

Finally, if the historical Jesus and the praised Lord are not, together and unseparately, the Christ of Faith, how can Christianity affirm and proclaim that salvation happened within history for historical human beings? This represents a serious question that Dr. Molnar's proposal seems to leave unanswered.

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Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism. By Michael Largey. The University of Chicago Press, 2006. 283 pages. \$25.00.

The material Michael Largey explores in *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art Music and Cultural Nationalism* is far richer than the book's title might suggest. Interspersing rigorous analyses of historical and musical texts with personal accounts drawn from his fieldwork in Haiti, Largey raises questions that center on the dynamic role of Vodou in promoting politicized visions of Haiti in the Caribbean and the United States. What was the role of Haitian art music in constructing collective identities within the Haitian transnational nation-state? In what ways did these identity constructions serve the purposes of various social and intellectual "elites," who, for various political reasons, strived to depict Haiti as a "Vodou Nation"?

Largey's multi-layered ethnomusicological approach resonates strongly with recent ethnographies of Haitian musical and religious practice. Following Elizabeth McAlister's *Rara!: Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora* (University of California Press 2002), and Karen Richman's *Migration and Vodou* (University Press of Florida 2005), *Vodou Nation* provides much-needed insight into the role of religion and musical practice in negotiating Haitian transnational identities. However, the book distinguishes itself from previous ethnomusicological works about Haiti by exploring Haitian art music (*mizik savant ayisyen*) and underscoring the historical connections between Haitian and African American composers, political activists, and cultural commentators. African American figures such as W. E. B. DuBois, William Grant Still, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neal Hurston saw Haiti as an inspiration for artistic creations and political stances that made reference to Haiti's history as the first black-led independent nation in the hemisphere. Many African Americans even viewed Haiti as an alternate "homeland" in the first half of the nineteenth century (36), and Jean Price-Mars's push for Haitian educational reform borrowed, in turn, from Booker T. Washington's ideas about technical education (47).

Covering the 1890s to the 1950s, *Vodou Nation* is structured around Largey's discussion of four modes of cultural memory, which he labels recombinant mythology, vulgarization and classicization, diasporic cosmopolitanism,

and music ideology. Through these modes of remembering, Haitian elites brought an idealized past into the present as a way of portraying Haiti as a unique, yet universally relevant, nation-state. The "Vodou nation" is thus understood as "a project of cultural nationalism which manufactures national sentiment through emotional attachments to an imagined past" (19). This description is reinforced by some of Largey's very interesting references to nineteenth-century blackface minstrelsy performances in the United States, the "transgressive glee" (83) of which Largey compares to Haitian elites' appropriations of peasant culture.

Recombinant mythology is the process through which Haitians "use mythologically oriented language to highlight praiseworthy characteristics of cultural heroes" (62). In historical narratives about cultural heroes, past presidents such as Dessalines are often infused with spiritual attributes borrowed from Vodou spirits. This narrative combining of attributes is, however, already a feature of Haitian popular religion. As Largey points out, the various *lwa* (Vodou spirits) were themselves already recombined through the process of being recontextualized in New World African societies and the sharing of attributes among various spirits (75). Largey's discussion of recombinant mythology delves into the careers of two important figures: Haitian composer Occide Jeanty and poet Oswald Durand. Both of these artists responded to foreign intervention by creating works that expressed patriotic sentiments. By evoking the sights and sounds of the Vodou ceremony, they also used of their art as "contact points" between elites and peasants. This enabled members of the elite class "to connect themselves selectively to aspects of lower-class Haitian culture without risk of social contamination" (84). Elite writers, in turn, used Vodou imagery to help weave a historical narrative of Jeanty and Durand as cultural heroes. Such narratives tended to conflate Jeanty's creative process with a "musical possession trance" in order to suggest a mystical source for the composer's musical genius (85). One of the remarkable aspects of Largey's book is that he provides some of the last remaining eyewitness accounts of this historical moment by drawing from interviews he conducted with Jeanty's contemporaries.

The use of music as a point of contact between social groups is also an important theme in Largey's discussion of composers Ludovic Lamothe (1882–1953) and Justin Elie (1883–1931). Lamothe's primary audience consisted of middle- and upper-class Haitians, but in his piano parlor music, he incorporated the Haitian meringue as a "crossover" genre in an attempt to appeal to all strata of Haitian society. By accentuating the meringue's African heritage, Lamothe aimed to show that Vodou was vital to the compositional expression of a Haitian national identity. Justin Elie's compositions, unlike those of Lamothe, were targeted towards listeners in the United States, where he had relocated in the early 1920s. After first looking to Egypt as a possible basis of Haitian expressive culture, Elie eventually sought to construct a distinctly Haitian national identity by evoking Native American imagery. Egypt had provided Haitian intellectuals and composers with a means to "recast Vodou as a

religious practice with roots in a powerful culture respected by Europeans" (124). However, emphasizing an imagined Native American heritage allowed Elie, along with late nineteenth-century intellectuals, to resolve a dilemma presented by the stigma attached by elites to Vodou and the lack of a direct connection to Egypt's Pharaonic past. It is thus through the "incorporation of an alternative indigenous spirituality into Haitian classical music" (126) that Elie's compositions dealt with the limitations posed by Vodou and ancient Egypt as sources of creative inspiration.

The processes of "vulgarization" and "classicization" (100) represent strategies geared respectively toward appropriating peasant culture (especially Vodou) for the performance of art music and establishing a link to a celebrated past. The task undertaken by Haitian elite writers and composers to win both local and international favor was made difficult by a dilemma not unlike that faced by upper-class blacks in the United States who, like their Haitian counterparts, were concerned with improving the plight of less privileged socioeconomic classes. While "Haitian elites experienced subalternity in the international realm even as they dominated their own country's national life" (12), Haitian composers plied their craft amidst an American thirst for the exotic that greatly impacted the ways in which their music was experienced and described by contemporary writers. Vodou is particularly enlightening in this regard because of "its capacity to instill revulsion in Haitian elites and fear in foreigners while providing a potential rallying point for Haitians wanting to distinguish themselves from outsiders" (13).

Largey's discussion of diasporic cosmopolitanism focuses on two operas written by African Americans, *Ouanga* and *Troubled Island* by composers Clarence White and William Grant Still, respectively. Through this discussion, Largey firmly establishes another connection between Haiti and African America, highlighting the ways in which these works "demonstrate the importance of class in the African American imagination" (184). For example, Langston Hughes' libretto for *Troubled Island* expresses a particular concern for those whom Hughes referred to as "people without shoes" (174). In contrast with prior narratives by white writers, both of these operas cast Haiti's first president, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, as a central agent in Haitian revolutionary history. *Ouanga* stands out as "the first opera to feature a range of Haitian musical genres that transcended class boundaries" (151). Furthermore, by attributing the overthrow of Dessalines to Vodou, *Ouanga's* libretto, written by John F. Matheus, is "revolutionary because it credited a religious practice associated with the lower class with tremendous political power" (151). Diasporic cosmopolitanism is also evident in the folksong transcriptions of Haitian composer Werner A. Jaegerhuber. This form of cosmopolitanism reflected the composer's attempts to establish yet another point of contact with the Haitian peasantry while showcasing Haitian music's universal appeal to African diasporic audiences.

Vodou Nation is quite clearly a refreshing piece of ethnomusicological scholarship. It will appeal not only to scholars of African diasporic religion,

but also to musicologists and anthropologists interested in the relation between expressive culture and constructions of nationalism. *Vodou Nation* is, in fact, noticeably interdisciplinary in scope, as the author draws on transcriptions of musical works, syntheses of historical documents, extensive interviews, and an array of fieldwork experiences. Like a multi-movement symphony featuring changes in tempo, the book moves the reader along at varying rates of speed. Several parts of the book are delightfully engaging, such as Largey's description of the emotional responses to Occide Jeanty's early twentieth-century composition, "1804," which became "an unofficial anthem of Haitian resistance" during U.S. occupation. Other passages are somewhat less accessible—for example, a reference to Edvard Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A Minor* (145) may feel too esoteric for the non-musically literate, and some ethnomusicologists may likewise find Largey's detailed descriptions of Justin Elie's compositions a bit too cumbersome. However, even these musicological discussions are a special treat for those who find a two-pronged excavation of historical and musicological texts helpful in understanding the fascinating links between musical sound, African-derived religion, and Haitian society.

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Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. By Livia Kohn. University of Hawaii Press, 2003. 300 pages. \$42.00.

This is the first general Western-language monograph on Daoist monasticism. It opens with a chapter on monasticism as a cross-cultural phenomenon and type. Chapter 2, "Origins and History," contrary to its title is not a history of Daoist monasticism—a history that began in the late fifth century C.E.—but rather a sketch of its prehistory. Chapter 3, "The Monastic Vision," presents some basic goals and values of Daoist monasticism as outlined in a few key texts; chapter 4, "Relation to Society," discusses monastic-State relations and rules for interactions between monastics and laity; and chapter 5, "Buildings and Compounds," sketches the prescribed spatial layout of monasteries. The final three chapters treat monastics' daily discipline, implements and vestments, and liturgies. The work concludes with a useful synopsis of textual sources, a glossary of Chinese names and terms, and an index.

As the book's subtitle makes clear, *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism* attempts a cross-cultural, "comparative and theoretical placement of medieval Daoist monasticism" (xii). Aside from reminding readers that Daoism is not the only religion to have developed a monastic tradition, however, the purpose of Kohn's comparative asides is not clear; they mostly consist of simply pointing out that other traditions share some of the basic-level features of the