

19-1-0030

Brill de Ramirez, Susan Berry; Lucero, Evelina Zuni; and Simon J. Ortiz, eds. *A Poetic Legacy of Indigenous Continuance*. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2009. 440 pp. ISBN 978-0-8263-3988-1, \$27.95 (pb).

Simon Ortiz, Acoma Pueblo poet, is one of the most important living indigenous writers. His splendid writing has set a standard for understanding American Indian issues: land, language, and community. This new collection of critical essays, edited by Brill de Ramirez and Lucero (Isleta/Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo), is an important contribution to critical conversations about Ortiz's significance. The book publication complements an issue of *Studies in American Indian Literatures* (Winter 2004) devoted to Ortiz and repeats some of the articles included there.

The volume is divided into an introduction with three selections by Lucero and Brill de Ramirez, and three separate sections: Essays by and Interviews with Ortiz; Short Creative Nonfiction Essays by Native Women Writers and Scholars; and Critical Essays. The authors of these works include prominent Native voices such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Joy Harjo, Laura Tohe, Kimberley Blaeser, Geary Hobson, and Gwen Westerman, and emerging scholars such as Debbie Reese and Elizabeth Archuleta. The thoughtful epilogue is by Robert Warrior.

The scope of the writings includes Ortiz's language, poetry, essays, and non-fiction—and his humanity. Most important is Ortiz's own voice. This edition is essential for anyone studying the works of Simon Ortiz.

P. Jane Hafen
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19-1-0031

Harris, Trudier. *The Scary Mason-Dixon Line: African American Writers and the South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2009. 248 pp. ISBN 978-0-8071-3395-8, \$37.50.

Preeminent scholar of African-American culture and literature, Harris makes the complex argument that while you may take the African-American writer out of the South, you cannot take the South out of the African-American writer. This is not a simplistic maxim but a critical adage. Harris considers an extensive range of twentieth-century African-American writers and demonstrates, with mesmerizing consistency, the presence of not only geographical references but also the imagery of the American South as it might have been experienced by those who actually lived through the days of enslavement and Jim Crow in works written by those who did not.

In response to Langston Hughes's famous words, Harris argues in the introduction that race is not the mountain that African-American writers must climb in order to become "free within themselves" (13). Rather, it is "The South" that is the mountain, and that "[c]omplete identity as an African American Writer seems to come only after a confrontation with black history and American history as represented by and in the South" (16). The chapters that follow are, as one would expect, insightful and rivet-

ing reading. This is a must read for all teachers of multicultural American literatures.

Leslie Antonette
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Visual and Performing Arts

19-1-0032

Chana, Leonard F; Lobo, Susan; and Chana, Barbara. *The Sweet Smell of Home: The Life and Art of Leonard F. Chana*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2009. 176 pp. Illus. by Leonard F. Chana. ISBN 978-0-8165-2818-9, \$40.00 (cl); 978-0-8165-2819-6, \$21.95 (pb).

Thom, Ian M. *Challenging Traditions: Contemporary First Nations Art of the Northwest Coast*. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2009. 176 pp. Illus. ISBN 978-0-295-98919-8, \$65.00.

These two new and delightful books on Native American/First Nations (from the United States and Canada) artists and the art they create are sure to change and challenge your perceptions of what their art is and where it is going.

Challenging Traditions: Contemporary First Nations Art of the Northwest Coast is a beautiful collection of essays about 40 of the most accomplished Northwest Coast artists (men and women) working today. Thom, a senior curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery, interviewed all the artists portrayed in the book and discusses their history, artistic background, career, and mentors, who they have worked with, and how they create their art. The book is filled with color images of at least two pieces of art per artist, which range in medium from masks to woven spruce root hats to abstract painting to metal sculpture to drums and bentwood boxes. What is clearly evident in all the portraits is that these artists are melding traditional ideas and images with contemporary materials, ideas, and techniques. They are creating something new, something not seen before, and creating some incredibly beautiful and moving pieces of art in the process.

The second book, *The Sweet Smell of Home: The Life and Art of Leonard F. Chana* is an autobiography about the self-taught Tohono O'odham artist. Told through oral interviews of Chana to anthropologist Susan Lobo before his death, we learn about Chana and his art from his very unique point of view. We read about his life and growing up on the reservation in Arizona, attending the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, his personal struggles with alcoholism, his family and friends, his artistic influences, and how he became an artist known for his stippling (pen and ink drawings that use dots instead of lines) drawings and paintings of the O'odham and Sonoran Desert lifestyle. A very modest man, Chana discusses the background of different pieces of art, how he created them, and how they are filled with traditional Tohono

O'odham imagery as well as "messages of healing, recovery, and hope" (xii). While Chana never had a formal show of his art—he was too busy selling it—his art was seen by countless people via the posters he created for many institutions, like the Community Health Department of the Tohono O'odham Nation and The International Indian Treaty Council. The book is filled with black-and-white and color photographs of Chana's remarkable art on posters, canvas, pottery, and even a gourd rattle.

These two excellent books are a welcome addition to any library collection of Native American/First Nations artists and their art and are also a welcome addition to collections that focus on contemporary Canadian and American culture. Highly recommended.

Melissa Aho
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19-1-0033

Collins, John. *Fela: Kalakuta Notes*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: KIT Publishers, 2009. 160 pp. Illus. with photos by Jak Kilby, Rico D'Rozario, and Thierry Secretan. ISBN 978-906-832748-9, \$29.95 (pb).

Fela: Kalakuta Notes contends that Fela Kuti was both the originator of the particularly unique West African music—Afrobeat—and separately, as opposed to other famous protest singers of the twentieth century, was more forward in his attacks, singling out specific government figures and agencies in open confrontation in his music and in his life. The many recollections from friends and fellow musicians within the West African scene, as well as the author's own recollections, support the legend of a rabble-rousing, offensive Fela Kuti.

Fela's lyrics, which are included throughout the book, stand for themselves as direct thrashings against the establishment in his own country, Nigeria, as well as elsewhere in Africa. Stories of Fela's promiscuity, the ease with which he and his crowd resorted to blows, and his general disregard for assumed standards of behavior represent to the author a living refusal of colonialism and European social mores.

While Collins's work adds to the legend of Fela, the sheer absence of editing and the author's coarse writing, poorly supported arguments, and seeming self-promotion are hard to overlook. The fantastic stories of Fela's life and the one independent musical analysis of the uniqueness of Fela's music are this work's saving graces.

Daniel Kamienski
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19-1-0034

Fox, John Hartley. *King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records*. Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009. 280 pp. Series: Music in American Life. ISBN 978-0-252-03468-8, \$29.95.

King Records was a small independent record company based in

Cincinnati, Ohio, which housed a mélange of impressive talent from the mid-1940s through the late 1960s, when it was acquired by Starday Records. What makes King a standout operation and well worth its place in popular American music history is its interracial list of artists, ranging from White country/bluegrass performers such as the Stanley Brothers and Grandpa Jones to great Black artists such as James Brown, Redd Foxx, and Johnny "Guitar" Watson.

Fox is the authority on this label, having produced an NPR documentary on it in the 1980s, and he provides just enough detail to keep the reader's interest without bogging him down. Some good black-and-white photos accompany the text, along with a useful secondary bibliography, but a discography of even limited length would have greatly enhanced the overall work. A fine acquisition for any collection interested in a comprehensive history of popular music in the United States.

Anthony J. Adam
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19-1-0035

Ragland, Cathy. *Música Norteña: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation Between Nations*. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2009. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-59213-747-3, \$27.95.

Ragland looks to define Norteña as *the* authentic music of Mexican migrants throughout a Mexican diaspora. To support her thesis, she traces the history of the northern Mexican musical tradition to its present-day inception and establishes the *corrido*, or a sung narrative ballad, as its definitive aspect. Building on others' analysis of the *corrido*, Ragland demonstrates the relationship between the historical and modern incarnations mostly through lyrical form and content focusing on the borderland, migration, and celebrated banditry.

Émigrés' experiences from the nineteenth century through the Bracero program as well as the historically exalted exploits of revolutionaries and border-raiders like Pancho Villa are compared to discussions of modern immigrants and drug-traffickers. Ragland establishes further its relation to migration within a Mexican diaspora by differentiating Norteña from a more Americanized *música tejana*. The music of *Tejanos*, or assimilated Texas Americans of Mexican descent, is to the author less traditional in its arrangement and instrumentation, and lacks a uniquely Mexican political consciousness. While the historical aspects of her work beg for more extensive referencing, her musical analysis and association of the *corrido* with Norteña are clear and concise and represent an informative look at a music underrepresented in the literature.

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Biography/Autobiography

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