

REVIEWS

BOOKS

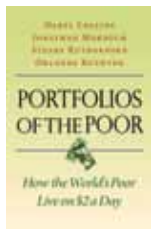
The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*An American Journalist in Yemen*

By Jennifer Steil

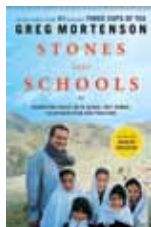
BROADWAY BOOKS, 2010



Steil, a liberal-minded career woman from Manhattan, accepts a position as the editor of the *Yemen Observer* in the ancient city of Sana'a. While struggling to understand the culture and the local approach to journalism, she initially tries to "save" the newspaper and mould it to her liking, but eventually accepts that this is not possible. Along the way there are interesting discussions about cross-cultural gender roles, the parallel between the concept of *insha'allah* and the Latin American *mañana*, and the effects of the drug *qat* in the workplace. Steil's daily discoveries and deepening relationships make the book hard to put down.

Portfolios of the Poor*How the World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day*By Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford and Orlanda Ruthven
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009

This study of the "financial diaries" of impoverished families around the world reveals that, rather than living hand-to-mouth, they plan their finances carefully using a complex web of financial tools. The detailed personal accounts give a rare inside look at the daily lives of the world's poor, uncovering many flaws in the financial tools available to them. The book concludes with suggestions to improve aid projects like microfinancing—invaluable for anyone working or considering a career in international development.

Stones into Schools*Promoting Peace with Books, not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan*By Greg Mortenson
VIKING, 2009

The equally compelling sequel to Mortenson's best-selling *Three Cups of Tea* follows the jour-

neys of the mountaineer-turned-school-builder while he expands into increasingly dangerous areas of Afghanistan. His efforts to build a school for the girls and boys of remote Bozai Gumbaz span the entirety of the book as the project is waylaid by an earthquake and a commanded appearance at the home of Pakistan's president. Though the Central Asia Institute still revolves largely around Mortenson, it's clear that the ownership of the work is gradually passing into the hands of locals, with whom he has built enduring personal relationships.

MUSIC Reviews by Matthew J. Forss**Angelique Kidjo**

Oyo

RAZOR & TIE

The musical influences from Angelique Kidjo's upbringing in the country of Benin are the primary focus of *Oyo*, which is named for the Oyo Empire (c. 1400–1905) of West Africa. There are a smattering of regional tunes, including the vocally-driven 'Zelie,' the Afro-beat anthem 'Kelele' and the Brazilian-tinged 'Afia.' *Oyo* is largely an homage to the music of other musicians, with songs by James Brown, Miriam Makeba, Carlos Santana, Dianne Reeves, John Legend, Roy Hargrove and Sidney Bechet. Angelique sings mostly in Beninese languages, but *Oyo* is essentially a masterpiece of global pop after more than 20 years in the music industry.

**The Mayapuris**Mridanga
MANTRALOGY &
EQUAL VISION

The Mayapuris is a U.S.-based kirtan music group that performs Sanskrit call-and-response chanting originating from West Bengal, India. The main performers are Vish, Kish, Jagi, Bali and Vrinda. The album's title reveals a *mridanga*, a drum, as the primary instrument of choice, yet there are a variety of instruments used including the *esraj*, violin, kartal cymbals, flute, cello, *dholak*, *dilruba*, *doumbek*, harmonium, bass and sax. The soul-stirring melodies, mesmerizing instrumentation and scintillating vocals provide great entertainment for any occasion. In addition, Sanskrit lyrics are included in the liner notes, which also fold out as a poster.

**Amazigh Kateb**

Marchez Noir

IRIS MUSIC

Algeria's Kateb Amazigh is a modern ambassador for trance-inducing *Gnawa* grooves. *Gnawa* music is characterized by the *guimbri* (three-stringed lute), *qraqabs* (iron castanets), frenetic dancing and repetitive vocals. *Marchez Noir* (Walk Black) is brimming with pulsating rhythms and earthy vocals. The songs are not entirely traditional, but instead bridge the gap between traditional and modern Algerian society with electronic instruments and arrangements that don't resort to techno or dance-club pitfalls. One of the highlights is a catchy reggae-tinged song called 'Mociba,' followed by a bluesy 'Dounia,' Balkan-infused 'Bonjour' and an enjoyable 'Dima Ntou.' The liner notes are in French and non-Romanized Arabic.



BLOGS

Hong Kong Confidential

SUZANNEMA.COM

Canadian journalist Suzanne Ma posts articles and musings as she lives in Hong Kong and travels around Southeast Asia on a Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship. Sometimes opinionated and always insightful, Ma blogs about political issues, Asian society and the life of an expat in the motherland.

You Can't Make a New World without Breaking a few Atlases

BROKENATLAS.COM

From Toronto and Rio de Janeiro comes this eclectic online magazine with an international perspective. Journalists, filmmakers, curators, artists, designers, "advertising types" and photographers contribute their take on the ironies of our world. Blog posts look at anything from 28,000-year-old German sex toys to the origins of Brazilian slang.

Out of Africa

TIMBUKTU CHRONICLES.BLOGSPOT.COM

Entrepreneur Emeka Okafor finds innovative African ventures in technology and business that could be useful and sustainable in many countries. Posts showcase things like paving stones made out of plastic bags, energy efficient cook stoves, and a school for training renewable energy tradespeople. These home-grown initiatives are practical and inspiring—they may well turn out to be the "paradigm-breaking technologies" that Okafor seeks.



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