

In Memoriam

Lise Waxer (1965-2002)

It was in 1988 that Lise Waxer first came to my office at York University, full of enthusiasm for the ethnomusicology classes she had taken with Tim Rice at the University of Toronto, as an undergraduate Music student, and eager to begin her M.A. at York University. She struck me as perhaps the most self-assured young woman I had ever met, absolutely clear about her determination to be an ethnomusicologist. I recall that she wanted to discuss the Geertzian directive that we should study, not traditions, concepts, or codes of behaviour, but the “webs of significance” in specific societies, the complex and often contradictory symbolic systems created in the course of living. Not the usual topic of discussion with an incoming Master’s student!

She completed that M.A. (1991) as well as a Ph.D. at the University of Illinois (1998), researching salsa communities in Toronto, initially; and then in Colombia she married the Colombian writer and journalist Medardo Arias Satizábal. In her brief 37 years, she had already edited an important anthology, *Situating Salsa. Global Markets and Local Meaning in Latin Popular Music* (Routledge, 2002) and published a social history of salsa in Cali, entitled *The City of Musical Memory* (Wesleyan University Press, 2002), as well as articles in *Ethnomusicology*, the *Latin American Music Review* and other major journals. The last paper I heard her present was an initial report on a new project in Colombia. The fact that she was always ready for the next challenge and eager for life makes her tragic passing so hard to believe.

Since 1997, Lise taught at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, where she also established the performance ensemble “Salsification.” At the time of her death, tributes from her students attested to her mentorship, her diverse performance skills, and her gift for helping students understand how much music tells us about life. Among other tributes, the Popular Music Section of the Society for Ethnomusicology has named their annual prize for the best student paper presented at an SEM meeting The Lise Waxer Prize.

In the introduction to *Situating Salsa*, she explains that she wants her work to celebrate the “overarching nature as a joyful and exuberant

musical style...in all its transnational and global contexts” (2002, 18). Her own nature was not unlike her characterization of the music she loved. We shall long remember and admire her intellect, her courage, and her passion for music.

Beverley Diamond

Jerry Goodis (1929-2002)

Jerry Goodis, one of the original Travellers, died near Harrison Hot Springs, B.C., this November. The son of a union organizer, he was born in Toronto’s garment district. He attended Central Technical School on Harbord Street, where a teacher told him he should go into construction because he would never make it in advertising. Nonetheless, Jerry founded an ad agency with his half-brother and a friend.

Along with Sid Dolgay, Simone Johnston, and Jerry Gray, he formed Canada’s first folk quartette, the legendary The Travellers, and criss-crossed Canada singing “This Land Is Your Land” in union halls and picket lines. Eventually, his little ad company picked up a contract for another little company called Hush Puppies, and the rest, as they say, is history. Jerry quit The Travellers and his ad agency became arguably the biggest and most famous ad agency in the country.

In the 1970s he joined a group of advertisers working on Pierre Trudeau’s campaign; Jerry remained a top advisor for Trudeau. From singing on picket lines to the PMO, it was a heady ride, the stuff of legends. It was not to last. After years on the top, he fell on hard times and lost money heavily. His personal life suffered, too, with divorces and estrangement from his children.

Finally, he retired to British Columbia with his third wife, to live a simple life far from the madding crowd. Alas, he soon complained of a backache, which turned out to be spinal cancer. The end was mercifully swift, although not swift enough to spare him the indignity of paralysis and the inability to speak.

But his voice lives on in those early recordings of The Travellers.

Lorne Brown