as commercialization (Aldred 2005), hobbyist powwows (Watchman 2005), and casino culture (Lalor 2006) are represented in this set.

With each episode running forty-eight minutes in length, these videos can be easily programmed into most classes. Further, because these documentaries were originally made for television (which has commercial breaks), it is possible to choose shorter segments for use in class that are relatively self-contained (these “breaks” are obvious by the appearance of a *Pow Wow Trail* banner at the bottom of the screen to indicate the lead out to and return from commercial). However, there is no scene selection built into the menu for each DVD. Consequently, it can be difficult to navigate to the particular clip you want to use. A teacher’s guide (CD-Rom) is
available for *Pow Wow Trail*, which includes a 5-6 page guide for each of the eleven DVDs (provided in both .pdf and .doc formats). Each guide includes a description of the episode, new vocabulary list (usually 2-3 words introduced in the episode), discussion questions appropriate to junior and senior high classes (though likely applicable in undergraduate courses), suggestions for class or term projects or activities, a short list of internet resources, a list of questions to guide the viewing of the episode (with answer key), and some sort of activity sheet that is usually word-based (crossword puzzle, word search, or word scramble). Of all of the material included in the teacher’s guide, the most valuable is likely the list of questions to guide viewing. Given the broad scope of topics covered in each episode, this sort of handout can help to focus students’ viewing. While I personally am a fan of word puzzles, and the crossword puzzles may have some pedagogical value, word searches and scrambles are perhaps better suited to a younger audience.

The suggested extensions and recommended resources sections, however, could be greatly improved. The extensions tend to be very general, directing students to conduct further research and present on a particular area of history or culture, to watch and discuss another film, to dress a doll in regalia, or to write an essay or story on a particular issue/topic. While these suggestions could be useful in compiling a list of possible term paper topics, it does not provide short in-class creative activities that could supplement learning objectives. Further, little information is provided in terms of execution. So, while the first suggestion in the teacher’s guide to “Have students make their own drums (make sure to consult a local elder first)” is a good one, there may not be anyone available with this specialized knowledge. Further, there are no instructions included for the construction of drums or idiophones (such as rattles) using traditional and/or found materials.

Nevertheless, with some creative thinking, some suggested projects could be reworked to stimulate intriguing conversation. For example, the final suggestion (from the teacher’s guide for episode eleven) was to, “Have the class organize a Pow-wow for their friends and families, schoolmates.” While organizing and holding a powwow would likely be outside the realm of feasibility for most courses, inviting students to brainstorm through the planning process could be a valuable activity engaging them with issues presented throughout the series: commercialization (to have prize money or not, the type and number of vendors to permit), competition (verses traditional powwow), promotion of the event (issues representation, the presence of tourists), and participation in hobbyist powwows (depending on the composition of the class).

All of the resources listed for each episode are internet-based. While this may improve accessibility for some, we still need to be careful about assuming that everyone has reliable internet access in his or her schools and communities (as well as computers available in classrooms). Certainly, in remote and/or economically disadvantaged areas this may not always be the case. Further, given the ephemeral and interactive nature of webpages, resources may quickly disappear or be replaced on the internet. (At the time of writing this review, four of the sites listed in the guide no longer exist, one has a new URL, and one requires a passkey for access.)

There is no doubt that the *PowWow Trail* series is a valuable resource for the study of
powwow and First Nations musical expression more broadly. Though the teacher’s guide is limited in terms of usefulness, the overall collection achieves its goal of “[exploring] the true meaning, beyond the feathers and beads,” of powwow (DVD case). This series will appeal widely to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, educators, and scholars, as well as powwow practitioners. As a whole, it will be of significant value to disciplines such as ethnomusicology, anthropology, folklore, cultural studies, and Aboriginal studies; however, individual episodes will also appeal to popular music studies (episode seven) and film studies (episode ten). As the area of powwow studies continues to develop, Pow Wow Trail will provide a much-needed audio-visual component that complements scholarly publications (such as Diamond 2008; Ellis et al 2005; Ellis 2003; Browner 2002).

NOTES

1. Powwow is spelled multiple ways throughout this series, including pow wow (as in the title), pow-wow (on the DVD case), and a combination of the two throughout the teacher’s guide. Powwow is also a common spelling used in recent publications (such as Ellis et al. 2005).

2. According to Internet Movie Database (IMDB), the original series consisted of thirteen episodes; however, the Arbor release of the DVD set includes only eleven. I was unable to determine whether information on IMDB was accurate or what the subject of the other two episodes might have been.

REFERENCES


Goertzen, Chris. 2005. “Purposes of


