

From the Editor

By Lyn Miller-Lachmann

I write these words at a difficult time for our country and for the world. Despite the efforts of the United Nations and the global community to reach a diplomatic solution, United States and British forces invaded Iraq in March of this year. Although the repressive regime of Saddam Hussein toppled shortly afterward, the work of reconstructing a devastated country and rebuilding strained U.S. alliances around the world has only begun. Whether one supported or opposed the war—most polls at the time showed 70 percent of Americans in favor, 30 percent against—one cannot predict the ultimate impact of this event on the people of Iraq, the place of the United States in the global community, and the future of America's multicultural democracy.

When I think of the lives lost—Iraqi, British, and American—as a result of this war, lives that can never be rebuilt, reconstructed, or replaced, I think of two individuals whose deaths in the past nine months have left huge holes in my own life. That is what death does, especially death that is sudden, violent, unexpected, or premature. The loss of a loved one, a friend, a teacher, or a mentor is difficult to bear, whether the death results from natural causes, an accident, or as has happened far too often in recent years, human malevolence. Those who remain must carry on, but the loss makes our job that much harder; we know things will never be the same.

On October 25, 2002, our nation and world lost a tireless voice for peace, justice, and understanding among diverse cultures when Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone died in a plane crash along with his wife, daughter, and five others, 11 days before a close election in which he had just taken the lead. The son of Russian Jewish immigrants, Wellstone taught political science at Carleton College from 1969 to 1990. Influenced by the civil rights movement, he both participated in and wrote about the efforts of low-income and politically powerless individuals to organize themselves into articulate, powerful groups in order to improve their lives. He carried his organizing skills and his dedication to social and economic justice to the United States Senate, winning in an underfinanced long-shot campaign that nonetheless gained the enthusiastic support of Minnesota's African-American and immigrant communities, women, farmers, union members, and others. In the Senate, he fought for money for schools and libraries and against high-stakes testing that punished children for the failures of underfunded and segregated schools. He and I shared a common heritage and commitment to the principle of *tikkun olam*—repair of the world—central to Judaism. For the years that he served in the Senate, I considered him my voice in the government and a leader from my own community. His death leaves a void that may not be filled in my lifetime.

Zoë Anglesey was an important person in my life and important to *MultiCultural Review* as well. When she lost her 16-month battle with cancer on February 12, 2003, she left behind four daughters, many friends, and countless readers who have become more inspired and wiser from reading her poems, translations, and essays. Her essay published in the September 1997 issue of *MultiCultural Review*, "Moving from an Obsolete Lingo to a Vocabulary of Respect," questioned many of the terms we take for granted, such as "ethnic," "minority," "biracial" and "multiracial," and even "American." Arguing for alternative terms chosen by members of the groups themselves, as well as terms that do not isolate and divide people, she reminded us that even "race" is an arbitrary social construct that uses physical appearance to distinguish people who are genetically similar. With that issue, Zoë began her service as the Music/Poetry Subject Editor of *MultiCultural Review*, and in this position she evaluated dozens of new books, interviewed authors, and advised me on the journal's direction. Even after the experimental treatments had failed and she learned that her situation was hopeless, she insisted on finishing her reviews for the journal; this issue features two that she dictated to me in late January—Giaconda Belli's memoir *The Country Under My Skin* and E. Wright Ledbetter's collection of photos entitled *Cuba: Picturing Change*.

Zoë was, above all, a poet, and as a poet she taught by direct instruction and by example. When I resumed writing in that genre last fall after a 15-year hiatus, she patiently explained to me the difference between a poem and an essay and encour-

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ing and beautiful. The resulting studio work is well done in a tasteful and appropriate fashion.

Generally speaking, the music on this marvelous recording is melodic, lyrical, and rhythmic. Its ethos is substantive and cross-cultural. That is, this music speaks to all people of all ages. Chanting is popular here, comparing favorably with music of the early Middle Ages of the Western world. At the same time, however, treatments of rhythm and individual capability are very contemporary.

Melodic types are modal, and repetition is interesting, adding together to create musical form. This disc is highly recommended as a source of beauty, enlightenment, and peace.

—Geary Larrick
Stevens Point, Wis.

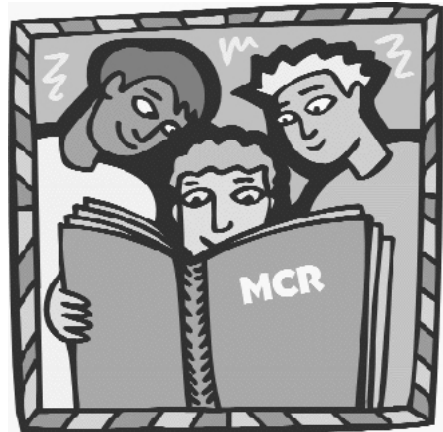
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The Rough Guide to the Music of the Indian Ocean. London: World Music Network, 2002. 78 minutes. CD. \$16.98.

This fascinating recording is, in general, highly rhythmic in popular or folk styles. Voice, strings, percussion, and wind instruments are here played with a certain amount of expertise, as well as uplifting entertainment.

The music is diverse and varied, utilizing several dialects. Yet these musicians are not at all isolated from the rest of the world. Outside forms such as polka, hip hop, and reggae help to enrich artistic forms from Asian and African sources. The guitar, accordion, and zither are not foreign to these people, in addition to many forms of drums. Indeed, the 18 segments on this marvelous record make the culture and the people come alive.

Musical ensembles include Lego, Seychelles All Stars, Tam-Tam des Cools, a string band, and the Cultural Musical Club, which counts a double bass player among its members. Highly recommended for musical joy.



Coming in the September Issue of MultiCultural Review

- ***Cultural Programming
in the Library***
- ***Children's Books about
Afghanistan***
- ***Jews in Latin America***

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aged me to send my best work to literary journals. Three weeks before she died I visited her in Brooklyn and told her that a prestigious literary journal had accepted one of my poems—her favorite of the ones I'd written. I consider myself the last of her students, who number in the dozens if not the hundreds, many of whose careers she launched by including their poems in the various anthologies she edited. In addition, she translated the works of poets and novelists from Latin America, giving them a voice in English and bringing their works to new audiences. Her commitment to translation grew out of her belief that borders between nations, like obsolete and pejorative words, are socially constructed boundaries that deserve destruction.

As a writer dedicated to breaking down boundaries that divide people, Zoë was a consistent advocate for peace. She opposed the Vietnam War and U.S.

interventions in Latin America, from Chile in the early 1970s to Central America in the 1980s to the continued test bombing of Vieques today. Living in Brooklyn, she witnessed the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and created a moving photo-essay about the 9/11 memorials in New York City and how they reflected the city's diverse cultures. The essay, "Remembering 9/11," was published last spring in *Dream in Color*, *MultiCultural Review's* creative arts web site (www.mcreview.com/dreamincolor). The cover of the June 2002 issue of *MultiCultural Review* featured one of Zoë's photos, a memorial in Union Square in Lower Manhattan. Although suffering the effects of the cancer that would soon claim her life, Zoë continued to write poems and essays in favor of peace and against wars of vengeance. She read her work at a variety of events throughout New York City, and two

of her poems, "Kabul: A Reappearing Scene" and "A Case Study," also appeared in *Dream in Color*.

Zoë opposed war because she understood the impact of death on the survivors irrespective of culture, for we share a common humanity. She concluded her essay on the 9/11 memorials by writing, "All deaths and sorrow are huge and beyond our capacity to accept. That is what I found remarkable: The families holding photos of their loved ones hope to find survivors or at least come upon bodies intact for identification. Life remains powerful even in the face of death. I don't want more lives to be taken in my name. Yes, those who are responsible want death more than life. I hope we want peace."

