

Folk and Ethnic Music in Illinois and the Midwest

Starved Rock State Park, Utica, July 13-18, 2003

Scholar: Paul Tyler, Old Town School of Folk Music

Course Syllabus

By now, most of the world's peoples—cultures, not whole populations—live in the Chicago area, and they brought their music with them, and probably made up some new stuff when got here. So we'll spend a lot of time talking about and listening to the vital music-making traditions found there. But other Midwestern precincts, rural and urban, will be heard from as well.

The most obvious ways to organize this global tour in the heartland would be according to history or geography. And on the first day, I'll summarize the history of immigration to the United States, and provide an overview of cultural areas, hoping it will help you fill some curricular needs.

I think there's a more interesting way to look at all the different occasions and situations and reasons for music-making. So I'm going to adapt a chart devised by my professor, Richard Dorson of the Indiana University Folklore Institute. Each day we'll look at a different kind of context in which communities of people make, use and enjoy their music traditions. This framework is, of course, only an analytical tool for understanding. Specific examples of music burst any boundaries we try to draw. But here they are, with just some suggestions on the kinds of folk or ethnic music we'll examine that day.

Monday	Civic contexts, historical understandings (nationalism, ethnic identity) Independence day, La Guignole (French Illinois), Mayan marimbas
Tuesday	Economic contexts, popular media (getting gigs, selling your records) Chicago Blues, Chicago Polka, bluegrass, Colombian <i>vallenato</i> , Salsa and Latin jazz, Arab singers, Muntu African Dancers, a Hindustani sitarist, Romany cimbalonists & violinists
Wednesday	Communal contexts, social gatherings (in-group) <i>El Gran Baile</i> (Tejano dance), Armenian <i>Kef</i> , Irish <i>ceili</i> , pow wow, church choirs, German beer gardens, Greek <i>rembetika</i> , tamburitzans (Slavic), Bohemian and Polish concertinists
Thursday	Domestic contexts, personal expression (family traditions, learning) early Dalarna fiddlers in Chicago and St. Paul (Swedish), Estonian zithers, Lithuanian folksongs, ballads from southern Illinois and Indiana and multicultural Wisconsin
Friday	Public contexts, presentational styles (your people on stage) Polish, Serbia, Mexican & c. folkloric dance groups, Korean drummers, fiddle contests, Mariachis, Chinese orchestra

Methods

Within the above framework, we'll listen to a lot of CDs. Discussion will focus on ideas about music and what it can mean and do in different performance events and social occasions. There will, of course, be much discussion about what makes a particular music sound a particular way, but I'll try to keep the course from getting bogged down in questions of a too technical nature. Learning about exotic instruments, however, is always stimulating.

Besides listening, there will be a Power Point presentation every day to provide visuals of musicians, instruments, dancers, costumes and performance contexts. Plus, some video tape will be shown.

And, TBA, the class will get to hear some live music.

Recommended Readings

From Lornell & Rasmussen, *Musics of Multicultural America*, the following chapters:

1. Music and Community in Multicultural America.
2. Czech American Polka Music in Wisconsin.
4. The Music of Arab Detroit: A Musical Mecca in the Midwest.
6. Mexican Mariachi Music: Made in the U.S.A.
8. Waila: The Social Dance Music of the Tohono O'odham.
9. Triangles, Squares, Circles, and Diamonds: The "Fasola Folk" and Their Singing Tradition.
10. The Memphis African American Sacred Quartet Community.
11. Sansei Voices in the Community: Japanese American Musicians in California.

Musics of Multicultural America

1st Edition

Kip Lornell - Smithsonian Institution

Anne Rasmussen - College of William and Mary

0028645855

348 pages Comb Binding 6 x 9 1/4

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This interdisciplinary text introduces the student to the diverse musical cultures that constitute America's musical landscape. Chapters cover twelve communities, from the West Indian steel drum bands of Brooklyn, to Mexican-American mariachi music.

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2. Czech American Polka Music in Wisconsin.
3. Klezmer Music: The First One Thousands Years.
4. The Music of Arab Detroit: A Musical Mecca in the Midwest.
5. "Pan Is We Ting": West Indian Steelbands in Brooklyn.
6. Mexican Mariachi Music: Made in the U.S.A.
7. Cultural Interaction in New Mexico as Illustrated in the Matachines Dance.
8. Waila: The Social Dance Music of the Tohono O'odham.
9. Triangles, Squares, Circles, and Diamonds: The "Fasola Folk" and Their Singin g Tradition.
10. The Memphis African American Sacred Quartet Community.
11. Sansei Voices in the Community: Japanese American Musicians in California.
12. Just being There: Making Asian American Space in the Recording Industry.
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