

*Bosavi: Rainforest Music from Papua New Guinea*, 2001. Recorded and annotated by Steven Feld. Produced by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, in collaboration with the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, SFW CD 40487. 3 CDs, 193 minutes, 47 tracks, 80-page booklet with photos and extensive notes.

This set of three compact discs is an anthology of field recordings made by Steven Feld, author of the monumental ethnomusicological work, *Sound and Sentiment* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982/1990). Feld lived for twenty-five years among Bosavi people in the Southern Highland Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Like many other linguistic groups in Papua New Guinea, the Bosavi people have experienced many changes during those twenty-five years, including rule by the PNG national government, the penetration of Christianity, the loss of traditional rituals, the founding of community schools, the exploitation of natural resources, and an influx of guitars, ukuleles, radio-cassette players, music cassettes, and so on. Looking back over the Bosavi's sonic and musical life for the past quarter century, Feld begins this CD set with recordings that most clearly represent current Bosavi music, that is, guitar band songs.

*Disc I: Guitar Bands of the 1990s* contains nineteen string band tunes by young Bosavi people. (*String band music* is the general name in Papua New Guinea for music accompanied by acoustic guitars and ukuleles.) Occasions for hearing string band

music in PNG cities and towns have been decreasing due to the predominance of popular music cassettes of bands using electric instruments. In many remote areas, however, it seems that the popularity of string band music has been increasing with the spread of acoustic guitars. What Feld emphasizes on Disc I is that the Bosavi people's new way of song-making in string band music follows their traditional way of song-making, as when borrowing the words of ceremonial songs that strongly evoke memories of the deceased, and when singing a syllable that recalls the sung weeping of women's funerary lamentations. Having adopted the nonindigenous guitar-band musical style, the Bosavi people reflect in it their own music tradition. This seems to be a significant case that can clarify how music is disseminated, localized, and indigenized.

*Disc II: Sounds and Songs of Everyday Life* aurally sketches the Bosavi's rich acoustic life, including sounds heard when felling trees and scraping sago pith; human voices singing with sounds of cicadas, waterfalls, and birds; and the sound of a Jew's harp played for self-entertainment, for example. Producing and listening to sounds are unquestionably at the center of Bosavi life. In particular, Feld closely examines the interaction between the sounds of people and the sounds of the rainforest. For Bosavi people the rainforest soundscape, with its innumerable varieties of sound, is the quintessential musical source that provides inspiration for their sound- and song-making. Track 10, "Voices in the Forest: a village soundscape,"

which condenses one day of the Bosavi soundscape into twenty-five minutes, is especially full of intimate connections between forest sounds and human sounds, and it conveys a remarkably fresh sensation.

*Disc III: Sounds and Songs of Ritual and Ceremony* includes sung funerary lamentations, a song for a spirit medium séance, ceremonial drumming, and four types of ceremonial songs. The occasions for these songs and performances began to diminish in the late 1960s and early 1970s, primarily under the influence of evangelical missionization and oil exploitation in Bosavi and the neighboring area, and they finally disappeared from ritual and ceremonial contexts by 1984. When we think about how rapidly traditional music has been vanishing, not only in Bosavi but everywhere in PNG, we recognize that the variety of ritual and ceremonial music recorded on Disc III is extremely valuable as sound documentation. What is now taking the place of this traditional music is the guitar band music on Disc I, and what continues to support the changing sound world of the Bosavi are the everyday sounds and songs and soundscape on Disc II.

Descriptions contained in the accompanying booklet are concise and comprehensive, serving as a helpful survey of the history and life of Bosavi people and sounds. The photos in the booklet also vividly portray them from the past to the present, and the beauty of the photos on the CD jackets deserves special mention. Furthermore, the sound quality of the field recordings made on a Nagra tape recorder is exceptionally good. This sound world with its distinctive details will surely attract and impress any listener.

This superb anthology of sounds demonstrates the possibility of a shift from an “ethnography of sounds,” which tries to promote understanding of a people’s acoustic culture through literal description, to a “sonography of people,” which seeks to provide a way of sensing sonic reality and its power for people. In this sense, we should regard these three CDs not just as by-products of Feld’s prolific work in Bosavi, but as a source of insight into the future of ethnomusicological presentation.

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