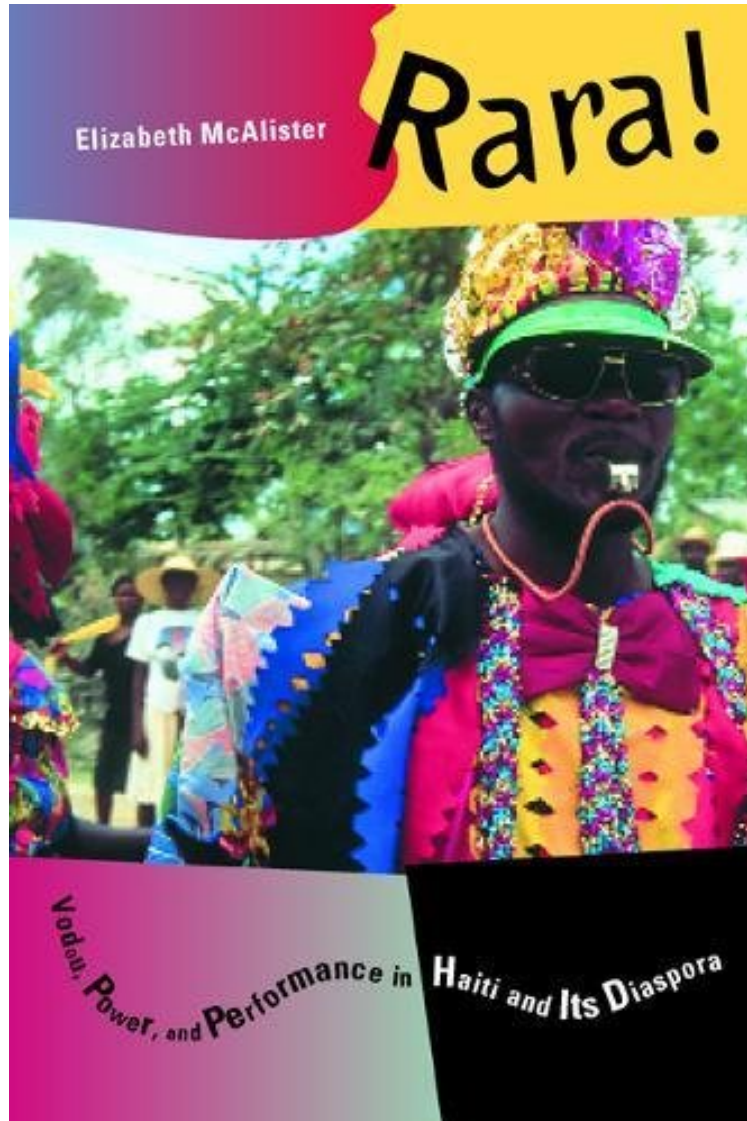


Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora

Elizabeth McAlister

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Elizabeth McAlister : Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. go Rara go By bamboo grove Be sure that your copy comes with the cd if you buy used, because the seller does not always indicate this on their listing. This book gave great insights on the culture and spirituality of the congo people and of Haiti. It does not get deep enough or accurate enough on some concepts, but the author is focused of the musical aspect of it. She does get somewhat a mention of becoming

involved, but still writes as an outsider anthropologist. However her documentation is still a valued read. She does try to apply her political views to some things, which at times seems to want to please certain groups, other times it is honest and won't. There are limitations on political and historical outlook. For example on the scapegoat Jew effigy. While people embraced being called devils and sorcerers, and it was about the easter season, it was not viewed as much and as homogenous as the author states. Some christians do not blame jews for jesus death as being part of gods will and covenant, and the jews were merely players. She notes that haitians do not go after jews on the island, however has no idea that the jews were the ones who funded the europeans to colonialize and slave, as christians were morally against banking, but needed funding. Instead she paints jews as the victims and merely merchants the population who settled in Haiti. Not much has been written about the haitian secret societies such as the bokor, bizongo, chanpwel, zobop. And we get to read a bit more here, as rara is a spiritual, cultural, carnival, military and civil protest form of band music.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating book. By JanoSanFran. This book was written by someone who obviously lives within the Haitian culture. There are so many gems of information, and so much understanding and love of the people and culture of this mysterious land. By the time I had finished reading it, barriers had been removed. I felt as though I had spent time there, had experienced the Rara bands and danced elbow to elbow with them. The subject matter is enticing, and the writing is enjoyable. I read this several years ago, and intend to reread it often, to increase my understanding of Haitian culture. Heck, I just want to dance with them again!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Amazing book. By L. J. Lowe. A fantastic piece of scholarship written by a fantastic scholar and human. If you are interested in Haiti and enjoy good ethnography, this should not be skipped.

Rara is a vibrant annual street festival in Haiti, when followers of the Afro-Creole religion called Vodou march loudly into public space to take an active role in politics. Working deftly with highly original ethnographic material, Elizabeth McAlister shows how Rara bands harness the power of Vodou spirits and the recently dead to broadcast coded points of view with historical, gendered, and transnational dimensions.

"McAlister demonstrates how religious ritual, Rara songs, and outbursts of violence during marches were coded messages of popular resistance to the ruling elite."--Choice

From the Inside Flap: "This is a startling, stunning, and fascinating book about the blend of music, religion, and politics in Haitian culture. McAlister's mastery of many different ways of knowing makes this study an endless source of insight, intrigue, and inspiration. Rara! succeeds magnificently as an exploration into Rara rituals and Haitian music, but it also presents original and generative insights into every aspect of Haiti's past, present, and future."

George Lipsitz, author of *Dangerous Crossroads*: "This is a major contribution to the literature on Vodou, Haiti, popular culture, Caribbean culture and music, transnational immigrant practices, and the corpus of black religions in the Americas. It is an extremely well-written, well researched and argued, and highly readable book."

Lawrence H. Mamiya, co-author of *The Black Church in the African American Experience*: "This is a smart and thoughtful book by a very talented ethnographer. Anyone interested in Haiti will appreciate the work of Elizabeth McAlister."

Karen Brown, author of *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*: "A rare in-depth look at an extremely popular, yet often misunderstood phenomenon. With this book and CD, Elizabeth McAlister, an involved observer, makes an incalculable contribution to our musical and cultural literature."

Edwidge Danticat, author of *The Farming of Bones: A Novel*