Photos, Maps, Tables, Drawings, Interviews, Bibliography, Discography, Videography, Index.

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Ethnomusicologists Anna Hoefnagels and Beverley Diamond have thrown any notion of the classic (dusty) classroom music anthology out the window and started fresh. Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada: Echoes and Exchanges presents Indigenous music as nothing but living and breathing, presenting a wide variety of traditional and contemporary Indigenous musical traditions and practices as well as their transmissions. The format of contributions varies widely, including scholarly work from varying fields, interviews, musical excerpts, maps, photographs, ethnographies, and personal stories. A comprehensive bibliography references the equally diverse range of materials consulted by contributors and includes literature, interviews, websites, a discography, a videography, and an index. Contributing authors are artists, culture bearers, scholars, and elders and members of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-Indigenous communities from across Canada, who together create an anthology strikingly unique in its integration and synthesis of informative content and carefully established contexts, framed by trenchant critical thought.

Overriding themes are consistently brought to the surface by individual authors as well as by both editors in a number of ways. Each author carefully frames his or her

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chapter discussion within a series of contexts: political, social, cultural, economic, local, and musical, among others. The editors take the time to tactfully and skilfully group the chapters thematically to facilitate reader understanding. The introduction establishes the many considerations and contexts—including intellectual contexts—to bear in mind while reading. The introduction also provides the reader with justifications for the careful balances of (1) scholarly and artistic work, and (2) Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal contributors (fifteen of twenty-seven) present in the anthology. Finally, the editors define the overriding theme of Indigenous modernity as well as the three thematic sections through which the chapters are organized: “Innovating Tradition, Teaching and Transmission, and Cultural Interactions and Negotiations.” A smaller thematic introduction precedes each of the three divisions, providing increasingly specialized insight for the reader. A subsequent section by Diamond, entitled, “Recent Studies of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Music in Canada,” precedes the chapter content proper. Here Diamond provides both an extensive bibliographic background on a range of work in the field and identifies areas of potential “postmodern” growth for ethnomusicology that would allow it to participate in a wider discussion about concerns affecting Indigenous peoples internationally (24). All of this comprehensive contextualization provides the reader with some of the necessary backdrop for a grounded understanding of the content of this edition.

Within the first section, “Innovating Tradition,” Amber Ridington discusses the revitalization, preservation, and innovation of the Dane-zaa Dreamer’s Song and Dance Tradition and presents her interview with Dane-zaa artist, Garry Oker (57). Janice Esther Tulk explores intertribal traditions and Mi’kmaw cultural expression through this community’s use of powwow music. Christopher Scales interviews Gabriel Desrosiers on the influences of recording and competition on Northern style powwow music, and finally, Anna Hoefnagels examines the roles of Aboriginal women in powwow music, and brings questions of “systematic marginalization” and “internal colonialism” to the surface (117). This section is refreshingly enlightening as it challenges typical notions of “tradition,” revealing the transmission of such practices as active and riddled with conflict, not as passive reproductions.

The observations offered by the first group of scholars leads logically to the next thematic section, entitled “Teaching and Transmission.” This group of essays moves into more personal accounts of the dynamic relations and processes involved in teaching and transmitting Aboriginal music. Sadie Buck, in collaboration with Diamond, tells her personal story of music as a “lived” experience (136). Mary Piercey, as a non-Indigenous teacher and fieldworker in Nunavut, recounts her experience negotiating roles in transmission in her “autoethnography” (132). Beverly Soulière and Jimmy Dick provide insight into their personal journeys as musicians and stakeholders of greater Indigenous communities in their interviews with Hoefnagels, and Annette Chrétien discusses Métis
music and Aboriginal education—interpreted in a number of ways—and storytelling as a method of Aboriginal educational accommodation (174-75). Accounts of personal experience and the introspection these scholars bring to their work are what give the anthology its lively and organic qualities.

“Cultural Interactions and Negotiations” is not surprisingly the longest and most challenging section, as it approaches incredibly complicated issues of cultural conflict and exchange (215). Russell Wallace provides personal accounts of collaborative processes between musicians. Dylan Robinson discusses his personal experiences of “power-laden” musical collaborations in Indigenous music and early Western music traditions (215). Klisala Harrison focuses on inner-city and urban youth of Indigenous descent engaging in theatre and activism, and in an interview with Gordon E. Smith, Walter Denny Jr. describes cultural interactions with the Catholic Church in the Mi’kmaw community of Eskasoni. Byron Dueck discusses musical individuation in the musical works of Chris Beach, a musician concerned with Aboriginal suicide in Manitoba. Whereas Marcia Ostashefski discusses histories of settlement, interaction and identity, using personal narratives and the musical production of Arnie Strynadka, a Ukrainian-Cree musician from Alberta to elucidate her point. Charity Marsh presents the many “places, spaces, and faces” of Hip Hop culture in Saskatchewan, as well as the discourses surrounding this genre (348), and finally, Véronique Audet examines trends of Innu popular music in Québec, as well as Aboriginal identity in la francophonie, in her work and interviews with Florent Vollant and Gilles Sioui (also in collaboration with Donna Larivière). This section unveils the varying possible forms of intercultural exchange in a contemporary Canadian context.

The editors of the anthology present intercultural exchange as a reality of Indigenous music in contemporary Canada. However, it is important to note the editors present Indigenous music in the contemporary Canadian context—acknowledging the effects of such a context—yet not necessarily as Canadian. The editors make this distinction carefully and delicately, engaging with comparable work in the field produced by other scholars. For example, within Elaine Keillor’s work, Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity, the author provides a survey of music in Canada, including the chapter, “Traditional Musical Expression of the First Peoples,” where she outlines various traditions among diverse groups across Canada.1 Keillor offers an informative historical survey of Indigenous traditions, yet does not discuss the delicate nature of the relation of Indigenous music and the Canadian context. She simply presents the facts, as was most likely her goal. One of the most striking and unique qualities of Echoes and Exchanges is the willingness of the editors to enhance this

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discussion and bring more complicated relationships to the table to explore the difficult yet important nuances within various indigenous traditions.

The contributors also approach this perceived type of intercultural exchange—regarding the appropriation of Indigenous musics (and by default, cultures) by Canadians—within the confines of their own chapters. Dylan Robinson critiques John Ralston Saul’s “sweeping and unsupported” statements that Canadian popular music is reminiscent of Indigenous music, and that much of Canadian culture is founded on First Nations principals (226). Robinson demonstrates a strong resistance to the synthesis of all cultures as one monolithic Canadian culture. This resistance exemplifies the undercurrent of conflict and debate throughout the entire anthology, an undercurrent clearly signalled to readers in the introductory passages.

Within the design of the anthology itself, intercultural exchange is a reality: collaboration and intercultural exchange take place between Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors as well as the editors during this 503-page discussion. Within the introduction, the editors are careful to frame their own “intercultural approaches.” Firstly, the editors do not neglect to mention the greater political issues facing Indigenous cultures and communities. Secondly, the editors provide core theoretical tenets for ensuing discussions. The editors make use of Robert Warrior’s “intellectual trade routes” that suggest that while intellectual trade is a two-way process where participants transform theories and ideas across cultural divides, such a dialogic process does not inhibit Native intellectual sovereignty.2 The editors also employ Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “the contact zone,” “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.”3 The editors clearly place the anthology within these discussions of intercultural approaches. It is through this framework that the anthology successfully pinpoints the subtlety of considering “Aboriginal Music” in and not as “Contemporary Canada”—a “contact zone” where “intellectual trade” takes place. These approaches also stir and maintain exciting internal debate as readers critically consider their roles in reading Echoes and Exchanges: the current “contact zone” where they are directly engaging in “intellectual trade” and confronting their own types of intercultural exchange.

As a discipline, ethnomusicology faces a number of challenges, and the anthology confronts these challenges in two ways. At its foundation, ethnomusicology deals with nagging questions surrounding musical meaning. As Timothy J. Cooley asserts, “musical meaning is often ambiguous or liminal, inviting ethnomusicologists


into a dialogue of multiple realities—a dialogue now shared by social scientists
endeavouring to understand other aspects of culture.”

Music, as abstract sound, has no
direct meaning. Within her anthology, *Music of the First Nations: Tradition and Innovation
in Native North America*, Tara Browner lists some of the various approaches
ethnomusicologists use to grapple with musical meaning—dialogic approaches,
intensive formalistic musical analysis, and fieldwork (among others).
The editors of *Echoes and Exchanges* confront questions of musical meaning through a system of
constant discussion and qualification of methods within introductory passages. Furthermore, the approaches taken by the various contributors accurately reflect the
diversity of approaches possible in the discussion of musical meanings, and thus
achieve a fair sense of Indigenous musical meanings in Canada.

Many of the contributors rely on fieldwork and ethnography as opposed to
formal analysis to portray these subjective meanings. Following H. J. Goodall’s words,
the editors and many contributors use “new” ethnographies, “creative narratives
shaped out of a writer’s personal experiences.”

Contributors also refer to Luke Eric Lassiter’s approach where researchers and subjects collaborate in the production of
ethnographic texts.

Most contributors to the anthology engage in both these forms of
ethnography, through the sharing of personal experiences, dialogues, and the constant
evaluation of their own methods and approaches. There is minimal use of the
traditional formalistic musical analysis employed by both Browner and Keillor in their
anthologies. The limited use of this type of approach successfully avoids the isolated
treatment of traditions outside of their social contexts.

The constant critical evaluation and qualification of concepts, methods, and
approaches is what best characterizes *Echoes and Exchanges*. While the importance of
these considerations are self-evident to the discussion of Indigenous music in Canada,
the generous amount of deliberation found within the text could pose a barrier to
scholars’ direct interaction with musical content. However, the anthology accomplishes
the greater goal of reuniting the discussion of music with essential critical concepts. Moreover, questions surrounding musical meaning should be in no way limited to
ethnomusicology. As Diamond points out in an earlier work, music as a whole is an

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4 Timothy J. Cooley, “Introduction,” in *Shadows in the Field New Perspectives for Fieldwork in


6 H. Lloyd Goodall, *Writing the New Ethnography* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers,

“academic discipline which has continued to give greater prominence to interpretations grounded in the nineteenth-century, Euro-centred belief in the autonomy of musical language.”  

Subsequently, many university-level music students remain unaccustomed to questions regarding their own discipline drawn from the field of critical theory, and continue to learn in formalist traditions. As the anthology is highly critical, its use in the classroom would challenge students to conceive of music of all traditions in critical terms. *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada: Echoes and Exchanges* is a tremendous step toward the study and discussion of Indigenous music in Canada so necessary today, as well as a highly effective tool for the development of musicology as a critical field overall.

**For Further Reading:**


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