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## Review of War Dance: Plains Indian Musical Performance

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Indian song and dance since 1947 as an eighth grader, Powers knows his material. He writes from the vantage point of a veteran surveying his field, offering description and analysis of it.

Powers's book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in an overview of Plains Indian musical performance, and the academic literature on it, as well as in detailed information about the music and dance of Plains Indians. Although Powers' frequent resort to classification schemes, typologies, and lists sometimes gets tiresome, the information he presents is valuable. Theoretically, Powers primarily poses issues and problematics and suggests directions for theory. The primary theoretical theme that he develops concerns Indian identity, expressed as a tension between "tribalism" and "intertribalism." Powers criticizes the influence of acculturation and assimilation models that misled many researchers in the 1960s and 1970s to posit an emerging "pan-Indian" identity that would supplant tribal identities. He argues, by contrast, that tribal culture and identity are alive and well, developing in a dialectical relationship with intertribal forces and processes such as regional powwows and federal Indian policies. Powers attributes much of the ongoing vitality of tribal culture and identity to Indian music and dance.

The primary problem with Powers' book lies with its organization. It is primarily a collection of essays written earlier and updated only slightly for re-publication. This format can be clumsy and confusing if information and arguments are contradictory, as sometimes happens in this book. For example, in Chapter 1 Powers argues against a preservationist perspective on American Indian culture, but in Chapter 7, presented later but written earlier, we find him arguing in favor of a preservationist perspective. It appears that the meaning of the term *preservationist* is different in the two essays. Although this partly explains the contradiction, it adds to the confusion. Also, after arguing convincingly against a pan-Indian perspective in the Introduction and Chapter 1, Powers lets the issue stand in Chapter 6, written in 1968, as a viable and legitimate perspective.

*War Dance: Plains Indian Musical Performance.* By William K. Powers. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990. Introduction, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xx + 199 pp. \$24.95.

Powers' stated goal in this book is to "provide some background, including the history, the continuity, and the change" that he has witnessed in American Indian culture from the perspective of musical performance over the last thirty to forty years. He has easily succeeded in this task. As an observer and participant in

Finally, reflecting a general reluctance by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, Powers declines to criticize his subjects of study. He does not ask, for example, why drumming is reserved for boys and men. Perhaps this reluctance to criticize is an understandable reaction to real and perceived Euro-American belief in their cultural superiority. Nevertheless, Indian lives are, like others' lives, constituted in part politically and through relations of power that distort, as well as enrich, them. A critical eye would better help the reader understand how this might be the case in contemporary Indian life. Powers' last chapter—arguably his best—begins to take up these issues, but briefly.

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