

Jonathan Dueck is Assistant Professor of Writing at The George Washington University. He previously taught at Duke University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Alberta. His music research explores musical practice in affinity groups—North American religions, and sporting communities. He is co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Music and World Christianities* (forthcoming), and has published articles in *Ethnomusicology*, the *Journal of American Folklore*, and *Popular Music and Society*.



Kidula, Jean Ngoya. *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. xx, 290 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-00667-7.

Sherinian, Zoe C. *Tamil Folk Music as Dalit Liberation Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014. 344 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-00233-4.

Jean Kidula's study of musical genres and practice among the Logooli of Kenya, and Zoe Sherinian's study of the theology-through-the-music of Dalit Christians of South India are welcome contributions to the ethnomusicological and anthropological study of Christianity. Both authors move these fields forward through their long-term and bidirectional engagement with Christians in the global South. Through close attention to musical practice (rituals, key roles, transmission and creation, adaptation processes) and the materials of music (songs, texts, instruments), both engage issues of cultural adaptation, ownership, power, and identity for Christian communities. Both have much to interest scholars and students in qualitative disciplines focused on religion, identity, gender, musical creativity and composition, studies of the individual, and of course scholars and students working on Christianity and the geographical areas of the studies (East Africa and South India).

Significant, too, is the fact that both books have been a long time in coming, covering, for Kidula, research that began in the mid-1980s, and for Sherinian, fieldwork beginning in the early 1990s. Several volumes engaging Christianity within ethnomusicology have recently appeared, or are currently in press (see, for example, Ingalls, Landau, and Wagner 2013; Engelhardt 2014; Reily and Dueck forthcoming). Kidula mentions the reticence of ethnomusicologists to write about Christian groups (2), and Sherinian places herself critically and carefully as someone aligned with Dalit priorities in liberation theology but not with activities of conservative and evangelical Protestants, particularly proselytization (xiv–xvi). Given the relative dearth of book-length studies focused on Christian groups in ethnomusicology's core literature (with, of course, some notable exceptions, including Reily 2002; Lange 2003; Muller 1999; Barz 2003; Titon 1988; and to some extent Friedson 1996; Miller 2008; Berliner 1978), Sherinian's and Kidula's volumes are part of a welcome opening of the field to study of and within Christian communities.

Kidula aims to consider "the intersection of religion, music, and identity since the end of the nineteenth century in Africa" through the case of Logooli music—an ambitious task for which Kidula, who grew up in this community and pursued formal study in it over a thirty-year period, is unusually well suited. Her study



approaches this task primarily through the lens of musical genres, exploring the history of a set of Logooli genres particularly through biographies of missionaries, composers, and hymnal compilers, and through close and nuanced musical and performance analysis of many songs within each genre.

Kidula's book is gentle in its argument, presenting a real wealth of data and preserving the complexities she finds there; a central theme, however, is the agency of Logooli musicians and composers in selecting, adapting, and newly creating musical and cultural practices from both the Euro-colonial and missionary power structure and the longer Logooli tradition. It is there that Kidula's story ends, reflecting that the women singers (including her mother) whom she visited over twenty years had "invigorated their religious beliefs. . . . They had also inscribed, crystallized, and archived their identity" (233).

Kidula's materials therefore span a wide variety of sources, covering a long period of time: she draws on ethnographic fieldnotes, recordings, and interviews with singers, songleaders, and composers in the Logooli community. Kidula also draws on archival materials from denominational, mission-related, and national archives relevant to Logooli music. Finally, Kidula uses media—particularly commercial recordings of Logooli Christian musics, but also the images and visual rhetoric employed in that media.

Some of the most insightful and engaging moments in Kidula's book explore a genre of music through its performance practice in Logooli communities. Her chapters on "Songs of the Spirit" (songs historically related to revivals and often learned in dreams or moments of inspiration) and on *makwaya* (choir) and gospel genres are particular standouts. Kidula describes typical performance practices in these genres, but also shares stories highlighting the complicated engagement between Logooli traditional social and communicative norms and missionary traditions. For example, Kidula tells the story of a village thief who received a song of the spirit. Despite the congregation's acceptance of this song—"songs of the spirit" are subject to community validation—they performed the song in Kiswahili rather than their own Lulogooli language, an act of "distanciation" reflecting negotiation between Logooli understandings of Christian identities and of the ways "natures" like that of the thief can be inherited, not chosen (159–160).

Similar issues of negotiating European (mission) and Logooli traditional musical form and practice are explored in her writing on "book music," the hymnals used in Logooli congregations. Kidula traces these issues primarily by comparing the texts and scores of Western hymns and their Logooli translations and adaptations. She then examines the ways the functions of hymns changed due to these processes of translation and adaptation. For example, she examines "Rock of Ages," which in the Logooli translation, in its later verses, reflects on death (101–102). Because of this, it is incorporated into processions at funerals, and it is performed in rhythms that accommodate walking. This analytic strategy, while it might risk giving "textual" (broadly speaking) aspects of "book music" a kind of causal primacy, is convincing for this body of music and offers Kidula a way to highlight both the agency and constraint under which Logooli have approached "book music."

Kidula's book is copiously documented and full—nearly to a fault—of ethnographic and historical data that will be useful to scholars across the disciplines interested in African Christianities and world Christianities. For example, as a scholar with some interests in musical performance in Chad—far from Kenya and with markedly different Protestant proselytization patterns, influenced by French colonialism—I found the discussion of music leading for "book music" remarkably useful in its careful description of lined-out songleading, a description surprisingly resonant with the practices I observed in Chad. The historical work in Kidula's chapters 2 and 3, tracing the Logooli people and their history of encounters with and appropriation of Christianities, will also find multidisciplinary application. Because Kidula draws not only on denominational archives and oral

histories, but also on her own life and personal networks as a Logooli Christian, she offers nuanced perspectives that might make for particularly productive comparisons when read with outsider texts exploring the overlap of sound and theological and ecclesiological history in Africa (and elsewhere)—like Thomas Engelke’s work (2007) on Apostolic congregations in Zimbabwe. Kidula’s book begins and ends with brief but powerful stories of her own encounters not as researcher but as Logooli community member. This is an essential text for thinking about world Christianities, because it approaches a particular African Christianity from both insider and outsider perspectives.

Sherinian’s title signals a complementary but quite different project: not a focus on song as religious cultural practice, but rather as a liberation theology specific to the politics of caste for Dalit people in Tamil Nadu. “Dalit” is a politicized term spanning lower-caste (“untouchable”) people, who began to claim this cross-sub-caste identity for themselves in Tamil Nadu in the late 1970s and early 1980s (115). Sherinian describes her aims as centered on “the agency of those who use and freely recompose Christian folk songs as everyday acts of resistance to the inhuman systems of caste, gender, and class oppression in India,” an agency which she characterizes as exercised through re-creating “music as theology,” or “dialogical (re)-creative praxis” (3). (As a scholar rooted in Mennonite musics and theologies, I understand her as addressing orthopraxy, relatively fluid and practice-based, rather than orthodoxy, text-based and propositional.) This is an ambitious and intriguing project, one that resonates with efforts in popular music studies (like Potter’s and Miyakawa’s) to engage with theology and music, but which goes beyond them in addressing itself specifically to other liberation theologians’ work (outside of music).

Sherinian’s materials span about twenty years of fieldwork and ongoing dialogue with Dalit people in Tamil Nadu, and her book tracks not only the musical and theological changes that happened over that period but also the ways in which her own subject position as ethnographer changed. Partly, she tracks the ways her engagement with the ethnomusicology of the Indian subcontinent (sometimes called “Indic musicology”) changed, as she became politicized and understood ethnomusicology’s strong focus on elite Brahmin-identified musics in terms of caste politics (51–61). In that sense, the book can be seen as an intervention in ethnomusicological and anthropological area studies in India and a significant push toward exploring folk musics and the politics of caste (countering the influence of elite Indian cultural studies figures, like Appadurai). While the book is most broadly an ethnography, Sherinian’s most distinctive and central methods here are, on the one hand, oral history, which she employs to tell the story of musician and theologian Theophilus Appavoo and his family (chapter 2) and also the stories of the reception and re-creation of his songs (chapter 5); and on the other hand a strategy of reading performance, text, and song materials (stemming from Appavoo) all together as an articulation of theology (chapter 3). Other portions of the book might be seen as more conventional social history, particularly chapter 1 and the opening of chapter 2, which track the development of Christian musics and their articulation with denominational, and especially caste, politics in Tamil Nadu.

Sherinian’s oral histories of Appavoo (a “town Dalit” and not a member of the lowest subdivision of caste), his family, and his followers present a complex reading of musical creativity, caste politics, and Christian institutions in South India. With a broad backdrop of Christianity’s appeal for lower-caste persons in South India, Sherinian traces the ways Appavoo’s family and their musical practices articulated with the complex hierarchical divisions among lower castes—moving, eventually, to an interest in indigenized Christian musical practices with Appavoo’s grandfather. Appavoo himself is presented first as an atheist reluctant to engage with the church, but he was invited by a priest, Honest Chinniah, to lead a choir at the Central Church at Cuddalore (107–108). Moved by the respect the middle-caste Chinniah showed to him, he not only led the

choir but, in the end, chose to study theology. He became a professor at Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary in Madurai, where his compositions and system of political and theological analysis influenced Dalit consciousness broadly in the region. Appavoo's close relationship to Sherinian is an important part of this story. He becomes a "teacher, friend, colleague, and a father figure" to her, eventually naming her "Parattai's musical voice" (xix), and poignantly she recounts being with his family on the occasion of his death while on a lecture tour of the US, in Oklahoma (xx).

Sherinian's narrative traces the ways Appavoo's interactions with other Dalits led to his articulation of a Dalit liberation theology through music. She examines this theology through a close reading of the performance practices and texts of his Village Music Liturgy, paying primary attention to his lyrics as they critique caste politics through narrative and word choice, and secondary attention to the ways musical style addresses and articulates a rural Dalit church and body politic. She examines the central tenets of his theology through relevant stories Appavoo told: *oru olai*, or "one pot," the practice of sharing food with all regardless of caste (a resonant reading of the significance of Eucharist and arguably of broader New Testament themes surrounding the politics of food); the "universal family" of the church; and the strategy of "reversal" of caste, gender, and other social orders within the church (133). She places Appavoo's theology in dialogue with other liberation theologies, observing the points of contact between Appavoo's work to claim a rural Dalit space within a Christianity that has become dominated by the middle class and similar projects within Black and feminist theologies (which she accesses through Emilie Townes and Serene Jones, as well as bell hooks). More broadly, throughout the book, she employs elements of Appavoo's system of social analysis in her own ethnographic and textual analyses—a significant move from the ethnopoetics that ethnomusicology sometimes applies toward what one might call an ethno-theoretic. Because Appavoo's system is situated in a neo-Marxist liberation theology, Sherinian's book is also a welcome broadening of ethnographic studies of Christianities, which have often focused on conservative, fundamental, or Pentecostal groups.

Sherinian's book is of obvious interest to ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and other socially oriented scholars focused on South India and on Christianity, as well as being relevant for students of theology in a global frame (and liberation theology). But it should also be noticed by those interested in ethnographic studies of religious institutions; much of it explores teaching and musical transmission at Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, and it might make a particularly productive text to pair with Judah Cohen's study of these dynamics at an American Reform Jewish college. It also breaks ground as an ethnomusicological study of an individual, because it not only presents a musical biography but also structures its ethnomusicological analyses around the theoretical framework developed by that individual.

Sherinian's and Kidula's books, while quite different in their projects and narratives, both represent remarkable steps forward for the ethnomusicology and anthropology of Christianity. They present historical and ethnographic analyses of Christianity and its musics in the Indian subcontinent and in Africa. They expand the spectrum of Christianities and add nuance to the set of Christian subjectivities available to socially-oriented scholars. Kidula's work is magisterial in its engagement with a large body of "owned" musics for the Logooli; it's particularly valuable for the way Kidula navigates her position as scholar and ethnic, musical, and religious insider. Sherinian's work points to the possibility of stronger and more bidirectionally productive engagements between ethnography and theology. And both, in my view, are exciting and essential new texts for scholars interested in Christianity, and in religion and society in Africa and India.

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