

a strong one. While women are free to voice their frustrations through song, by and large this is within the context of women's gatherings, i.e. those with the power do not ever encounter it.

Overall these two books provide fascinating reading. They will interest scholars of music, sociology, African studies, feminism and perhaps even religion (especially those chapters in volume two dealing with the uneasy relationship between Islam and the local spirit religions). I commend the scholars for giving the women of the Sahel an international voice through these books, and I hope it will encourage other scholars to build on this valuable research.

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**Taarab Music in Zanzibar in the Twentieth Century: A Story of 'Old is Gold' and Flying Spirit.** Janet Topp Fargion. 2014. Surrey: Ashgate. 10 b & w figures, 1 table, index, 250pp.

This book provides an overview of *taarab* music in Zanzibar during three different historical and political periods: during the Arab-speaking aristocracy 1870–1963; postcolonial nationalism under Nyerere from 1964–1985; and the post-Nyerere era and the beginning of neoliberal policies on the island from 1985–2010. Through the historical contextualization of *taarab* in Zanzibar, the author demonstrates the origins of this musical style in Egypt in the 1870s and how, during the twentieth century, *taarab* is influenced by other musical forms from the Arabian Peninsula, India and even local Zanzibari rhythms. Fargion's research on *taarab* music in Zanzibar was done for her doctoral thesis during 1989–1990. She revisited this ethnography in the mid-2000s by attending various cultural events in Zanzibar and examining how *taarab* music has developed in the last twenty-five years. As a result, this book is divided into four parts, the last part of which is the conclusions based on her post-2000 research.

Although Fargion emphasizes the predominant role of women in the development of *taarab* music, she also offers an extensive analysis of how the religious, political and social conditions in Zanzibar affect *taarab* music in the historical periods mentioned above. In order to understand the evolution of *taarab* music from its origins, the author provides translations of *taarab* songs, music transcriptions, interview extracts and photographs. Further, Fargion uses Swahili words and local musical terms in relation to the musical concepts found in *taarab* music which enhances the study of the specific characteristics of *taarab* as a musical form.

In the first part of the book, Fargion points out the importance of the “multilayered evolution” of *taarab* in relation to how this musical style is influenced by different social contexts and external cultural contacts with India and the Arab Peninsula (1). She examines the origins of orchestral *taarab* in relation to its band format known as *takht* in Egypt and its instrumentation based on *ud* (plucked lute), *qanun* (zither), *nay* (flute), *riqq* (round frame drum) and violin.

Fargion explains her initial interest in *taarab* music as growing out of her general interest in the piano accordion in Africa (8). Her discovery of *taarab* music was through a vinyl record by John Storm Roberts released in the 1960s and from Hugh Tracey's recordings at the International Library of African Music (ILAM) made in the early 1950s. Although Fargion's idea was to research *taarab* music in several areas of Eastern Africa, she decided to focus on *taarab* in Zanzibar in order to provide specific research of this musical style in this particular area. Fargion pays homage to Mwalimu Idi Farhan as one of her mentors in *taarab* music explaining how Farhan contributed to *taarab* music in Zanzibar and, in general, to the cultural activities of the island (12-13).

The second part of the book concentrates on the study of the evolution of *taarab* music in Zanzibar during the twentieth century. Fargion analyses the origins of orchestral *taarab* in Zanzibar as "old is gold" because it was performed for the aristocracy and also the origins of *kidumbak*, which is a more percussive form of *taarab* performed by women's associations (*lelemamas*) that sang for themselves with percussive instruments. Fargion goes on to discuss the female singer Sitibinti Saad who was the first artist to popularize *taarab* through her performances and recordings abroad (mainly in Bombay) from the 1920s to the 1950s. Saad also remains a main figure of orchestral *taarab* because she was the first *taarab* artist to sing in Swahili about peoples' lives before independence in 1964. As a case in point, after independence, *taarab* underwent a complete de-Arabisation and the musical style became politicized through the singing of songs based on nationalism.

As part of the musical development of *taarab* during the twentieth century, Fargion also examines the origin and development of *kidumbak* as a new form of *taarab* sung in Swahili and accessible to non-aristocratic Zanzibar, unlike orchestral *taarab*, which was performed for the aristocracy before independence. The author describes some of the *wanawake* bands in Zanzibar that started as *lelemamas* in which women sang in Swahili for the general public; these bands later became orchestral *taarab* ensembles with female singers such as Royal Air Force and Royal Navy bands. Fargion also examines the importance of the social clubs, such as Sahibal-Ari and Banati al-Khairiyah, where these female bands developed their music (133).

The second section of the book focuses on the participation of women in *taarab* music since the 1920s. In particular, it concentrates on the audiences of *taarab* performances in Zanzibar and how the different forms of *taarab* provide different experiences in the historical periods examined in this book. As previously mentioned, orchestral *taarab* or "old is gold" was more popular than *kidumbak* before independence and meant to be performed for the male aristocracy. However, after independence "*kidumbak* became more popular as an economic and desirable choice" than orchestral *taarab* (144). In addition, *kidumbak* allowed people to dance and did not have a dress code like orchestral *taarab* where people are expected to wear expensive dress in order to show their social status. In the making of *kidumbak* during the postcolonial era, women also played an important role as poets. The rivalry of women's *kidumbak* groups through poetry also emerged. This type of competitive

poetry is known as *mpasho* (150). In general, in *kidumbak*, poetry is rich in proverbs and rhymes, however, *mpasho* is meant to be improvised, and as an extension of the lyrics by insulting or undermining other *kidumbak* bands (151). Fargion gives an example of two bands using *mpasho*—Nuru El-Uyun and the Royal Air Force—in which the level of insults becomes clear through the songs (152). Fargion's musical analysis of *kidumbak* also includes the uses of local rhythms by female musicians such as *pachaka* or *unyago* (160).

In the third part of the book, Fargion introduces men's negative attitudes toward *mpasho* as found in the belief that men are the keepers of orchestral and aristocratic *taarab* in its Arab form without using local rhythms or dancing. Fargion's research in 1990 established that men did not facilitate the development of *kidumbak* but that men rather were guilty of confiscating instruments, asking for high economic payment for the use of rooms for rehearsal and trying to "persuade women to join orchestral clubs" (163). Finally, the author analyses a new form of *kidumbak* known as *rusha roho*, predominantly performed with keyboards and electronic music and how *rusha roho* attempts to adapt *kidumbak* to a new commodified form for the youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The final part of the book discusses the professionalisation of *taarab* music in Zanzibar and the incorporation of this musical style into the global market through music festivals in Zanzibar and commercial *taarab* recordings by record labels. During Fargion's visits to Zanzibar from 2005 to 2007, she observed that the appearance of international festivals on the island provided a positive platform for Zanzibari culture; however, she also states that the popularity of *taarab*, *kidumbak* or *rusha roho* were replaced by the influence of other global musical styles such as *bongo flewa* (Tanzanian hip hop music). Fargion also highlights the importance of women in the continuum of *taarab* music especially through their introduction of local rhythms into *kidumbak* (201). As a result, Fargion suggests, women are predominantly responsible for the modernization of *taarab*. In addition, women play an important role in *kidumbak* by participating as poets, composers and primary consumers after independence (4). Further, she emphasises the role of the youth, through the emergence of *rusha roho* in the modernisation of *taarab*. The book concludes by outlining the historical development of *taarab* first by the male aristocracy and female singers during early orchestral *taarab* in the colonial period; Zanzibari women through *kidumbak* during the colonial and postcolonial period; and by the youth through the creation of *rusha roho* in the 2000 era.

In general, this book offers a specific historical and ethnomusicological view of the continuum of *taarab* in Zanzibar. Fargion offers a valuable contextualisation of the development of *taarab* over a period of one hundred years. Her descriptions of the different aspects of *taarab* during the colonial and postcolonial periods provides a clear understanding of how a musical culture reflects certain social changes, such as the singing of songs about love in Zanzibari *taarab* to singing nationalist lyrics after independence. Fargion also examines the musical influences from Egypt and the Arab

Peninsula and Hindustani music on *taarab*. As a result, this book provides substantial information for the study of musical and cultural convergence in the development of *taarab*. The awareness of how *taarab* is inter-related with other musical styles contributes to an awareness of how Zanzibari people have interacted with external agents in the last century. Fargion's book is a valuable in-depth exploration of the cultural, social, political and musical life in Zanzibar through the history of the development of *taarab* on the island during the 20th century.

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**Music and Social Change in South Africa: Maskanda Past and Present.** Kathryn Olsen. 2014. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 10 tables, 18 figures, index, 222pp.

This book offers an extensive analysis of maskanda music by providing a rich overview of this Zulu musical style during the apartheid and post-apartheid periods. In particular, Olsen provides evidence of how maskanda music has historically been a means of tracking social change through its narration of the lives of the Zulu community in the above historical contexts. The book contains musical transcriptions, translations of maskanda lyrics into English and the author's research material from interviews with musicians.

Olsen researched maskanda music extensively during the period 1999-2009. In the prologue, she narrates that the first time she encountered maskanda music was in 1999 during her time as an undergraduate music student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban (xii). With regard to the contextualization of maskanda in post-apartheid South Africa, Olsen offers a self-reflexivity on her identity as a white South African woman from Durban researching maskanda music. For example, the author reports that her interaction with Zulu women was more egalitarian than with Zulu men by saying that "her whiteness and economic privilege often appeared to be less significant" with women (xiii). Thus, Olsen brings her own experience and class identity into her research and tells readers how it facilitated her interaction with Zulu artists, specifically with Zulu women. Although Olsen also addresses that "the researcher reality cannot be substituted for that of the musicians" (3) and says she tries to "naturalise differences rather than using them" to construct power relations (187). For Olsen, this type of naturalization of her differences between her social reality and that of the maskanda musicians leads to a more specific study of the music and its social context.

Olsen's book is organised into six chapters. In the first chapter, she provides her theoretical framework and research methodology. Olsen also offers a brief history of maskanda music and how it reflects social changes in the Zulu community since the 1950s. However, Olsen criticizes the concept of social change as being highly politicised in South Africa by the main political parties. As a result, social change