

both the script and visuals. The filmmakers are clearly concerned that traditional medicines are undervalued and at risk of loss due to rapid modernization. While I disagree with their analytical perspective, I agree with their final argument, that traditional medicines and healers should be understood as a significant aspect of Tongan culture writ large, as important in the future as in the past. I also agree that Tongan traditional practices are immensely robust when it comes to “existing alongside the new.” Ultimately, and regardless of the caveats offered here, this film is a must-have for anyone wishing to teach about Tonga, or about medical anthropology in Oceania. While not fulfilling the ideal of the perfect medical anthropological or ethnographic film, it is still very good, certainly the best that we have available.

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Wasawasa. 2002. Composed and recorded by Sailasa Tora. Produced by New Sounds Oceania, <Oceania@usp.ac.fj> with assistance from the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture, University of the South Pacific, Suva. SAG 01/995 660. 1 CD, 42 minutes, 12 tracks, 8-page booklet with art and descriptive notes. F\$30 plus F\$10 shipping.

I have a special place in my heart for Fijian music—the guitar-driven harmonies sung around the kava bowl in the village or their modern, keyboard-driven, urban club descendants; the percussion-inspired chants accompanying the meke dance; and the uplift-

ing vocal blends of the schoolchildren at their morning assembly or the congregation at their religious services. To try to quench my thirst for this music since leaving Fiji, I've downloaded favorite new renditions from the Internet, begged friends to send CD releases, and even incorporated representative samples into the repertoire of my Honolulu-based Pan-Pacific group, the kava boys band. That being said, I admit that I agreed to write this review with a hope of sharing the feelings that Fijian music inspires in me through writing about a new compilation of what I knew as Fijian music. But, to my surprise, the mesmerizing and inspirational music of *Wasawasa* by Sailasa Tora is unlike anything, Fijian or otherwise, that I have ever heard before.

Though produced by New Sounds Oceania (the new recording studio of the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture at the University of the South Pacific in Suva), *Wasawasa* might be regarded by some as neither “new sounds” nor “sounds Oceania.” Under the group name Kabe in the year 2000, Sailasa Tora released an album entitled *Kacikaci Vakatama*, which included songs found on *Wasawasa* such as “Kacikaci Vakatama,” “Wasawasa,” and “Na Vatu Kwe” (per *arTok*, the Pacific Arts Online website: <<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/artok/music/s193457.htm>> 20 Sep 2000). Subsequently, George “Fiji” Veikoso released a cover version of “Na Vatu Kwe” as the opening chant on his *Transitions* CD. But, while songs on *Wasawasa* may be recognizable from previous releases, the type of music itself strikes the ear as a unique new blend of sounds.

Regarding the origins of these

sounds, many might not at first think that they are particularly those of Oceania. After hearing Sailasa Tora perform live in Suva, one friend of mine remarked that it reminded her of hearing lullabies sung in Fijian. Per the description of my initial surprise above, I also had difficulty in attempts to categorize the music. Certainly the lyrics are in the Fijian language and often sound much like Fijian chants. The percussion also frequently follows a style distinctive to the Pacific. But I found myself initially classifying some songs more as ambient, ethno-tribal, or acoustic New Age music. I do not wish to discourage those who, like me, have acquired some distaste for particular artists in this vast genre. However, as New Age music has been popularly described as having soothing forms that caress the mind, comfort the heart, and awaken the spirit, this description does seem to fit both musical and lyrical expression on *Wasawasa*. From blasts of winds and chirps of birds in the opening title song through subsequent pours of rain sticks, beats of the lali drum, pulses of other percussion, and patterns of acoustic guitar and keyboard, the music surrounds and pulls emotions. Likewise, the sometimes haunting, sometimes lilting, and sometimes driving vocal qualities blend with the musical expression to nurture the mind, heart, and spirit. So, although I'm not certain of the content of all other artists recording in Fiji, those who seek categorization might be satisfied to believe that Sailasa Tora has established a new subgenre called Fijian New Age music.

One especially intriguing element of this surreal quality of the music is

the incorporation of pan flutes and the blending of traditional chanting with four-part harmonies. The combination of pan flutes and three-beat percussion evoke an almost Native American feeling, but Tora has explained that these sounds are the result of many months of research of the indigenous music of villages of Fiji and other South Pacific islands (*arTok*, 20 Sep 2000). Though many would associate pan flutes with some South American music and also with the Solomon Islands, Tora was surprised to find that their use had a history in Fiji. Likewise, although four-part harmony is used extensively, he also adds elements from traditional meke dance chanting, which is dominated by minor notes (*arTok*, 20 Sep 2000). Through his research and quest to blend old with new, he thus found ways to utilize pan flutes and traditional chanting to augment contemporary elements of his music.

This incorporation of elements of music from the past and present to create a new composite sound fits well with the messages of the lyrics. Alternating vocalists make pleas for people today to be wary of the treacherous temptations and disturbances of modernity and remain mindful of the prevailing indigenous wisdom of the forefathers in such qualities as resourcefulness, resilience, caring, listening, understanding, forgiveness, love, self-control, and faith in God. But, as summarized in the notes to "Veigauna Talei," "Yesterday is gone, tomorrow has its own share of problems—what matters is NOW!" (For those who are not adept in the Fijian language but wish to know the lyrics that accompany the musical feeling,

a brief English language summary of each song is provided on the first page of the liner notes.) Like his efforts in researching and finding ways to incorporate lost or buried traditional musical qualities into contemporary music, Tora's lyrics plead with people to dig deep to find ways to do so in contemporary society as well. As he expressed it, "The past is just like today, we have dark and light together, you know. You've just got to reach into the light and leave the dark. That's what I've done with the music" (*arTok*, 20 Sep 2000).

As before, I will always have a special place in my heart for Fijian music—and now a special part of that place is for a new subgenre inspired by the music of Sailasa Tora. Like his lyrical call to continually blend traditional and contemporary influences without the loss of beneficial attributes of both, this music should not be dismissed as either threatening or inferior to the more traditional and other prevailing contemporary sounds. In terms of enjoyment, it is a rewarding addition to any music collection, and can be appreciated privately while trying to write or simply relax. And, as truly "New Sounds Oceania," it is a complimentary addition to Sailasa Tora's pioneering work augmenting other current Fijian musical practice and inspiring both producers and consumers of music to continue to evaluate modifications to tradition.

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Gauguin's Zombie, an installation by Debra Drexler at the Honolulu Academy of Arts, 5 September–27 October 2002, and at the Maui Arts and Cultural Center's Shaefer International Gallery, 3 May–15 June 2003.

The life of artist Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) retains a mythic quality, though its once-scandalous aspects now seem only draped with a certain late-nineteenth-century nostalgia. The early life of Gauguin, born in Paris, included years living in South America and working as a seaman. He settled in Paris as a stockbroker's agent, became a friend of several of the Impressionist painters and began to paint on his own, first exhibiting with the group in 1881. He left his family and struggled to make a living as a full-time artist, eventually settling in an artist's colony in Brittany in 1887. The changes in his style, from a more subdued palette to one enriched with color, from naturalism to symbolism, may be seen to parallel an increasingly intense search for an anchor of spirituality, which he sought first among the Breton folk, and later among the natives of Tahiti, the French colony he first visited in 1891 in his quest to be free of the bonds of civilization. He returned to Paris in 1893, enjoying the celebrity following the publication of his diary *Noa Noa*, but returned in 1895 to the South Seas where he lived out his life on increasingly remote islands, fretful at the relentless encroachment of European influence. Reading this life, set in an era of emergent modernity, from the perspective of the intervening century, we may appreciate its poignancy, but we are also inclined to see in Gauguin