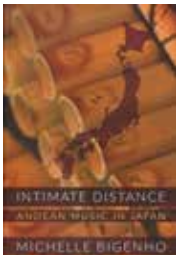


Japan



Michelle Bigenho, *Intimate Distance: Andean Music in Japan*

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. 232 pages, 18 illustrations. Cloth, \$79.95; paperback, \$22.95. ISBN 978-0-8223-5220-4 (cloth); 978-0-8223-5235-8 (paperback).

ONE MIGHT think that *Intimate Distance: Andean Music in Japan* is a monograph on musical adoption and localization along the lines of the phenomenon of western music in Japan (GALLIANO 2002), jazz in Japan (ATKINS 2001), or reggae in Japan (STERLING 2010), to give just three examples in a world of rapid global flows and complex musical identities. However, with this book, Michelle Bigenho offers a perspective that explores not only such localization and adoption from different locations, but also an ethnography of touring Bolivian musicians

to Japan. For Bigenho, central to such modern-day social and musical movement are the ways that intimacy is produced between two cultures that are geographically distant.

The book is structured with seven chapters. The main discussion is found in chapters 2 to 6, which explore topics such as indigeneity, otherness, work, value, intimate distance, and *gringa* (female foreigner in Latin America). In chapter 1, the author outlines her role in the book: author and subject in terms of being a performer in the Bolivian musical band, *Música de Maestros* (Music of the Masters), that tours in Japan. For the author, Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies at Hampshire College, the book's main aim is to comprehend what it means to play music that "is a mere crumb in a musical smorgasbord" (12) of consumed global styles in Japan that is not necessarily one's own, for Bolivians, Japanese, or the author: "that pull of desire toward difference and the contrasting distance that one still maintains while taking on the cultural trappings of an Other, about the multiple and contrasting stories of *intimate distance*" (2).

Bigenho includes much discussion on the theme of indigeneity throughout the book. Noting that 62 percent of Bolivians claim to be indigenous, the author explores links between notions of indigenous between Japan and this South American nation. However, the subject of indigeneity is given special attention in chapter 2. Particular regard is given to the idea that through a "Bolivian-Japanese nexus of Andean music" where music "is mediated through Western frameworks," "both Bolivians and Japanese represent cases of non-indigenous people staging Bolivian indigeneity" (34). In this chapter there is a discussion of some of the pathways that Andean music has taken to reach Japan, including Simon and Garfunkel's borrowing of "El condor pasa" in the 1960s. Bigenho explores indigeneity from many angles, such as in Bolivia and as it is staged in Japan.

The author's ethnographic account of touring in Japan is continued in chapters 3 and 4 with a discussion of work and value in performing musical otherness, which includes intimate distance through transnational exchanges and a context of a flourishing musical economy where difference is at the core (albeit with Andean music comprising just a fragment of this). Chapter 4 provides a fascinating account of how a Japanese enthusiast of Bolivian music came to be so engaged with the field that they eventually joined a band in Bolivia, recording there and in Japan. Here, the author explores the notion of identity, both in Bolivia and in Japan.

Chapter 5 is about intimate distance—"the way both Japanese and Bolivians claimed closeness with and distance from the others with whom they engaged in a musical intersection of transnational music performance" (123). The discussion of cultural flows and identity in the chapter is extremely interesting and offers the reader a glimpse into some of the complexities of a micro music in Japan on the one hand, yet at the same time having much meaning and significance that offers a case study on aspects of transnationalism.

The last main chapter before the conclusion offers a study of *gringa* in Japan, reflecting on the author's fieldwork and experience in the study. This chapter mixes theory, ethnography, and reflection, and serves as a case study on what the author calls "inter-area ethnography" (166).

Intimate Distance is very much an exploration in the anthropology of music. The ethnography offered by the author includes a multidimensional approach of participant observation as a performer with study of different locations, society, and culture in Japan and Bolivia, as well as a reflexive analytical research method that entwines the text within many personal perspectives on the subject matter. The book includes some useful black and white photographs, as well as endnotes, bibliography, and index. Overall, Bigenho has produced an intriguing study in musical ethnography that takes the field to new heights in the contemporary era. It will be of interest to ethnomusicologists, cultural anthropologists, and those with an interest in Japan and/or Bolivia more broadly.

REFERENCES

- ATKINS, E. Taylor
 2001 *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- GALLIANO, Luciana
 2002 *Yōgaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century*. London: The Scarecrow Press.
- STERLING, Marvin D.
 2010 *Babylon East: Performing Dancehall, Roots Reggae, and Rastafari in Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Henry Johnson
University of Otago, New Zealand