

step guide on how to deal with language problems, how to ask good questions in simple English, how to learn about translation problems (here from Khmer language to English) to raise awareness what kind of English the narrator will speak, how to prepare and handle the interview process, how to factor in time and follow up interviews to clarify misunderstandings, and how to listen to a “Firsthand Account of Evil and Trauma.” This is all well structured, well written, and easy to follow.

Again, if you look for a practical yet deeply sensitive and empathetic guidebook on how to do research in refugee communities, this book will be a valuable source and handbook.

Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich

Meredith, Sharon: *Tuk Music Tradition in Barbados*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015. 149 pp., CD-ROM. ISBN 978-1-4724-4027-3. Price: £ 48.00

Sharon Meredith’s “Tuk Music Tradition in Barbados” is an important contribution to academic knowledge about Barbados and about Barbadian music. Though the academic focus on Barbadian music is growing, it still remains quite small; many of the other territories of the region, particularly Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti but also Carriacou, the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, Dominica, garnering more attention. If we accept, as Kenneth Bilby says, that the Caribbean is a “musical region,” then the more work that fleshes out the musical variety in the region the better. Meredith’s work does just that: providing a solid examination of the distinctive nature of tuk – a traditional Barbadian music form and practice involving bass drum, kittle (snare), flute (penny whistle), and steel (often a triangle). As I outline below, though the book makes a very important contribution to recording and highlighting the traditional music of Barbados, this text might have been further enhanced by a closer consideration of what it means to discuss cultural artifacts in a former colony.

After an introduction that maps out Meredith’s introduction to and fascination with tuk each chapter explores different aspects of the musical practice and its significance to Barbadian culture. Chapter 2 provides a history of Barbados that is designed to quickly orient the reader to the island. Chapter 3 delves into the history and development of tuk and its relation to other, similar forms of music. The references made to other, similar forms of music are useful and necessary. They are useful because they locate Barbadian musical practices within the larger sphere of African and African diasporic music and such a broad level focus is key to highlighting the continuities across the Black Atlantic. The references are also necessary because, as the writer points out, there is not a large amount of written work on tuk. Thus, along with her interviews, Meredith must build her narrative by referencing other musical practices for which there is already some historical record. As she suggests, this is one of the challenges with undertaking research in former colonies where the aesthetic practices of the majority of the population are deemed unworthy of notice by the colonial elites. The work that she does here, therefore, is vitally

important in providing a record of tuk for future scholars, musicians, and fans of the music. Chapter 4 is a close examination of the musical elements, instrumentation, and performance practices. It would have, perhaps been nice to hear even more information and even more directly from Wayne “Poonka” Willock, who, as Meredith points out, is generally accepted to be the leading contemporary advocate of tuk. Though he is an important source for the book, his voice remains somewhat muted. Chapter 5 lists spaces in which tuk has been, and/or continues to be, performed. Chapter 6 provides an introduction to the Landship, a unique feature of Barbadian culture that is both a savings society and an artistic practice – tuk serves as the musical “engine” for Landship performances and maneuvers. In Chapter 7 Meredith explores some of the changing meanings that have been articulated to tuk as Barbadians have sought to craft a post-independence national identity. Finally, Meredith has a concluding chapter that reiterates some of the key arguments made within the text.

From the above it should be apparent that this is a solid piece of research, that draws on multiple, important sources. Meredith points out that there is limited documentation on tuk, but this book draws together much of the writing that exists and fleshes it out with important analyses of performances, and with interviews of a variety of Barbadians and different performers of tuk. Nevertheless, there are a few moments in the text where the theoretical work in the book could have been stronger in permitting a more nuanced examination of the ways in which Barbadians think about and talk about tuk. Though she acknowledges that contemporary attitudes to tuk have changed somewhat as tuk has been made part of the nationalist project within the island, Meredith’s book makes a consistent argument that Barbadians are embarrassed and ashamed of tuk. She presents some evidence of this by referencing comments from *some* informants. Where this could have been made a little more nuanced, however, is in the theoretical work on what it means to be a colonial society and the impacts that a colonial past has on a postcolonial present. I am not suggesting that this is an easy matter to address. The ethnographic project must rely, as does this text, on the meaning-making practice of those who are part of the culture. Still, that attention to meaning-making must tussle with the question of layers of meaning.

Still, as I have already suggested, “Tuk Music Tradition in Barbados,” adds to the growing body of work on Barbadian music. Together with work by Curwen Best and other research on tuk that is on the horizon it looks like tuk is finally getting the academic attention that it deserves. Additionally, as a slim, clearly outlined, volume this book also has the advantage that it provides undergraduate and graduate students with a useful resource helping them explore some key practices of conducting ethnographic research. The book will be of particular interest to those in Caribbean studies, ethnomusicology, and anthropology.

Susan Harewood