

# BOOK REVIEWS

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Mary Jo Arnoldi. **Playing with Time: Art and Performance in Central Mali.** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. 260, photos, plates, tables, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Kinsey Katchka

Mary Jo Arnoldi's *Playing with Time: Art and Performance in Central Mali* is, in a word, dynamic. This recent publication on Malian youth association puppet masquerades provides an important study integrating key concerns in contemporary ethnography, including fluidity of history, practice, performance, and identity. Arnoldi investigates these concepts as they are manifested in the semiannual masquerades in Kirango, a community in the Segou region of Mali.

The idea of "play" suggested in the title defines youth theater, in which young men and women create an imaginary universe through which they explore and comment on individual and shared experiences. By drawing comparisons between local performances in Kirango and regional performances elsewhere in the Segou region, Arnoldi clearly illustrates how youth puppet theater acts as an "arena of artistic action and a site for the production of knowledge" (xiv). She also demonstrates how these performances construct identities (local, ethnic, regional, and national) through a synthesis of contemporary experience and historical memory.

Arnoldi divides her multi-faceted analysis of performances into two sections. First, she highlights youth association masquerade (*sogo bò*, also called *do bò*) as an artistic event and performance process. She examines local definitions of the masquerade and explores the relation of youth theater to other regional performance traditions, both historical and contemporary. Second, Arnoldi focuses on the production of meaning in *sogo bò* masquerade, examining how people selectively use artistic forms to interpret the past and construct contemporary knowledge. Arnoldi shows community beliefs and values as they shape and are shaped by the masquerade's expressive forms.

Arnoldi's analysis has been influenced by recent developments in the humanities and social sciences that "have refocused attention away from the isolated object or text" (xiv), instead placing them in the broader context of the

overall performance, shifting the focus from the puppet masks themselves to the contingent processes of time, change, and human agency and to the masquerade as aesthetic and social practice. Arnoldi stresses that the masquerade is a multi-media theatrical production, meaningful only when examined and experienced with the accompanying costume, dance, music, song, and audience.

Arnoldi states that the diversity of forms and characters apparent in puppet masquerades raises a valuable and "serious challenge to the still frequent pronouncements about 'traditional' African arts as static and conservative" (xi-xii). She confronts this challenge by including various types of data, incorporating personal experiences and dilemmas, photography, lyrics, and audience response for a more insightful understanding of the research process. In addition to the various data included within the text, Arnoldi provides useful addenda including a list of illustrations, insightful notes, an extensive glossary of Bamana terms, a masquerade list, and a bibliography.

By sharing the research process, Arnoldi affords a more dynamic and holistic experience for readers. Arnoldi's methodology, analytical approach, and synthesis will prove useful to scholars concerned with performance, historical memory, creative process, and cultural politics, regardless of their geographic and disciplinary concentrations.

Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, eds. **Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. 256, halftones, line drawings. \$35.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

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The idea for *Shadows in the Field* began at a conference titled "Fieldwork in Contemporary Ethnomusicology" which was intended to initiate "dialogue between ethnomusicology, anthropology, and other fields that involve fieldwork by addressing issues such as ethics, politics, gender, and relations with the people studied in contemporary fieldwork environments" (Barz and Cooley:vii). Using this conference as a model, the authors of *Shadows in the Field* examine their own approaches to ethnomusicological fieldwork, focusing particularly on postmodern, feminist, phenomenological, reflexive, and dialogic theories of the fieldwork experience. The authors do not approach this book as a "how-to" manual, but as a way of looking at fieldwork experiences and recognizing ethnographers' presences in the "field" and the "shadows" they cast on the people they study.

*Shadows in the Field* is divided into three sections: "Doing and Undoing Fieldwork," "Knowing and Being Known," and "The Ethnomusicological Past,