Two Desert Dances

Arroyo Storm - Blue Moon Mist

Hank Hehmsoth

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1. Arroyo Storm

source: Jemez dance; Performing Artist - Herrera, Ramon; Recorded 1957 in Cochiti Pueblo, NM
Identifier  MU 7 CD 56 Track 12; Source ZIM CSWR Robb MU 7; index number 1582

Ramon Herrera, male vocalist/performing artist, and Native American Jemez Indian, sings in a brisk 5/8 meter, and uses a sophisticated nuance of pitch intonation which encompasses the inverted diminished scale (or octotonic scale) in his inflections. While playing a 5/8 pattern on the drum, he sings vocal rhythms that complement the drums in a convincing way.

His vocal range is a maj 10th, plus the lower neighbor below the root B.
Generally a B minor pentatonic, his inflections precisely outline the diminished scale, something I have not heard in other native American vocal work.
He embellishes the root B with an A below and a C natural above, the 3rd, D natural, is colored with a D# inflection, the 5th, F#, with an F natural. In the B section he introduces the minor 3rd below the root, the G#.
This collection of pitches is the inverted diminished scale, B-C-D-D#-F-F#-G#-A-B.
The combination of a fast asymmetrical meter plus the octotonic harmonies implied gave me a large source of material and invited many creative ideas to work with.

2. Blue Moon Mist

source: Pito melody; Performing Artist - Padilla, Vicente; Recorded 1952 in Santa Fe, NM
Identifier  MU 7 CD 37 Track 19; Source ZIM CSWR Robb MU 7; index number 1075a

The four pitch melodies played on a Pito, a Southwest native ocarina instrument, by Native American Vicente Padilla, show a remarkable variety of phrasing. The more I listened to his melodic ideas, the more I wanted to explore the inherent harmonic possibilities, and to reconsider what can be done with these four pitches. His themes are treated with a contemporary jazz harmonization and an open section of improvisation.

It's fascinating to me that some people and cultures arrive at sophisticated and very colorful melody and rhythm through wholly natural means, while others (myself included) must derive similar points via theory and study.

As I spent time working with these dances, the more I felt a connection with the past, and these musicians. There is a spirituality and pleasure here, which comes through in my writing.

I hope the simultaneous live performance with the actual field recordings from 60 years ago is a way to connect today's audience across different times and cultures, in the way that only music does, and breaks these two Native Americans' long silence.

Hank Hehmsoth
8/19/2010
**Instrumentation**

Voice/Pito (from recordings) or Tenor Sax/Flute (live)

Violin

Cello

Electric Piano (Rhodes) / Acoustic Piano

Electric Bass

Percussion (2 Players)

The dances are designed to be performed live with the J. D. Robb source recordings. A performance cd is available from the composer. The source vocal and pito (ocarina) can be alternatively performed with tenor sax/flute.

Please note minute sectional rhythmic pattern variations at certain rehearsal letters in the percussion.

(suggested substitutions for Flextone or triangle): Mambo Bell, Cha-Cha Bell, especially Pearl Percussion (model BCH11) Hand-Held Campana Bala Bell, Hi Pitched
Segue

V/Sx.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

Bass

Perc.

crisp and incisive

resonant

sim.

sim.
2. Blue Moon Mist

Very Relaxed  (M.M. $d = c. 59$)

Perc.: cymbal scrapes  pandeiro roll  hi tom

Perc.: cajon  tambourine  maracas