

From reviews of
MUSIC GROOVES: ESSAYS AND DIALOGUES
Charles Keil & Steven Feld
The University of Chicago Press; November 1994
1995 Chicago Folklore Prize

"Charles Keil and Steven Feld, both musicians and both among the very best anthropologically trained ethnomusicologists alive today, have tried to forge a book that recreates both the musical and the scholarly creative process and experience...The reprinted texts alone should be read by everyone studying the performing arts today. They were important when they appeared individually, and taken together they form a central text for the discussion of music...This is an important book for what it has tried to do, what it has succeeded in doing, and what each reader will have to judge the success of. All too rarely have we had a scholarly performance event incorporated in discussions of performance, and that in itself is a victory of the imagination over the printed medium."

-Anthony Seeger, in AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST,
September 1997

"In Music Grooves, Charles Keil and Steven Feld offer one of the most thoughtful and thought-provoking reflections on music, culture, and the academy to come along in recent years...Dialogue, conversation, participation -- Music Grooves is not simply 'about' these ideas, it enacts them. It is one of the chief virtues of this book that its structuring demands an engagement on the part of the reader; the act of reading becomes, by necessity, participatory...In the end, Music Grooves is a wonderful reminder to us all that musical participation *is* transformative -- which is why we were drawn into the business of studying it in the first place. This extraordinary book is participatory to the end, but the conversation it represents is never-ending."

-David Ake, in AMERICAN MUSIC, July 1997

"As a book which seeks not merely to explore intellectually but to inspire 'participatory consciousness,' it was clearly a stunning success with me!"...Keil and Feld "choose to write their personalities, their humanness, into this book and I applaud

them for that...If only because it places objects of study and authors' subjectivities in new relationships, relationships where the participant discrepancies enable a sort of 'lifting-up-over' the issues, this anthology is an inspiring and provocative read whether or not you've previously encountered the reprinted articles."

-Beverly Diamond, in CANADIAN FOLKLORE, Fall 1966

"Music Grooves exploits the essay collection's naturally segmented form to its own purposes. Its apparent incoherence is simply a refusal of closure. All those photos and footnotes and dialogues in which the two scholars occasionally try on each other's far-from-identical positions evoke an intellectual continuum they never get to the end or bottom of."

-Robert Christgau, in VOICE LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, May 1996

"Like Alan Merriam's The Anthropology of Music, this book will be seen as a landmark for exploring important issues of our time."

-Carl Rahkonen, in NOTES, March 1966

"Keil and Feld have spent most of their careers scouting the borders of their subject, bringing in fresh news, new maps of spaces previously imagined to be aesthetically blank. Some of the ground explored in their earlier essays has now been settled more abundantly, become more familiar. But as a point of review, a survey of where music studies have come in the last thirty years, and an intimation of some of the directions in which they might proceed, this is perhaps the most valuable text since Middleton's Studying Popular Music."

-Bruce Johnson, in PERFECT BEAT, January 1996

"Music Grooves is an involving dialogue on 'the groove' as participatory production and appreciation of live, mediated, mediated-and-live, and mediated-and-mediated music. With insight, wit and drama, musician-scholars Charles Keil and Steven Feld trace this idea in analytic contexts ranging from micro-measurement of the rhythmic patterns that enable grooving in jazz, to style as a source of participatory experience of cultural meaning, to questions of expropriation and mediation of the participatory groove by transnational economic

institutions. Their intellectually probing dialogue -- lively, transcribed and edited conversations between the two, chronologically and topically arranged reworkings of several of each author's pieces, and well-worked scholarly notes -- establishes a paradigmatic musicology in the fullest and best sense of discourse exploring music, language and communication in a variety of cultures and time periods. The engaged scholars' reflexivity about their ongoing personal involvement with the groove, their scholarly mentors and theirs and others' fieldwork is exemplary. Keil and Feld's clarity, mastery and enthusiasm grace every aspect of this upbeat, fascinating, elegantly crafted conversation."

-Citation by the Judges, 1995 Chicago Folklore Prize

"Music Grooves is a special and marvelous book...rewarding to read." Keil and Feld "pursue a 'liberating musicology' that opposes the centers of music industry power that leads to music culture homogeneity and product control...Musicians are ready for this kind of book, even if they take its authors to task."

-Ron Welburn, in JAZZTIMES, December 1995

"I anticipate plentiful future discoveries emerging from these ideas, not only for music criticism which can elevate textural and rhythmic microworlds to their rightful place in our aesthetic value system, but for a more grounded awareness of our own insecure place in the thick rainforest of mediated, marketed, MIDI-ed music."

-David Toop, in THE WIRE, July 1995

"...Music Grooves is essential reading for those pondering the 'doubly social' expanse of jazz, blues...and traditional musics rife with 'participatory discrepancies' in timbre, pitch, rhythms, etc. which invite listeners into the music's phenomenological progression through time. "

-Andy Bartlett, in CADENCE, June 1995