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George Herzog's Transcriptions of Mohave Birdsongs: What Happened to the Dance?

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George Herzog's Transcriptions of Mohave Birdsongs: What Happened to the Dance?

Steve Elster

Abstract: In 1927, George Herzog (1901-1983), an early ethnomusicologist, conducted a field trip to some of the tribes located along the Colorado River and also within Southern California. Based on the fieldnotes and the musical transcriptions that he made of *Birdsongs*, one of the genres of music that local singers perform today, I will be examining one of his Birdsong transcriptions. In the process, I will be asking and attempting to answer questions centered around why Herzog seemed to limit his musical explorations and did not, for instance, embrace both music and dance in his consideration of Birdsongs? I hope to show that part of the answer lies in the particular types of training that Herzog received as he studied piano, counterpoint, some of the folk music of Europe, and also music from non-European cultures. This training, I will be arguing, had not trained him to embrace both music and dance, when making musical transcriptions of *Birdsongs*, for instance. At the same time, I will be arguing that such an approach is necessary because of the close relationship between music and dance that is so much a part of Birdsongs.

Keywords: Transcription. Herzog. Birdsong. Dance.

Transcrições de George Herzog das Birdsongs dos Mohave: o que aconteceu com a dança?

Resumo: Em 1927, George Herzog (1901-1983), um antigo etnomusicólogo, conduziu uma viagem de campo a algumas das tribos localizadas ao longo do rio Colorado e também no sul da Califórnia. Baseado nas notas de campo e nas transcrições musicais que ele fez das *Birdsongs*, um dos gêneros de música que os cantores locais executam hoje, eu analisei uma de suas transcrições de *Birdsong*. No processo, tentarei responder a perguntas sobre por que Herzog parecia limitar suas explorações musicais e, por exemplo, não abordou a música e a dança como um elemento único em consideração às *Birdsongs*? Espero mostrar que parte da resposta está nos tipos particulares de treinamento que Herzog recebeu ao estudar piano, contraponto, parte da música folclórica da Europa e também música de culturas não-européias. Este treinamento, eu argumentarei, não o treinou para abraçar tanto a música quanto a dança, ao fazer transcrições musicais de *Birdsongs*, por exemplo. Ao mesmo tempo, argumentarei que tal abordagem é necessária por causa da estreita relação entre música e dança, que faz parte das *Birdsongs*.

Palavras-chave: Transcrição. Herzog. Birdsongs. Dança.

Las transcripciones de George Herzog de Mohave Birdsongs: ¿Qué pasó con la danza?

Resumen: En 1927, George Herzog (1901-1983), un antiguo etnomusicólogo, condujo un viaje de campo a algunas de las tribus ubicadas a lo largo del río Colorado y también en el sur de California. Basado en las notas de campo y en las transcripciones musicales que hizo de las *Birdsongs*, uno de los géneros de música que los cantantes locales ejecutan hoy, he analizado una de sus transcripciones de *Birdsong*. En el proceso, trataré de responder a preguntas sobre por qué Herzog parecía limitar sus exploraciones musicales y, por ejemplo, no abordó la música y la danza como un elemento único en consideración a las *Birdsongs*? Espero mostrar que parte de la respuesta está en los tipos particulares de entrenamiento que Herzog recibió al estudiar piano, contrapunto, parte de la música folclórica de Europa y también música de culturas no europeas. Este entrenamiento, yo argumentar, no lo entrenó para abrazar tanto la música y la danza, al hacer transcripciones musicales de *Birdsongs*, por ejemplo. Al mismo tiempo, argumentar que este enfoque es necesario debido a la estrecha relación entre música y danza, que forma parte de las *Birdsongs*.

Palabras-clave: Transcripción. Herzog. Birdsongs. Danza.

Introduction

In the early 1990's, when I first began to study the music of the tribes of Southern California, my work took me in many directions, one of these involved attending ceremonial events with tribal singers¹. A group of these singers were in their late teens or early twenties. Late into the night, I can still remember these young singers gamely posing questions about any number of poignant issues. These young men were not only learning songs, but they were also involved in reconstructing them, by speaking with tribal elders and other tribal members. In general, these singers have focused on learning *Birdsongs* as well as others², ones that have melodies and words that seem to be directly related to their respective native culture(s). In the process, they were honing their skills as tribal oral historians³.

Why did these young men need to reconstruct their songs? Two polar elements need to be explored when beginning to answer this question: first, the events that

have led to a loss of culture; and, second, the attributes that have enabled tribal members and their communities to keep alive their cultural traditions⁴. It seems likely that both of these elements have always been present, in a dialectic, with one or the other coming to the fore since the arrival of Europeans and then Euro-Americans. While providing a history of this dialectic is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems clear that since Europeans and Euro-Americans first began their respective colonial interventions that various officials and missionaries and settlers and scholars have persistently told the local Southern Californian tribes that they should abandon their cultural traditions and knowledge. In fact, some parts of their cultural knowledge have been lost; these tribes, however, have not stopped celebrating their traditions⁵. Looking to the future, Harry Paul Cuero, Jr., a master singer⁶ and the Vice-Chairman of the Campo Kumeyaay Nation, explained to me that "the old people say" that forgotten traditions "are

- 1 While it has been a privilege to have the opportunity to learn about the music of the tribes of Southern California, I want to make it clear that this paper is not an attempt to establish the truth about the music. What I write below constitutes my interpretations, and mine alone. In addition, while a number of tribal members have shared information with me and corroborated the assertions that I will be making here, I take full responsibility for the possibility that in listening to what was said that I may have somehow altered its content. I will only be providing the names of tribal members with whom I collaborated and worked with over a number of years.
- 2 I will be discussing *Birdsongs* in the second part of this paper. *Bird* is a shorthand way of referring to *Birdsongs*. A tribal member might look at a group of singers and explain: They're sing'n Bird.
- 3 I will be differentiating the terms I have created versus the terms that tribal members have shared with me. "Tribal oral historian" is a term that I have developed.

- 4 For an argument that discusses the resiliency of Native Americans as well as the problems that go along with casting them as solely damaged, see Tuck (2009).
- 5 Although I will not be reviewing this history, I will, however, provide some references for those who want to learn more about it. The following provide a macro view of issues rather than treatments focused on the local Southern California tribes. See Anderson (2013), for a macro view regarding how Europeans and Euro-Americans management of the land resulted in a reduction of native foods; White's (2011) and Merrell's (1989) separate discussions regarding the sale of alcohol to tribal members, during colonial times; and Jackson's and Castillo's (1995) discussion of the spread of disease amongst local Native Americans, in California, during the time of the missions; In 1921, the Bureau of Indian Affairs issued Circular 1665 that expressed disdain tribal cultural traditions.
- 6 "Master" singer is my term for a knowledgeable singer who has sung, taught, led other singers at ceremonies, for years.

sleeping." "They are sleeping," until they can be brought back⁷.

Despite the hardships that they have faced, tribes and their members have found ways not only to continue to take part in their ceremonies but also to teach and pass on their songs and other cultural knowledge to their youth. For many singers, resiliency does not appear to revolve solely around the musical practices; it seems more likely, rather, that the ability to maintain tribal culture inheres from being involved in a matrix of supportive activities. Some singers who lived through alcoholism and other challenges gave up alcoholism, continued to sing, and to teach tribal youth. Many of today's experienced singers continue to be staunchly anti-alcohol. Many have accepted role(s) in their tribe's leadership. Still others serve on repatriation or other committees⁸. Some have led leaders of tribal youth groups, designed to prevent the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Learning to be a tribal oral historian⁹ is still another skill that many singers have been developing, one that promotes resiliency. As they tap into the extended network of tribal members throughout Southern California and its neighboring tribes, these singers continue to share and to gather information concerning songs and other cultural knowledge. Since I met this group of young singers in the 1990's, I have seen some of them become teachers and/or mentors to subsequent waves of young men and women.

7 Harry Paul Cuero, Jr. Personal Communication, 2018.

8 Some Kumeyaay singers serve on The San Diego Kumeyaay Cultural Repatriation Committee (KCRC).

9 Saying that singers are oral historians is my insight; and, I believe, an apt one, considering what they have and continue to accomplish.

While attending ceremonies, I began to survey and study the relevant archival materials such as the audio recordings and field notes held at the Archives of Traditional Music at the Indiana University¹⁰. Additionally, I began to read and get familiar with ethnographic reports such as Alfred Kroeber's *Handbook of the Indians of California* (1925), Leslie Spier's *Yuman Tribes of the Gila River* (1933), T. T. Waterman's *The Religious Practices of the Diegueño* (1910), and those of other scholars¹¹.

Most of these ethnographies and archival audio recordings were collected or written down and published before World War II. Some, however, date to the first decade on the 1900's. While I quickly realized that these materials contain information that could be of useful to the tribes; I also saw that these reports can be hard to decipher. Touching on a related topic, Rainer Hatoum – an anthropologist, archivist, and a Franz Boas (1858-1942) specialist – pointed out that Boas's handwriting was so hard to read that Hatoum had to spend time learning how read them, before he could make sense of the fieldnotes. Having done so, he reported that Boas's early years with the Kwakiutl seemed to convey "...the state of confusion and ignorance we experience when we are confronted with cultural settings utterly

10 To cite some more: the Research Archives - San Diego History Center. San Diego, California (<http://www.sandiegohistory.org/researcharchives>, accessed December 2, 2018); The Pacific Region Records Center Facility. Riverside County, California (<https://www.archives.gov>, accessed December 2, 2018); Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University (<https://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/index.php>, accessed December 2, 2018).

11 Some of which include: Kroeber, Spier, and Waterman.

different from our own"¹² (Hatoum 2016: 238).

Hatoum thought Boas was aware of this and that, as a remedy, regularly consulted with his native collaborator, George Hunt, when preparing papers for publication.

Another factor that can make publications and fieldnotes difficult to understand derives from the difference between the time-specific training of different generations of researchers.

The idea that observers, even ones from different intellectual generations, could visit a people and come up with conclusions that might be contradictory is an issue that some scholars have struggled with. Responding to this, James Clifford pointed out that by 1925 ethnographic reporting and analysis had changed; because anthropologists had figured out how to generate ethnographies in relatively short periods of time, by focusing on the social structure of a group and other key parameters. James Clifford referred to these as the "new ethnographies."¹³ Clifford Gertz's (1995) striking account of a Balinese cockfight is but one example". James Clifford contrasted these "new ethnographies" to the reports that 19th century "arm-chair" anthropologists created, based on their compilations of information gathered in the field by a variety of experts. Still other anthropologists suggested that the use of narrative styles in ethnographic writing undermined the scientific nature of objective reporting.

12 Here I am thinking of Hatoum's: "I wrote all my notes in shorthand..." (2016: 238). This conclusion seems to relate to field notes and diaries written from 1894 to 1897. Also see, for instance, Briggs and Bauman (1999).

13 Argued in Elster (2010), Chapter 2.1, "The Question of Transcription," p. 80-85. Also, see the original sources: Clifford (2002).

Responding to the fact that Freeman (in 1984) and Mead (in 1928) had "come to opposite conclusions about the same society," namely Samoan adolescent sexuality, and seeing this as a result of observer bias; Aunger (1995) asserted that such bias could be accounted for by using a methodology that he had developed. Sangren disagreed, arguing that "disputes of interpretation have always been with us"¹⁴.

Moving back to the moment when I first began to listen to the late-night banter of younger singers, in the 1990's; it was at that point that I decided to dedicate some of my time to interpreting older ethnographic and archival accounts, with the hope of demonstrating strategies that could be used when deciphering older sources. I hope that this work may help to bring others closer to the day when they are able to awaken currently slumbering traditions.

The Geographical Area:

At ceremonial events, I soon realized that the musicians I was meeting came from a relatively large geographical region and had similar approaches to performance. When thinking about musical areas, many scholars have defined areas as a result of classifying both melodies and scales and combinations thereof. In contrast, my idea of a musical area or region emphasizes the use of similar approaches towards performance. Margaret Kartomi has refined and expanded on what I mean by performance, with her discussion and definition of "performativity." According to Kartomi:

14 See Sangren's comments to Aunger's article (Aunger 1995: 121)

*Performativity, on the other hand, refers to all the describable and analysable aspects of a performer's or group's competence or accomplishment while performing, including the sounds, movements, and gestures that the artist(s) produce.*¹⁵ (Kartomi 2014: 190)

The larger geographical performance region appears to include the southern part of Southern California, the tribes located along the Colorado River, and the tribal communities in Northern Baja California, in Mexico¹⁶. I will be using the term the Extended Southern California Performance Region (ESCR) when referring to this region (see Figure 1). Singers from any number of reservations may be invited to participate or may decide to attend a ceremony or tribal gathering held anywhere throughout the ESCR.

Elements of performance practice

Throughout the ESCR, a variety of musical genres are performed or otherwise celebrated. In this paper, I will be focusing on song-cycles and in particular *Birdsongs*, a song cycle and one of the ones that George Herzog (1901-1983) discussed in his 1928 paper: "The Yuman Musical Style" (Herzog 1928: 183-231). When referring to *Birdsongs*, I will sometimes refer to it as being a song cycle and at other times as a "song," following the terminology that I have heard singers and tribal members use, such as: Which song does that singer sing? Answer: *Bird*. The terms *Bird* and *Birdsongs* are used synonymously¹⁷.

¹⁵ See also Cook (2001).

¹⁶ By Northern Baja, I mean the area extending from the U.S. border to a point just south of Cabo San Quintin, in Baja California, Mexico; this is approximately 100 miles south of Ensenada.

¹⁷ I will make clear those times when I am using "song" to refer to a song cycle (as in *Bird*), in

In a performance of a song cycle, a singing group may perform 200 to 300 songs, throughout a night¹⁸. Performers often work together in what I will be referring to as a singing group¹⁹, each of which is led by a "master" singer²⁰. In turn, master singers are accompanied by helper singers, comprised both of highly experienced and novice singers, and by a group of dancers, and relatives and friends. At a ceremony or gatherings, multiple singing groups might be heard performing simultaneously, even though each singing group may be singing a different song cycle. There is no attempt to coordinate the performances of one group with another. In fact, the starting and the ending points of the songs of different singing groups may not coincide. The net sonic effect is a unique kind of enriched "wall of sound"²¹, one that provides support for all present.

In addition, because singing groups often perform throughout the night, each group tends to get into a groove. It is as if each singing group sets the course of its music/dancing ship towards the morning. Dance steps that will be performed throughout the night become more economical. Each song has its own

contrast moments in which I use "song" to refer to one of the songs from the *Birdsong* cycle.

¹⁸ Unless a singer(s) has not yet reconstructed a sufficient number of songs from a given song cycle; but it is difficult to make generalizations about song cycles when only a subset may be known; further, I am not privy to the nature of all or even most song cycles.

¹⁹ My term.

²⁰ I use "master singer" when referring to singers who have performed for years; who have mastered a song; whose knowledge as a singer appears to be respected, possibly throughout the ESCR; and who travel to and sing at ceremonies throughout the ESCR. Of course, my idea of who might fall into this category is limited to my experience.

²¹ My term.

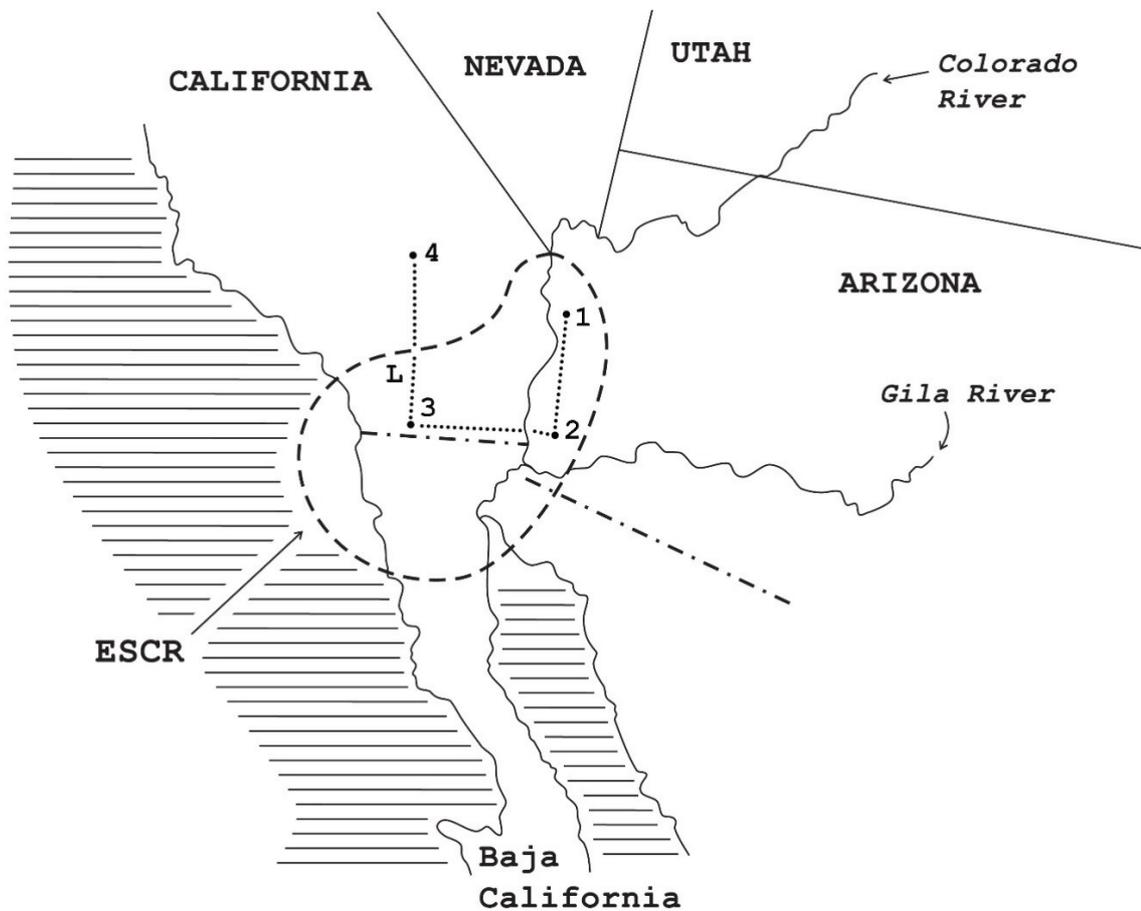
melodic/rhythmic profile generated as the performers sing and dance its songs. The singing generally begins with the singers sitting on a bench or row of chairs. The dancers and friends and relatives stand on the dance floor, facing the singers. In response to the leader's cue (consisting of verbal shouts and physical gestures such as the raising of his gourd while generating a distinct percussive pattern); the helpers join in, singing in unison. In response to another cue, the singers stand up and the singing group begins to dance. Dance steps can be economical, reflecting the fact that a singing group often dances through night, with the most basic dance step involving a shifting of one's weight from one foot to the other, in time with the music. All elements are woven together like a finely stitched embroidery, each supportive of yet framed by the other. This includes the dance steps, the rhythmic patterns articulated with the gourds, and the words of each song. The most common percussion musical instrument is a seed-filled gourd²², the act of using the gourd sometimes being referred to as "throw'n gourd." Through years of participation and practice, singers learn to produce complex rhythmic patterns as they "throw gourd." While dancing, a singer's gourd stroke is integrated with each dance step. A gourd stroke emanates from a singer's core and legs, communicated through his shoulder, the forearm, to the singer's circling wrist, the action of which determines the way(s) in which the seeds make contact with the inside walls of the gourd, thus generating the

sound. Singers can generate sharp, staccato sounds. Or, they also create softer, shushing, or swishing sounds. They create the latter sounds by moving the seeds more gently and slowly. The following illustration shows how the that seeds might move, inside of a gourd while generating either a shushing or a staccato crashing sound (See Figure 2)²³.

The next illustration depicts a gourd pattern that might be used in a three-beat rhythmic pattern (See Figure 3). The sound of the seeds crashing or rolling against the gourd continues after the beat, for a brief moment. In the following illustration, each downward moving stroke is represented with the letter D. The swish stroke is represented with the letter S. In both strokes, the sounds of multiple seeds striking the insides of the gourd begin slightly before each beat and end slightly after it. In contrast to a down stroke, with the swish stroke, the sound of the seeds starts sooner and the duration of their sounds continues for slightly longer.

22 Other percussion instruments are used such as a tin-can rattle. Still others were used in the past such as deer toe rattles, sticks that were used to articulate rhythmic patterns on an overturned reed basket, and other more idiosyncratic forms such as the beating of one's chest with one's open hand.

23 Wiley Elliot, a Manzanita tribal member and singer, kindly shared the terms shushing and swishing with me. Personal communications, June-November, 2009. Although I have adopted Elliot's terminology for gourd strokes, any errors in interpretation that I have made are of course my own. See Elster (2010: 23-25).



The approximate outline of the ESCR is indicated with: "-----"
 The U.S./Mexican boundary is indicated with the symbol: "— · — · — · — ·"
 The itinerary of George Herzog's 1927 field trip, in the order he visited:
 1. Needles; 2. Yuma; 3. Campo; 4. the Serrano (location approximate).
 Helen Roberts worked with the Luiseño. "L" indicates their general location.

Figure 1. The Extended Southern California Region (ESCR)

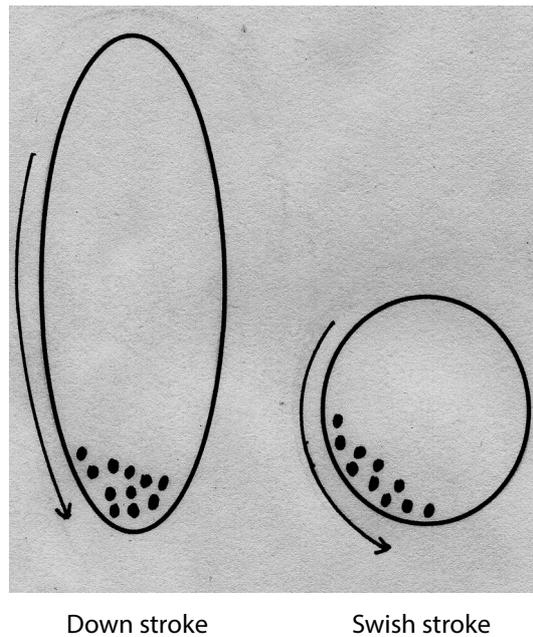


Figure 2. Two gourd strokes. Two possible strokes used when “throwing gourd.” These are the “down” stroke (on the left) and the “swish” stroke (on the right).

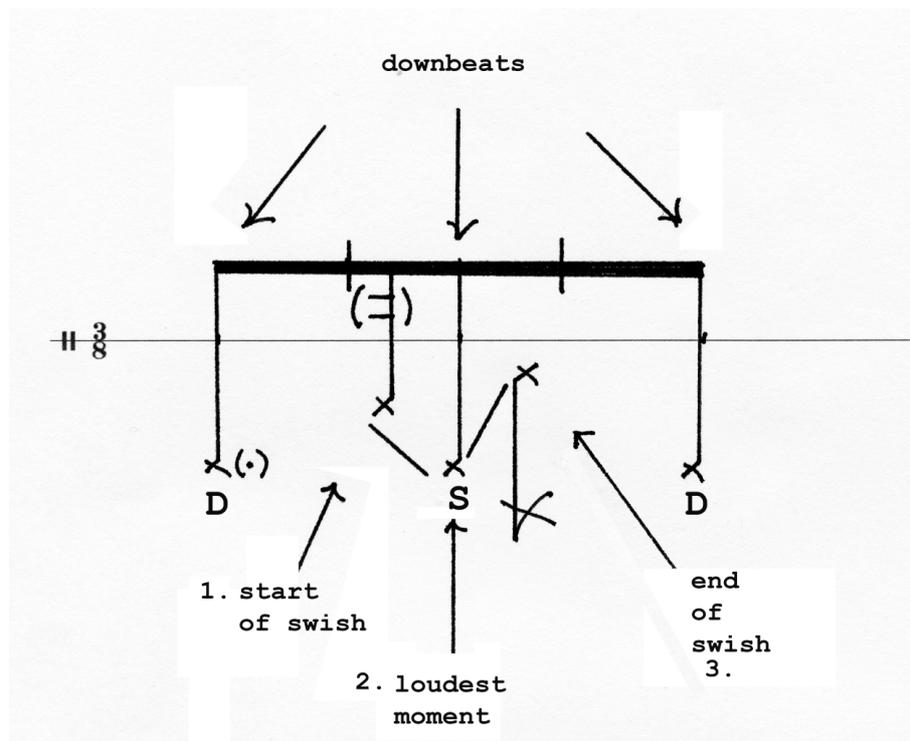


Figure 3. Gourd, a three-beat pattern. The figure shows both the more staccato “down” strokes and “swish” stroke, the latter of which emphasizes a slightly longer sliding of the seeds against the inner wall of the gourd²⁴.

24 See the map in Figure 1. Also, see Elster (2010: 23-25).

George Herzog (1901-1983)

During the summer of 1927, the ethnomusicologist George Herzog traveled to the ESCR to make audio recordings of singers from various tribes²⁵. Along the Colorado River, in Needles, California, he interviewed and made audio recordings of Mohave singers. Close to the U.S/Mexican border, in Yuma, Arizona, he appears to have worked with Mohave, Quechan, and possibly Cocopa singers. Traveling westward, likely on the road to San Diego, California; Herzog stopped at the Campo reservation. From there, he traveled north to the Serrano, located in San Bernardino County, on the outskirts of Los Angeles²⁶.

In 1928, Herzog published his descriptions of the music that he had heard, in his paper: "The Yuman Musical Style" (YMS). He included thirty-nine musical transcriptions.

Born in 1901 in Budapest, Herzog attended the Budapest Royal Music Academy, starting in 1917. There, he studied with the composers Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967) and Béla Bartók (1881-1945), and his subjects included: counterpoint, music theory, and piano (Katz 2013: 199). Bartók's interest in studying and transcribing Hungarian folk music preceded his work with Herzog, as is made clear in a 1906 letter that Bartók wrote to his mother (Lampert 2008). Bartók probably introduced Herzog to the study and transcription of Hungarian folk music. Herzog continued his studies at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik, where he studied piano with the Dutch virtuoso Egon Petru (1881-1962) (Katz 2013: 200). In 1920, when the anti-Semitic Admiral Nicholas Horthy

rose to power, in Hungary, Herzog was unable to take his exams in order to qualify for admission to a university²⁷. From 1922 to 1924, Herzog volunteered as a research assistant at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv that curated a collection of some 10,000 phonograms and that was led by Erich von Hornbostel (1877-1935). (Note: wax cylinder audio recordings were called phonograms. They were recorded on phonographs, audio recording machines.)

By the first decade of the 1900's, the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv had already set up a program to encourage researchers to make audio recordings from around the world.

The arrangement was clear. They [researchers] received a phonograph with the necessary equipment and a bulk of blank [wax] cylinders from the Archive. Upon their return, the equipment was given back, together with a so-called "journal"... Hornbostel himself or other researchers transcribed the music and published the material. (Koch, Wiedmann and Ziegler 2004: 227)

At the Archiv, Hornbostel and others developed and standardized strategies for making musical transcriptions. They included their decision to use metronome markings to indicate tempo rather than Italian terms that were not relevant for non-European music. Further, they agreed upon symbols to indicate pitches that fell between the cracks of the equal tempered scale. Herzog must have been familiar with this system since he transcribed some 400 wax cylinders while at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv. In 1924, Franz Boas asked Hornbostel to send him a student who:

25 On aluminum discs.

26 His itinerary is shown as a sequence of points: 1-4, connected by a dotted line in Figure 1.

27 Herzog was Jewish. Also, see Inman (1986).

could be trained to carry out anthropological investigations of American Indian music. Von Hornbostel offered the opportunity to Herzog and he eagerly accepted, motivated in part by the political conditions at the time in Germany.

Not able to take his exams in Hungary, Herzog moved to Serbia, where he took his graduate entrance exams in the Yugoslav language. In 1924, he entered graduate school at Columbia University (Inman 1986), where he studied anthropology with Boas. From 1929 to 1931, he was a research assistant at the University of Chicago, where studied with the linguist Edward Sapir. In 1931, Sapir was hired by Yale, at which time he asked his students to join him as lecturers. This included George Herzog, Helen Roberts, and others (Katz 2013: 200). Roberts and Herzog shared a mutual interest in establishing an archive at Yale²⁸.

Herzog and Helen Roberts, his associate at Yale, urged a reluctant Sapir to at least rent the Fairchild record²⁹ for a trial period in support of the plans to establish at Yale a sound archive of national importance (Inman 1986).

Robert's fieldwork in the Southwest may have set an example for Herzog. She deposited her first audio recordings in 1923, of Hawaiian music. In 1926 she deposited recordings from a number of tribes, including the Luiseño who are located northeast of San Diego, California³⁰. In 1928, she deposited recordings of the Hopi and Pueblo. The next year, she deposited more recordings, made at other Pueblo villages. Her monograph on

Luiseño music, "Form in Primitive Music", appeared in 1933 and included musical transcriptions (Roberts 1933).

Boas and Herzog may have been influenced by Robert's field studies. According to Marilyn Graf, archivist with the Indiana Archives of Traditional Music: "In the summer of 1927, Franz Boas asked George Herzog to make a survey of Indian music in the Southwest." That summer, he made recordings in the ESCR and in New Mexico, with a number of Pueblo tribes.

Thus, when visited the ESCR in 1927, Herzog was a graduate student at Columbia. He was experienced in Hornbostel's methods for taking field notes and making musical transcriptions; further, he was a European-trained musician and pianist with an interest in the traditional musics of the world.

Writings on the work of the Berlin Phonogram Archiv have focused on the number of phonograms held in this archive, the fact that musical transcriptions were made, that Hornbostel and others developed a standardized set symbols to be used when making musical transcriptions, and the musical expertise of those who made the musical transcriptions. Unmentioned, however, is the question of what might happen when a musician encountered an audio recording of a people for which he or she had no cultural context. I am not thinking about a general knowledge of a people and their customs; I am thinking of the kinesthetic memory that musicians apparently can develop upon observing music making. Or as Mitchell and Gallaher wrote in their article titled *Embodying Music: Matching Music and Dance in Memory* (2001), "music prompts kinesthetic (motor) responses in both children and adults that

28 Mary Wheelright donated two thousand cylinders to the "new Yale archive." (Inman 1986: 3).

29 A wax cylinder recording machine.

30 By the mid 1920's, Roberts had begun to do fieldwork and make audio recordings. For the approximate location of the Luiseño tribes, see the symbol "L" on the map in Figure 1.

often match some aspect of the music" (p. 66), or "when someone observes a dance, he or she can perform similar actions, translating the visual images from the dancer into kinesthetic and visual of himself or herself" (p. 67)

When Herzog and Hornbostel listened to recordings of music that they had experienced firsthand, might they have evoked and remembered the dance steps that went with that music? What might have occurred, when they listened to music for which they had no visual or first-hand kinesthetic cues, as in: I am listening to some music; yet, because I have never visited or watched the singers and the dancers, making this music, I have no idea how they move or gesture, as they made this music? Musicians, known to be a creative bunch, to say the least, may have believed that they could discern the rhythmic patterns they were hearing. And in some cases, they may have been correct. In other instances, their guesses might have proven to be incorrect.

Herzog faced a variation of this problem, when he transcribed the audio recordings that he had made of ESCR singers; but, it may not have been because he lacked visual cues. As we shall see, he had certainly watched singers and dancers, firsthand. I am not sure, however, that his training at the Berlin-Archiv

prepared him to put together visual information with audio, when it came to making musical transcriptions. Further, as we shall see, ESCR musicians may pose a unique challenge, not just for Herzog, but for any musician who has not spent time dancing to ESCR music.

Based on my fieldwork since the early 1990's and on what singers have kindly shared with me, I know that ESCR song cycles contain both "single-" and "double step" dances. The former utilize a pattern of either two's or three's, from start to finish. While maintaining a steady underlying rhythmic tactus, a double-step song shifts between two's and three's, as shown in Method 1, in Figure 4.

Know implicitly by each singing group, double-step dances introduce both variety and artistry into the already finely woven mesh that links together the words of a song with its melody, its dance steps, and with the rhythmic patterns articulated by the gourds. Having said this, a double step song is likely to throw off novices who may be expecting a song's initial rhythmic pattern (in two's, or in three's) to continue from start to finish. For a beginner, in a double step song, rhythmic shifts can seem to come without warning. This is one element that Herzog would need to respond to when transcribing the recordings that he had made.

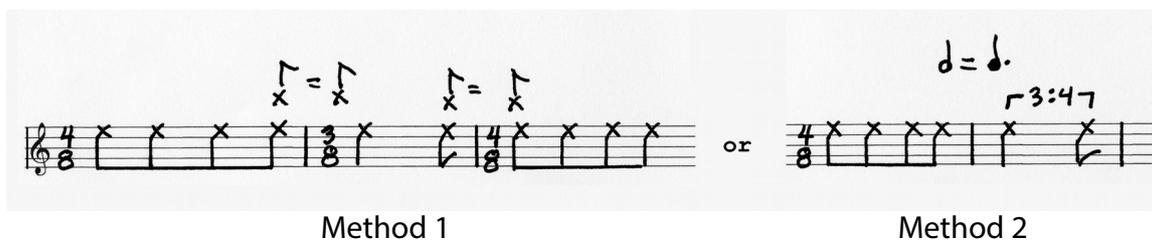


Figure 4. Two types of rhythmic variation

In his YMS, Herzog indicates that he realized that rhythmic shifts were occurring. But as I will demonstrate, it is not clear that he perceived the presence of an underlying tactus, as shown in Method 1 of Figure 4; or whether he thought that the duration of each measure remained the constant unit but that the number of beats per measure might change, as is indicated in Method 2 of Figure 4. Two types of rhythmic variation. Here is an excerpt of what Herzog wrote. Note that while he mentions rhythmic variation, he does not say whether there is a steady underlying tactus:

In more than half of the songs the time-unit ("bar") is not constant within the song. The most diverse combinations occur, which reappear without change in subsequent repetitions of the song. Such forms imply a more complex and more flexible feeling for rhythm than is ours, and they do not have to be interpreted as deviations from simple norms to which our rhythmic habits have become limited. (Herzog 1928: 194)

With another statement of his, he also does not clear up this issue. I will subsequently be asserting that because he did not clear up this problem, he made rhythmic errors in some of his transcriptions.

Often the same rhythmic configuration is found in subsequent time-units ("bars") of different length. This may appear as a shortening or lengthening of the same rhythmic figure, by eliding or adding a rhythmic unit (beat). (The last bar of a phrase is often set off in this way, as in [transcriptions] Nos. 1, 4, 29, 30). Or, the number of beats is kept but their actual time-values are changed; in which case the figure appears contracted or expanded. A common practice of this kind is a temporary change from a two-unit to a three-unit rhythm, a continuous movement like ♪♪ ♪♪ changes

for a few beats to ♪ ♪ or vice versa (See Nos. 5, 14, 26). In many songs, the rhythmic unit is a combination of these two elements (as in Nos. 12, 21, 25, 27, 30, 32). (Herzog 1928: 194)

As a concert pianist and lover of traditional music, Herzog was eminently qualified to discuss rhythmic variation. However, he had not been trained to gather and synthesize rhythmic information from a variety of sources: melody, dance movements, gourd patterns, and other types of movements and gestures. It seems clear that both Herzog and Roberts, his contemporary at Yale, were part of a group of scholars who spearheaded the recognition that so-called primitive peoples were as sophisticated as Europeans and Euro-Americans. Even a brief review of the literature on dance and anthropology or the study of music and dance will show that neither of these topics had drawn more than marginal interest, in Herzog's time. Concerning scholars who have been interested in both music and dance, Brenda Farnell, an anthropologist and dancer, noted that Boas (one of Herzog's teachers) was apparently always interested in this topic, as evidenced in the title of his 1888 publication: "On Certain Songs and Dances of the Kwakiutl of British Columbia" (Farnell 2003³¹). Farnell believes, however, that Boas missed a chance to bring this topic into the mainstream of scholarship, when he chose to exclude "gesture language" from his 1911 *The Handbook of American Indian Languages* (Farnell 2003: 46-47). With her brief chronology, Farnell demonstrate that there has always been interest in the nexus between anthropology and dance and music (Farnell 2003)³². She notes that Franz Boas, for

31 For the original, see Boas (1888).

32 For another historical discussion of scholars interested in dance and anthropology, see Torp (2013) and also Richter (2010).

instance, reconsidered this question, at the age of 70. Possibly in response Rudolf Laban's then recent work on dance notation (Laban 1928³³) and because he was working with Franziska Boas (1902-1988), his daughter and a modern dancer, and because he could now procure and travel with a motion picture camera; Boas once again visited the Kwakiutl, this time with both a wax cylinder recorder and a motion picture camera (Farnell 2003: 43-55). Technology had advanced, his intent was clear. Boas wanted to use audio recording in conjunction with film, to study the relationship between Kwakiutl music and dance.

Whereas Boas and Sapir and their students were ready to debunk the idea of the primitive, others have suggested that there would be quite a delay before scholars embraced the study of anthropology and dance or of music and dance. One group of scholars writes that these interests did not become disciplines until the 1960's and 1970's (Kringelbach and Skinner 2012: 2-5). In 1993, Grau (1993) reports that "The study of dance, let alone 'dance anthropology,' is still barely accepted by academic...". Farnell even goes so far as to suggest that the bifurcation of anthropology and dance reflected a belief in participant-observers that they needed to have a separation between themselves and the people they studied. Farnell writes:

The participant-observer may participate in a ghostlike manner, wandering through the ethnographic groves, making notes, drawing diagrams, learning to talk and ask questions; but not, for the most part, learning how to dance, how to gesture appropriately, how to make fires or build a hut, make dry meat, pound grain, or put a baby to sleep, and all the other myriads of activities that constitute

33 This was not published until 1928, well towards the end of Boas's career.

tacit and embodied knowledge in cultural practice. (Farnell 1994)

Thus, it seems possible that there has been a division between those who study music, and those who study dance, and those who study anthropology. Based on this, perhaps Herzog (in 1927) was more likely to stick with his pen and musical manuscript paper than to set them aside and become a participant-dancer.

What solutions, however, have scholars come up with for notating both music and dance on the same score? The answer to this question does not seem to be clear. While highly accurate, dance notations such as Labanotation seem so complex that most people could not be expected to understand their meaning. As Brenda (2002: 38) wrote, "few readers are literate in this [Labanotation] writing system". As a temporary remedy, I will be using a simple yet direct method, for indicating dance steps in Birdsongs.

***Hamini kovara*, a "single-step" song**

I will now consider one of the musical transcriptions that Herzog made of the eleven *Bird* songs that the Mohave singer Sitcomai sang, in Needles, Arizona.³⁴ Herzog described Sitcomai as being forty-five years of age. This song is *Hamini kovara*, a "single-step" and it uses the same rhythmic pattern from start to finish. A scan of Herzog's

34 Herzog's audio tapes and his fieldnotes are at the Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University. The field notes are not paginated but are divided into a number of categories. For the information that Herzog includes about Sitcomai, see the type-written notes that begin with the heading: "Phonograph records collected by George Herzog, Summer, 1927."

transcription of *Hameni korerāa* is shown in Figure 5.

As suggested in his transcription of this song, Herzog rarely used bar lines in his musical transcriptions. In this instance, he used a time signature of 21/4 in conjunction with a metronome reading of each quarter note = 106, implying a brisk and regular tempo.

I have listened to Herzog's audio recording of this song. The gourd or other percussion instrument is not audible. While there are moments when the singer Sitcomai distorts the underlying rhythmic pulse, the recording sounds like a song with a steady three-beat pattern. Because the underlying tactus is brisk, while dancing to this song, one might simply shift one's weight from one foot to the other, in time with the downbeat of first beat of each measure, as indicated in Figure 6³⁵.

As a first step towards indicating the steady, three-beat pattern, I have re-notated Herzog's transcription, adding bar lines, measure numbers, and a time signature of 3/4 (see Figure 7).

Each song (in the *Birdsong* song cycle) generally contains two sections, each of which may be repeated, a number of times. In my experience, it is easiest to perceive these sections while dancing and listening to the music, the gourd pattern, and the words. After having spent enough time dancing at ceremonies, I have found that it is also possible to get a sense of the rhythmic pattern of an individual song and even its dance steps³⁶. As I listen, I hear two sections.

35 This figure consists of the first two systems shown in Figure 8. *Hameni kaurerāay*, based on the tape. I developed the dance step symbol (the "foot") in Elster (2014).

36 This is one point where I need to emphasize that my perceptions may very well differ from those of others, especially when listening to a song that I have never seen performed.

The performer Sitcomai sings a number of repetitions of each of section. Herzog's transcription also indicates two sections; but they are in different places, ones that do not reflect the repetitions of the words and the melody, on the tape. While Herzog had developed a general understanding that each song contained two sections; it seems unlikely that he listened to his tape that much since his repeat signs do not delineate the sections 1 and 2, as heard on the audio recording. To indicate these sections and other aspects of this song, I have provided my own transcription (see Figure 8), with the first section consisting of measures 1-14. After repeating this first section, a number of times; Sitcomai sings some repetitions of section 2, consisting of measures 15-28. Beginning with measure 16, the singer reaches his higher pitch, for the song. A rise to the highest pitch level for a song, in the second section, is a characteristic that Herzog referred as the "Yuman rise." It apparently occurs in all *Birdsongs*. I have graphically aligned repeated phrases of this song such as *Hey-yo-oo* in measures 6-7 and 13-14, as well as others.

3. $\text{♩} = 102$

A

kau-va - ra(u) hi - ya - o ha - mi - ni kau - va - ra - i

kau - va - re (i) hi ya - o ha mi - ni kau - va - re

B

kau - va - rai hi - ya - a ha - mi - na - ko -

wa - - le - ε mi - na - ko wa - - ya - a

(A) etc. from ♩

ko - wa - le - ε - le ko - wa - le - ε le - en hi - ya - o

Var 1. ♩ Scale. (+)!

Birds song-series, ninth song. Rattling: $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$ etc. The record contains: 4A 2B 3A 2B 3A B. The first rendition of A begins at the sign. Ending as in No. 1.

Figure 5. A scan of Herzog's transcription of *Hamini kovara*.

Figure 6 shows two staves of music in 3/8 time. The first staff has lyrics "ha-me-nii kau-re-rāay-ii kau-re-rāa a hey-yo-oo" and is annotated with foot diagrams (L and R) and movement units (m1, m2). The second staff has lyrics "ha-me-nii-a kau-re-rā kau-re-rāa a hey-yo-oo" and is annotated with foot diagrams and movement units (m4, m5, m6).

Figure 6: Dance step³⁷

Figure 7 shows five staves of music in 3/4 time, with lyrics and harmonic markers (H1-H31) above the notes. The lyrics are: "kau - va - ra(u) hi - ya - o ha - mi - ni kau - va - ra - i", "kau - va - re(i) hi - ya - o ha - mi - ni kau - va - re", "kau - va - rai hi - ya - a ha - mi - na - ko -", "wa - - le - e mi - na - ko wa - - ya - a", and "ko - wa - le - e - le ko - wa - le - e le - en hi - ya - o".

Figure 7. Herzog's *Hamini kovara*, rewritten with bar lines

37 A possible dance step for a song with a steady, repeated three-beat pattern. I am using a graphic to indicate alternating between the left and right feet. The “movement units”, m1 – m6 are discussed below”.

1 ha-me-nii kau-re-rāay-ii kau-re-rāa-a hey-yo-oo

2 ha-me-nii-a kau-re-rā kau-re-rāa-a hey-yo-oo

3 o-me-na-ko-wel- ley-ey

4 o-me-na-ko-waay- ja-a

5 ka-wa-ley-a-ley ka-wa-ley-a-ley-a haay-yo-oo

6 ha-me-nii kau-re-rāay-a kau-re-rāa-a hey-ya-an

7 ha-me-nii-a kau-re-rā kau-re-rāa-a hey-yo-oo

Figure 8. *Hameni kaurerāay*, based on the tape

As indicated above³⁸, each individual *Birdsong* song has elements that seem to support and help to support a singing group as they perform through the night. Hamini is an excellent example (See Figure 6). Part of the support comes from I call the “movement

units” (MU) that draw on elements in the melody, the rhythm, and the dance steps. Each MU contains a repeated middle level pitch (“f”). From there, the singer either reaches up a third or down a fourth, to pitches that seem to give drive to the melody. Each time the singer reaches down to the fourth, he does this on an upbeat, and

38 See the heading: Elements of Performance:

the melody seems to be propelled back to the mid-level pitch. The final "hey-yo-oo", at the end of each system, is one of the few places where the singer reaches the lower fourth on a downbeat. This, immediately followed by a faster moving recitation of "hey-yo-oo" seems to add even more motion to the melody. This combined with the steady motion of the dance step (left foot, right, left, right...) produces the kind of tight-knit sound and motion that birdsingers are known for and that seems to help them move through the night, from song to song, and hour to hour.

Herzog's wrote down quite a few details, in his field notes³⁹. They include the main words for each song, and each song's rhythmic gourd pattern and on which beat the singers struck the ground with his foot. In addition to his audio recordings, the Archive of Traditional Music at Indiana also has musical transcriptions that Herzog made for many songs. a page of transcription for each song that he transcribed⁴⁰. Regarding Sitcomai, Herzog said:

Almost all of the songs have at the beginning a few words spoken; the number of the song [said by the singer] (for me) and joking remarks addressed for the dancers in order to clear them up [i.e. encourage them to dance]. At the end of all (except for No. 1, here singer has forgotten to do it) have 'ha' syllables repeated. At these [,] the dancers jump and "make jokes" Charlie Wilbur [Herzog's Mohave collaborator?] said around the seventh song: "these songs are not so good, now it becomes always better and better ...

39 The accession number for Sitcomai's recordings of eleven *Birdsongs* at the Indiana Archive of Traditional Music (ATM) are ATM Cylinder #'s 3992 through 4003.

40 Probably meaning this. Herzog is not clear.

Above, Herzog wrote that: "the dancers jump." It seems possible the he may have been referring to the jump dance step. As they execute a jump step, dancers pivot from the right to the left (or left to right), timing their jumps to coincide with a downbeat. As their feet touch the earth, the dancers bend their knees deeply while holding their arms out in front of their torsos (See Figure 9).

I learned more about what Sitcomai had said by playing the tape to a dear friend, Lone Dock (1924 – 2007), a Mohave elder, oral historian, an expert dancer, and always supportive of younger tribal members from throughout the ESCR who wanted to learn more about their respective cultures. Apparently starting with his 6th song, Sitcomai spoke in Mohave to those who had gathered to listen. Here are excerpts from Dock's translation⁴¹:

Sitcomai: This is the 6th song now you kick the ground or stomp your feet you know like keeping in time. You really dash.

Sitcomai: This song is the 7th so really get into it. This is the 7th song so I'm really gonna get into it. I'm gonna sing but really kick the ground.

Dock: Regarding Sitcomai's remarks, she explains, "It's like a boost or encouragement."

Sitcomai: This is the 8th song and what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna lift my foot up real high.

Dock: "What he means is [to keep] in time with the music [when Sitcomai says] I'm gonna stomp the ground."

41 On July 11, 2001, Lone Dock was kind enough to listen to Sitcomai's tape and the remarks that he made before each song. Lone Dock, Personal Communications.

Sitcomai: I'm gonna get really into it I'm gonna lift up my leg and stomp the ground. Lift both legs up and really keep in time with the music.

Sitcomai: Really get into the rhythm and really stomp your foot. That's what I'm gonna do he said.

Sitcomai: This is the tenth song and really get into it. You really stomp your feet.

Dock: "That's what it [the tape] says."

Dock's translation makes it clear that Herzog's time with Sitcomai transcended the strict confines of an ethnographer-interviewee relationship. For, as Sitcomai continued to

sing, a lens seems to have been opening up into how tribal members gathered around a singer and began to dance. In addition, Dock helps us to understand what and how Sitcomai was communicating with and asking his audience to do, namely to dance with all their heart. Not just as conveyed by Sitcomai's remarks but also based on my own experience dance seems to be an element that cannot be separated from any of the other elements that comprise a *Birdsong*. Indeed, singing *Bird* means *throw'n gourd* while singing and dancing. For those interested in learning more about *Birdsongs*, learning to dance to them is a step that no one should leave out.

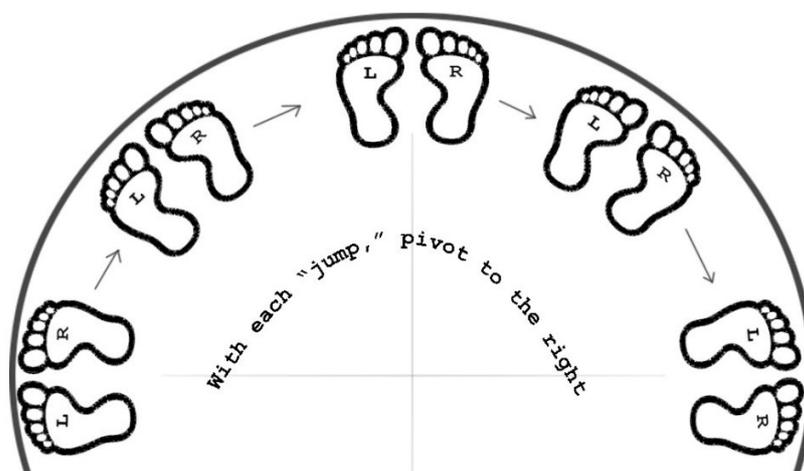


Figure 9. The jump step.

Conclusion

I do not see how Herzog could have been expected to discern either the steady underlying tactus or these rhythmic shifts, based solely on listening to his recordings. It seems possible that he along with others came to expect that they could proceed in this fashion in part because they were such superbly trained European musicians. When it comes to making musical transcriptions of *Birdsongs*, there apparently is no substitute for learning to dance to these songs and perhaps even learning to *throw gourd*. Studying dance as a strategy for learning more about a people's music does not appear to have been part of the philosophy suggested to the musicians who were making musical transcriptions of the cylinders at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv. In this sense, Herzog was the recipient of a training that seems antiquated today. On the other hand, his 1927 audio recordings of ESCR musicians along with his field notes would seem to constitute materials of a kind that might not be found today. At the same time, *Bird* is a song-cycle that many of today's singer know. I hope that this discussion may be of use to tribal scholars or others who would like to rescue jewels that may be hidden away in archives and publications from nearly a century ago, waiting to be awoken.

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