

simply add our expertise and energy to extant desires and activities. Put another way, we can find a better recorder than Bill Hendrickson's noisy model, a better archives than a dusty cassette box, a better stage than a potato hole.

By serving those who wait, we also enhance our emotional, intellectual, political, and occupational survival. Whether based in the academy, in a state agency, in a private non-profit organization, or in the ranks of the self-employed, public folklorists are as potentially disenfranchised and endangered as the cultures and people with whom we work. In our often paradoxical and Sisyphean efforts to conjure centers out of edges, to make margins meet mainstream, we are best sustained by the support, understanding, and critical appraisal of people like Bill Hendrickson. They are not concerned with the shifting hierarchies of disciplines or with which theories currently comprise the cutting edge. They are not convinced by arguments that "fine art" is any more fine or universal than their own. Nor do they buy the notion that a folklorist's work is trivial or always "fun." Because they are serious about what they do, they are serious about what we do. And by helping them, we help ourselves.

For Lack of a Prayer: A Call for Consultant Collaboration

Glenn Hinson, University of North Carolina

I smiled when the Heavenly Angels approached me at the concert's close. Their singing, as expected, had soared, filling the sanctuary with impassioned harmonies. And the congregation had certainly registered their approval. So I was puzzled when I saw the frowns on the singers' faces. Something was clearly amiss.

"Brother Hinson," Sister Johnson began, "we thank you for inviting us to sing on this program, but we'd be obliged if you didn't invite us to another program like this." Her tone conveyed a sense of gentle finality. I must have looked surprised because she added, "It's no reflection on you. It's just that this isn't right. At least not for us."

Before I could ask what hadn't been right, we were interrupted by other singers. When I turned back to the Heavenly Angels, they had gone.

I spent that evening mentally reviewing every detail of the program, wondering what had prompted the Heavenly Angels' reaction. The concert, sponsored by Philadelphia's International House, was part of a series celebrating local African-American artistry. We had programmed all the concerts in the performers' communities; this program—emceed by a Baptist deacon—had taken place at Philly's oldest African-American sanctuary. The more I thought about the evening, the less I understood Sister Johnson's words.

The next morning I called Sister Johnson. Her response to my question was tellingly succinct. "You didn't open the service with a prayer," she said. "So it

wasn't ever really a *service*. Instead, it was like a *concert*. No one gave thanks for God's Grace; no one asked the Lord to bless the service. And that's not what we're about. When we sing, we sing for God's glory! Not just for a performance."

A prayer? As I reflected on the gospel programs that I had attended, I realized that *every one* had opened with a prayer.

"But this," I thought to myself, "was different. This was a folklife program." Even as I thought this, however, I realized the arrogance of my assumptions. I knew the structure of gospel programs, but I had never really thought about their logic. Consequently, I had presumed that *my* logic—a logic of secular presentation that deftly separated performance from faith—would suffice. I had thus pulled together the artifacts of faith (church, deacon, and singers) and set them within a frame of my own construction. And I had expected the "concert" to "work."

It probably did for some. But it didn't for the Heavenly Angels. And it likely didn't work for other singers who simply refrained from voicing their concerns—perhaps in deference to our friendship and/or my authority as a folklorist and presenter. After that conversation with Sister Johnson, the program didn't work for me either.

The lesson is simple. Presentation without consultation and collaboration often yields misrepresentation and alienation. If I had asked the performers about program structure, if I had invited their input during the program's conceptualization, then I would not have made this mistake. And if I had not been so sure of myself—so certain that I knew the rules for "proper" programming—I would have thought to ask. Thanks to the Heavenly Angels, I know better now.

Traditions and Transitions in Acoma Pottery

*Claude Stephenson
New Mexico Arts*

Known also as "Sky City," Acoma is one of the more famous, if remote, of the New Mexico pueblos. It is renowned for its distinctive pottery. The origin of the Acoma people is disputed among archaeologists who commonly trace them, coincidentally via their pottery, variously to the Mesa Verde and Mimbres cultures, both of which produced black-on-white bichrome pottery.

During the early part of this century, largely through the impetus of the Indian Arts Fund and the Fred Harvey Corporation, each pueblo was designated as having its own unique style of pottery. Acoma pottery was categorized as a distinctive and intricate black-and-orange-on-white polychrome style. Through the years this pottery has evolved to become more and more intricate and dazzling, but it has still remained true to the established style.