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LANGORON:
Music and Dance Performance Realities
Among the Lak People of Southern New
Ireland,
Papua New Guinea.

by

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to describe the indigenous realities, meanings, and perspectives that are central to the music and dance practices of the Lak (Siar) people in Southern New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. The insights recorded here are those gained through the experience of twenty-three months living in Rei and Siar villages as a participant in many aspects of Lak social life.

The music and dance practices of the region are examined in the context of the wider social and cultural setting. Lak performance realities are indivisible from kinship structures, ritual proceedings and spirituality. By contextualising Lak music and dance within the frame of the extensive and socially defining mortuary rites my intention is to show how music and dance not only reflect but also create Lak realities.

By examining the ethnographic materials relating to music, dance and performance in the context of mortuary sequence broader elements of Lak society are brought into focus. In these pages I argue that Lak society is reproduced literally and symbolically in these performances.

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