

musicology.” While it is regretful that this statement continues to be true, growing interest in eastern Christianity is bound to change the current state of knowledge on Coptic chant and neighbouring musics.

TALA JARJOUR

Kuwait: Sea Songs of the Arabian Gulf: Hamid Bin Hussein Sea Band.

2014. Music of the Earth. Multicultural Media MCM3051. Recorded, annotated, and produced by Lisa Urkevich. 32-page booklet with notes in English. Colour and b/w photographs, musical notations, map, glossary. CD, 11 tracks (55:46).

Despite the end of millinery pearl fishing activity some eight decades ago, the performance of sea songs has persisted as one of the richest and most amazing musical repertoires of the Gulf Coast and the Arab world in general. The two components of sea songs—work and leisure songs—in their old context were performed separately, as befitted their differing functions and venues. Distinctions were reflected in their suite structure, in the body movements, and in the differing number of musical instruments (more in the onshore leisure performances). With the end of pearl fishing, the two complementary repertoires appear side by side in the same leisure performance space, transmitted as reminiscence of older times and as a transnational musical expression of the region’s culture.

The present CD and accompanying text are welcome reminders that the venerated sea song traditions of the pearl fishers are still alive in the upper Gulf region, supported by a considerable number of devotees, specialists, and amateurs. With the exception of two examples of unknown origin from the 1960s and 1970s, Professor Urkevich’s recordings feature a selection of work and leisure songs performed *in situ* between 2006 and 2012 by the Hamid bin Hussein family ensemble, known since the 1940s—a time when the group’s members were still in contact with pearl divers. For generations, family members continued to perform regularly in their *diwaniyya* (meeting place) for their own pleasure and that of Kuwaitis. Their long devotion to this art led them to become the official state ensemble representing Kuwait abroad. Above all, Lisa Urkevich’s work fills in a large gap in our knowledge about current Kuwaiti performances of this art, as compared to the better known Bahraini and Qatari traditions.

Another valuable aspect of this CD, besides the performance of traditional sea songs, with their complex rhythmically interlocking hand-claps and drone-like humming as performed in Kuwait today, there are passages from other musical traditions known in the Gulf, such as the oboe of Afro-Arab traditions,

the classical Arab genre *al sawt*, or even the *khashabba* and the urban song *beste* from southern Iraq. It would be worth examining this interesting evolution in the performance of sea arts and whether it has become a regular part of the performances in other Gulf countries with sea traditions.

SCHEHEREZADE HASSAN

EAST ASIA

Corée: *L'art du Sanjo de Cheolbyeongeum* / Korea: *The Art of the Cheolbyeongeum Sanjo*. 2015. INEDIT. Maison des Cultures du Monde W 260152. Engineered by Jo Deundeun. Annotated by Yu Kyung-hwa, Kim Hae-sook and Pierre Bois. Produced by Kim Sun-kook. 28-page booklet with notes in French and English. French translation by Kim Youn-sil, Han Yumi, and Hervé Péjaudier. English translation by Frank Kane. Colour photographs, musical notations. CD, 5 tracks (45:14).

Corée: *L'art du Sinawi* / Korea: *The Art of Sinawi*. 2015. INEDIT. Maison des Cultures du Monde W 260153. Engineered by Oh Young-hun. Annotated by Kim Hae-sook, Kim Young-gil, Ahn Sung-woo, Kim Sun-kook, Yu Kyung-hwa, and Pierre Bois. Produced by Kim Sun-kook. 24-page booklet with notes in French and English. French translation by Kim Youn-sil. English translation by Frank Kane. Colour photographs, illustrations. CD, 11 tracks (62:36).

These two CDs continue a series on Korean music produced by the Maison des Cultures du Monde. According to its website, their series “passionately promotes endangered or unknown world musical heritage, along with artists seeking to preserve individual cultures.” Neither *sanjo* nor *sinawi* can be considered endangered, though, as they form core repertoire for musicians learning traditional instruments in South Korea; still, both of these releases provide a unique viewpoint on better-known Korean musical genres.

Cheolbyeongeum sanjo is a little-known branch of the Korean folk-art genre *sanjo*, which moves through a series of movements, gradually increasing in speed, and is accompanied by an hourglass drum, the *janggu*. Established in its current form in the late nineteenth century for the *gayageum* twelve-stringed zither, *sanjo* has since been adapted to a wide variety of instruments; here it is adapted to an instrument reportedly developed in the 1940s as the Korean equivalent of the Hawaiian guitar by Kim Yeongcheol, who also founded *sanjo* for his instrument. Played by Yu Kyung-hwa, this CD showcases a complete version of this lineage’s style (of which Yu is currently the best-known proponent), giving a clear picture of the instrument’s unique sound; however, *chuimsae*, the shouts of encouragement customarily given in *sanjo* performance by the accompanying drummer, sadly