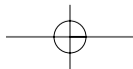


Hayward, P (2006) *Bounty Chords: Music, Dance and Cultural Heritage on Norfolk and Pitcairn Islands*, Eastleigh: John Libbey and Co

Bounty Chords is a book with ‘attitude’, originality and both scholarly and moral integrity: a sometimes melancholy but utterly fascinating account of the music, dance and related heritage of Norfolk and Pitcairn Islanders of Bounty mutineer-related descent. It also contains a deeply personal and thought provoking account of how the author fearlessly negotiated the treacherous shoals awaiting the scholar who dares to deviate from the orthodoxy of traditional scholarship in basing their study on a methodology that is both boldly progressive and ideo-



Publication Reviews

logically inflected. The fact that the author is one of the most influential figures in the scholarship of Australian and Pacific region music and culture of the last decade makes this book compelling and essential academic and general reading.

A succinct Introduction explains, among other things, how the author sought to 'implicate' music and dance within an ever shifting continuum of cultural heritage as opposed to 'extricating' them for analysis (as in traditional approaches to music and dance study), and how 'heritage' as a concept can embrace new 'objects' and 'put forward new meanings' (224). The author then retraces the history of the Bounty mutiny and the establishment of Pitcairn Island and, later, Norfolk Island as the twinned Pacific homelands of the Bounty-related descendants. The scope of the study therefore does not embrace the cultural life of the convict and settler communities that preceded the Pitcairn Islanders' arrival at Norfolk Island. Throughout this narrative he demonstrates the integral relationship between music and dance development and broader cultural issues, documenting and explaining the various processes of selection, adoption, synthesis and innovation that have collectively contributed to Pitcairn and Norfolk community culture, including its unique and problematic vernacular language.

The last half of the book is less chronological and functions to link post-war (to the present) developments in Norfolk and Pitcairn Island (N&P) music and dance culture with earlier N&P cultural events and heritage. Case studies of individuals, historical data and anecdotes, musical and text analysis and discussion of performance culture clearly illustrate how heritage can be understood as a continuing process of cultural identification and modification, and how heritage and cultural identity are, in fact, projections of both the real and the imagined. In the Conclusion and Afterword the author reflects deeply and honestly upon his a role as a player in the ongoing process of N&P cultural identification and modification. He describes how and why he and a coterie of academic colleagues – who address themselves as 'CERF (Culturally Engaged Research and Facilitation) workers' (231–239) – became political activists in the sense of identifying the necessity and positive potential of intervening in small island cultural identity and modification processes. Hayward describes their agenda as that of promoting both preservation and hybridity, along with the development of 'cultural heritage' deriving from highly ethical 'collaboration' between CERF workers and small island community practitioners and other knowledgeable islanders (233). The author's open definition of cultural heritage embraces outcomes such as books, articles or other media, or organised events that enhance small island cultural identity. The author has, in fact, been spectacularly successful with other progressive projects involving cultural intervention and collaboration to enhance and develop heritage and cultural identity.

Bounty Chords has various levels of relevance to academia and the general reader. From the general reader's perspective, the Bounty saga and its aftermath is one of the most intriguing and poignant stories of the last two hundred-plus years and, as historian Greg Dening demonstrates in *Mr Bligh's Bad Language*

Publication Reviews

(1992), the social, cultural and political issues remain as universally compelling as they were in 1790 when an imagined version of the mutiny was mounted on the London stage only several months after the mutineers and their cohorts began their nefarious and ill-fated settlement on Pitcairn. Community-dividing events that unfolded at the very time when the author was researching *Bounty Chords* – the bizarre and brutal 2002 murder of Janelle Patton on Norfolk Island and the British-conducted trial of leading male figures on Pitcairn Island for previously culturally accepted sex with minors – have brought the twinned Bounty-related islands and their community cultures into the regional and international media spotlights. These events, by default, will further compel readers to examine Hayward’s account and social and cultural commentaries, just as reading *Bounty Chords* re-sparked my own interest in the Bounty saga and its aftermath. For non-academics with special interest in music, dance and related cultural perspectives on the Bounty-related Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands communities, *Bounty Chords* stands alone as an engaging, accessible, detailed and extensive account of those aspects of community history that are all too often missing or glossed over in social and cultural histories.

Bounty Chords will be of very special interest to scholars engaged in the vast and still burgeoning field of post-colonial studies with its (ever-shifting and provisional) positions, theories and concepts including globalism, localism, and ‘glocalism’ (Robertson, 1995). It also taps directly into closely related critique of traditional ethnomusicology as presented in works such as *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (Barz and Cooley (eds) 1997). *Bounty Chords* also appears to stand in intriguing opposition to the seminal and astonishingly provocative position taken by Ronald Radano in his acclaimed and condemned *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (2003), in which he deliberately sets out to ‘de-essentialise’ the seemingly empowering and legitimizing premise (myth) that all ‘black music’ shares a common unity and spiritual essence. Yet, at closer comparison there are important similarities. *Bounty Chords* does in fact de-essentialise myth through its exhaustive and scholarly historical research and both books – albeit in opposing ways – ultimately seek to empower marginalised peoples. However, it is *Bounty Chords* that demonstrates vividly that enhanced (even assisted) belief in one’s own cultural heritage and identity can be more empowering than certifiable historical reality.

JOHN WHITEOAK