

## **SHORT BIO: Steven Feld**

Steven Feld is an anthropologist, filmmaker, sound artist/performer, and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology *Emeritus* at the University of New Mexico. After studies in music, film, and photography, he received the Ph.D in Anthropological Linguistics at Indiana University in 1979. From 1976 he began a research project in the Bosavi rainforest of Papua New Guinea. Results include the monograph *Sound and Sentiment* (republished 2012 in a 3rd and 30th anniversary edition), a *Bosavi-English-Tok Pisin Dictionary*, and essays, some published in his co-edited books *Music Grooves* and *Senses of Place*. From this work he also produced audio projects including *Voices of the Rainforest*. Key theoretical themes developed in this work are the anthropology of sound and voice; acoustemology, particularly regarding eco-cosmology as relational ontology; emotive sensuality; and experimental, dialogic writing, recording, and filmmaking. Work after 2000 has concentrated on related themes in the study of bells in Europe, Japan, Ghana, and Togo, published in CDs, DVDs, and books like *The Time of Bells*, *Skyros Carnival*, and *Santi, Animalì, e Suoni*. His most recent project concerns jazz in West Africa, published in the ten CD, four DVD, and book set *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra*. Feld's work has been supported and honored by MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships as well as book and film prizes.

## **LONG BIO: Steven Feld**

Steven Feld's academic research principally concerns the anthropology of sound, voice, senses, and media, incorporating linguistics and poetics, music and aesthetics, acoustics and ecology, film and photography. From 1975-2000 he studied the sound world of the Bosavi rainforest region in Papua New Guinea, from environmental sounds and bird calls to language, poetry and music. Later he engaged a multi-CD/DVD project on the history and culture of bells, with European research and recording in France, Finland, Norway, Greece, Italy, and Denmark. Since 2004 his main research concerns diasporic acoustemology and jazz history in Accra, Ghana, focusing on the legacy of Ghanaba, the man who introduced talking drums to American jazz drummers in the 1950s; on Accra Trane Station, a group that plays music inspired by John Coltrane on African instruments; and Por Por, a jazz-inspired music for honking squeeze-bulb car horns performed by union bus and truck drivers. This work is presented in ten CDs, four feature length documentaries and three short films, and his most recent book, *Jazz Cosmpolitanism in Accra*.

Among honors, Feld received a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation fellowship in 1991. In 1994 he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2003 he was named the 15th recipient of the Koizumi Fumio Prize for Ethnomusicology. Also in 2003 he received a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. His research has also been supported by the National Science Foundation, National Endowments for the Humanities and Arts, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and smaller private foundations.

Three of Feld's books have won prizes in anthropology and expressive culture: *Sound and Sentiment* received the 1991 J.I. Staley Prize from the School of American Research; *Music Grooves* (with Charles Keil) received the 1995 Chicago Folklore Prize; *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra* received the 2013 Elliott Skinner Prize from the Association for Africanist Anthropology. His other books include *Senses of Place* (edited with Keith Basso); *Bosavi-English-Tok Pisin Dictionary* (with Bambi Schieffelin and five Bosavi collaborators); and *Jean Rouch: Ciné-Ethnography* (as editor and translator). He has also contributed essays in the anthropology of sound and music, language and media arts to journals and edited books. His books and essays have been variously translated to French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, Greek, Russian, Turkish, Serbian, Chinese, and Japanese.

Feld has lectured or performed at some 150 universities, galleries, and museums, and has delivered numerous keynote addresses or distinguished lectures, including the Ernest Bloch Lectures in Music at University of California, Berkeley, the Annette Weiner Memorial Lecture at New York University, the Rayson Huang Lecture at University of Hong Kong, the Sigmund H. Danziger, Jr. Lecture in the Humanities, University of Chicago, the Centennial Lecture, University of Alberta, Canada, and the Bruno and Wanda Nettl Distinguished Lecture in Ethnomusicology, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He has also appeared on radio and TV programs in the US, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific.

Equally engaged as a documentary sound artist, Feld's New Guinea CD recordings include *Voices of the Rainforest* (produced by Grateful Dead percussionist Mickey Hart); *Rainforest Soundwalks*; and the triple CD/book *Bosavi: Rainforest Music from Papua New Guinea*. Popular with academics as well as radio audiences, these recordings put Papua New Guinea on the world music map; *Time Out New York* called them "anthropology that is truly wonderful to behold." His more recent European CDs include *New York Times* "Best of Season" *Bells and Winter Festivals of Greek Macedonia*.

In 2003 Feld founded VoxLox, a documentary sound art label; its first title was *Iraqi Music in A Time of War: Rahim AlHaj in New York* (2003). Since

2004, VoxLox has released more than twenty-five CDs and DVDs including Feld's series *The Time of Bells*, as well as *Suikinkutsu: A Japanese Underground Water Chime*, and the media book collaborations *Exposures: A White Woman in West Africa* (photographs by/of Virginia Ryan, with a text by Feld), and *Skyros Carnival*, (photographs by Dick Blau, text by Panayotis Panopoulos and Agapi Amanatidis, CD and DVD by Feld).

From his Africa work Feld produced *Por Por: Honk Horn Music of Ghana* for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, a US government gift to Ghana for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence in 2007. He also performed and toured in Africa, Europe, and the USA with Accra Trane Station, and produced and recorded with them on the CDs *Tribute to A Love Supreme*, *Meditations for John Coltrane*, *Another Blue Trane*, *Topographies of the Dark*, and *Bufo Variations*.

Feld has also worked for many years in the fields of documentary photography and film, producing work for festivals, galleries, and museums. *The Castaways Project*, in collaboration with visual artist Virginia Ryan, was featured at Manchester's Whitworth Gallery and Italy's Spoleto Festival in 2007-8. His feature-length documentary film, *A Por Por Funeral for Ashirifie*, won the Prix Bartók at the 2010 International Film Festival Jean Rouch in Paris.

Feld retired from thirty-five years of university teaching in 2014. He taught Anthropology and Music for ten years each at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of New Mexico, taught visual and sound communications for five years at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, and for shorter periods taught Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz and New York University, and Music at Columbia University. He also taught in visiting positions in Music at the Universities of Bergen and Oslo, in Anthropology at the University of Sydney, and in both fields at the University of California, Berkeley.

Currently Feld is writing a theoretical book, *Acoustemology: Sound as a Way of Knowing*, filming a feature length documentary co-produced with the Anyaa Arts Kollektif and titled *J.C. Abbey: Ghana's Puppeteer*, and editing an improvised performance CD, *Afrifonica*, recorded in Ghana in 2014 with longtime musical colleagues Nii Noi Nortey, Nii Otoo Annan, and Alex Coke.

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