We should look at Zumwalt's book as a heuristic device that helps us to understand the past. Postmodernist approaches would shun the dichotomizing and categorizing of people into one camp or another; certainly the situation is not as simple as saying that anthropologists focus on people while literary scholars focus on texts. The world, and the people in it, are much too complicated for such neat labeling. Nor should people think that one academic approach is better than the other; both approaches contribute to our knowledge.

Zumwalt, if she teaches as well as she writes, is a very good teacher indeed. She presents the issues succinctly and clearly, and she does not assume that the reader has been in the field for 15 years. Here is just one example of her succinct and lucid explanations:

The literary folklorists adopted both an evolutionary and a devolutionary explanation for the origin of folklore. As Dundes explains in "The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory," while people were said to evolve, folklore was said to devolve or to degenerate: it passed from the higher to the lower classes [Dundes 1969a]. (103)

In two short sentences, she has not only clearly stated a complex idea, but she has clarified it and delivered a bibliographical source as well. The book is rich reading, outlining the intellectual genealogy of American folklore and delivering many interesting historical tidbits. Folklore teachers will want to use this book in their introductory theory classes, while doctoral students will want to memorize the book before their qualifying exams.


Reviewed by Johnson A.K. Njoku

It is not often that one comes across a book that successfully ties the history and development of folk music scholarship with contemporary concepts, issues, and shifts, and which treats varied folk musics of the world cultures within the rubric of folklore and ethnomusicology with subtle generalizations making sense to serious minds, scholars and advanced students in both fields. Bohlman has succeeded in avoiding the pitfall of many contemporary researchers and authors who narrowly discuss folksongs, especially song texts, as if they were never sung, or as congruent entities from the societies that own, perform, appreciate, or dislike them.

This is not just another book on folk music. It is unlike many books about given societies that begin with a long introduction that usually leads nowhere, and catalogs of folk music characteristics that say virtually nothing about the social basis of music. By contrast, this book has been written, it would seem,
as a series of articles. Each chapter is thoroughly professional in its research, organization, and presentation. It is the type of book that will stick around for an extended time. I strongly recommend this book to graduate students in folklore and/or ethnomusicology, especially those preparing for comprehensive or qualifying examinations.

The eighth chapter is, perhaps, the strongest part of the book. The reader would be well-advised, however, to understand "the modern world" in this chapter in particular, indeed the book as a whole, as the present, highly multicultural world where no culture (at least musically) is squeezed out of existence; instead, it is a world in which cultural interdependency has become a factor of musical change. Bohlman has raised the level of discussion on musical change evident in much folk music scholarship from a negative, hegemonic parochialism to a point at which change is to be considered as a dynamic and complex phenomenon. Again, I strongly recommend this book to both scholars and students in ethnomusicology, folklore, and adjacent disciplines.


Reviewed by Linda Kinsey Adams

This comprehensive index—essential for any serious folklorist—lists everything published from 1888 through 1987 in the Journal of American Folklore. The index includes not only (1) a chronological listing of every article, book review, note, announcement, and report published in the JAF's first century, but also (2) an author index, (3) a subject index, and (4) a title index, all of which are cross-referenced to the chronological listing. In addition, a chapter at the beginning of the volume traces the history of the editorship of the journal in conjunction with a history of the development of the discipline. Personal information about each editor is given as well as the direction the journal took under that editor's leadership.

Each of the 9,655 chronological listings gives the date, page number, title, author, editor, director, and/or performer, followed by classificatory terms and key words. These entries are numbered for easy cross-reference. A user can tell immediately that a particular entry is a book review by the "rb" attached to the entry's number.

The outstanding quality of the index is its usability. The first chapter clearly and succinctly explains how to use the volume. The clear organization is enhanced by the attractive typographic features which include boldface lead-ins to each of the chronological entries. The book has everything a bibliographer dreams of: excellent organization, comprehensiveness, authoritativeness, cross-