

Record Booklet Review

By WALLY OLSON

"Alaskan Eskimo Songs and Stories"
by Lorraine Donoghue with illustrations by Robert Mayokok. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 1972
Retail: \$9.00.

If long distance is the "next best thing to being there", this recording is certainly a long-distance memento! The cast reads like the Who's Who of Eskimo singers - Paul Green, Jimmy Killigivuk, Negovanna, Seton, Kachatag and many others supporting them are the interpretations of Oliver and Olga Amouak, Fred Goodwin and most of all Irene Reed. Who could ask for more! For one who loves both Eskimo songs and dances, I closed my eyes and I was there. The voices, the stories, the laughter all brought back memories of unforgettable nights of song and dance.

The recording was compiled from recordings made by Lorraine Donoghue Koranda from 1950 to 1964. In a few cases the technical quality is not perfect, but it is highly superior to what any amateur might capture on his little tape recorder. Its fairly polished and well-edited and comes across well on a good record player. But most of all, its the content; the record and text are real gems.

Unless the listener is an Eskimo who understands the language readily, the accompanying text is not only a necessity, but a work of art in itself. Robert Mayokok captures the Eskimo world in his unique sketches. The text itself is well organized and most informative. The appendix of translations by that great scholar of Eskimo, Irene Reed, is like the topping on a beautiful cake!

The price here in Juneau was \$9.00 retail, but think of it this way. If you love to recall your times in Eskimoland, without taking the actual trip there, this is the second best way to be there! This writer recommends that you sit down and listen to recording with the text in hand - much like you would do with a libretto to an Italian Opera.

The University of Alaska has just begun a study of the Music of Alaskan Natives and perhaps they will turn out comparable productions. But until they do, this is one of the best there is.

This reviewer doesn't often give an unreserved recommendation but in this case the rule must be broken! Here are hours of enjoyment. Pardon me while I leave the typewriter and get back to listening. Its almost like being there!