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The Politics of 'Sound Quantum' in Contemporary Afro-Inuit Musical Practice

In "The Politics of 'Sound Quantum' in Contemporary Afro-Inuit Musical Practice," Perea addresses how the lived experiences and musical expressions of individuals of mixed Inuit and African American descent make audible the intersections between and politics of Blackness and Indigeneity in Alaska. She focuses on "tribal funk" innovators Stephen and Phillip Blanchett and the "Eskimo Flow" of DJs HeTook and RiverFlowz (twin brothers Julien and Torin Jacobs), paying particular attention to the ways in which their distinctive styles challenge racialized expectations of Native American and African American performance practices. Their work provides a crucial intervention to what Perea refers to as "sound quantum" ideology, which parallels the colonial and oppositional logics of who "counts" as a Native American or African American person endemic to "blood quantum" and "one drop" ideologies. By listening critically to "Red" and "Black" musical entanglements, this work demonstrates both the multiplicity of Alaska Native musical life and the fluidity of contemporary Indigenous identity formation.

JESSICA BISSETT PEREA is currently working on a book project about Circumpolar Inuit music, performance art cultures, and the politics of self-determination. Drawing upon ethnographic and archival research, Indigenous methodologies, and critical race theory, her research contextualizes the lived experiences and movements of a diverse cadre of Inuit performance artists in order to examine processes and problems of colonial and racial difference as amplified by the usage of "non-traditional" performance practices over time. Jessica is from the Matanuska-Susitna Valley (just north of Anchorage) and is an enrolled member of the Knik Tribe and a descendant shareholder in Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (an ANCSA Corporation). Her innovative dissertation research and dedication to community outreach were recognized with a 2010 Alaska Native Visionary Award, presented by the Alaska Native Heritage Month committee and board of directors. She completed her Ph.D. in Musicology at the University of California, Los Angeles in June 2011 and is currently in residence at Berkeley's Department of Music as a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow.

MONDAY, APRIL 22ND
3:30 - 5:00PM
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