

THE DIVISION OF MUSIC HISTORY, THEORY, AND ETHNOMUSICOLOGY PRESENTS:

AMANDA MINKS

*Mapping Culture across Borders:
Music Research and U.S.-Mexico Relations
in the 1930s and 40s*

LECTURE

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

4 p.m. - 5 p.m., Main Music Building, Room 321
Reception to follow in the Green Room



In the 1930s and 40s, recording technology and music research were increasingly put to work in the documentation of local musics as a representation of regional, national, or universal human heritage in the Americas. This work was carried out under the auspices of national and international organizations that crafted cultural policies along with hierarchies of difference and value. The intellectual, political, and artistic interaction between Mexico and the United States was especially intimate and multilayered due to their shared history and border. In this presentation, I will examine how U.S. music researchers such as Charles Seeger, Henrietta Yurchenco, and Alan Lomax engaged (or failed to engage) with Mexican music, and how their projects intersected with broader inter-American politics. I argue for a more nuanced view of a history that is usually reduced to either celebratory homage of disciplinary forebears or critical dismissal of cultural imperialism. This analysis helps to recover the role of Mexican and other Latin American musics in the development of ethnomusicology as a discipline and practice. More broadly, it historicizes the contemporary discourse of Latino influence in the U.S. by emphasizing the deep roots of Latin American music in U.S. territory, and the long-term mutual influence between the U.S. and Mexico in cultural and political realms.

Amanda Minks is an Associate Professor in the Honors College of the University of Oklahoma. She has a Master's degree from Wesleyan University and a Ph.D. from Columbia University, both in ethnomusicology, and she also studied linguistic anthropology at NYU. She has received fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the Fulbright Institute of International Education, among others. Her first book is entitled *Voices of Play: Miskitu Children's Speech and Song on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua*, published by the University of Arizona Press in 2013. It is an analysis of indigenous children's multilingual discourse and intercultural identities shaped by migration and media. Her interest in intercultural contact zones also led to her current research for a book tentatively titled *Hearing Heritage: Music, Statecraft, and International Organizations in the Americas*.