

Reviews

***Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs.* By David Grazian. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. xx+303 pp., index, photos. ISBN 0-226-30568-6
doi:10.1017/S0261143006210924**

Blue Chicago is one of the better books on music I have read in recent years. It is well written, humorous, engaging and thought provoking. Part of what makes it good reading is the difficulty of the subject. Authenticity is a fascinating concept and has wide application – one only need attend an ethnomusicology conference to see how many scholars tackle it. It is good to see someone address the problematic head-on in a discussion rooted in musical production.

Chicago prides itself on being a centre of the blues. Grazian's mission is to understand the role that perceptions of authenticity play in promoting Chicago as such. His methodology is multiple: ethnographic, historic, textual and theoretical. To carry out the majority of his ethnography, he stations himself at the end of the bar at B.L.U.E.S., a blues joint in Chicago's Lincoln Park, a neighbourhood that since the club's opening in the late 1970s has undergone profound gentrification, even in what were its industrial parts. On weekends the club is one of Chicago's tourist attractions, and tourists are an important target of Grazian's research. During the week, however, it still attracts a neighbourhood crowd, giving him access to a sampling of locals. He interviews musicians, bar staff, and club guests, seeking to understand how their various ideas of authenticity are satisfied or frustrated and on what factors they are based.

His historical research includes demographic data related to patterns of migration to and settlement in the city, against which he views the placement and changing popularity of blues bars, as well as the musicians and tourists who frequent them. The textual aspect of his research includes analysis of newspaper articles, guide book accounts, and city promotional materials, as well as a topical consideration of performed meaning in blues shows. His theoretical approach is influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualising of cultural capital, Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis of social life, and the urban sociology of subcultures of University of Chicago scholars Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Harvey Zorbaugh and others.

One of Grazian's points is that tourism, an economic antidote to declining manufacturing and industrial income, is a chief motive for the city's investment in promoting the blues and its legacy in Chicago. The relationship between legacy and economic strategy is a valuable aspect of his analysis of authenticity. Tourism thrives on the movement of people and their money. Novelty, especially the exotic, is a principal tourist attraction. Legacies are constructed as exclusive territories, whereby a city can claim privileged access to or ownership of a certain cultural manifestation. As Grazian shows, various interests have a stake in maximising Chicago's association with the blues in the public imagination.

One of the ways that Chicago maintains its claim of being an authentic home of the blues is through development narratives. These accounts, such as how the blues

came to Chicago, gain traction, according to Grazian, in the public imagination when 'trusted messengers', such as newspaper journalists, pass them on. Grazian identifies four parts to these narratives: an assumption of authenticity, a portrayal of a legendary reality, an assertion of inevitability, and the evocation of a myth of continuity. With this angle, Grazian deconstructs one tactic in a wider strategy of establishing authenticity, even though his interest, he says, is not in what *is* authentic, but in the search for authenticity itself (p. 9). These narratives, such as the account of the northward migration of bluesmen from the Deep South to Chicago, foreground particular conditions or characteristics, like place, time, events, or change, and posit authenticity in those particulars. The sense of inevitability seems, well, inevitable in such retrospective renderings, given the dot-connecting intrinsic to timeline-type portraits. Seen from our perspective, from this end of the timeline, a tautological case for inevitability can be made, despite other putative and hypothetical possibilities (such as that of musicians during and after migration abandoning the blues in favour of, say, jazz, or rockabilly), since they didn't occur. A problem arises when one makes the leap from the deconstruction of an argument to the dismissal of facts, merely because the mechanics of the argument have been demonstrated specious. I am sure Grazian does not want readers to believe that Chicago does not have a 'true blues' history.

The fact is that sufficient numbers of musicians have continued to play the blues to keep it a major music in the city, however pre-packaged the music may seem to someone wanting to discover for themselves a primordial sound. And however slick and cynical Chicago's boosters may appear for promoting mythicised images of the city and the music, they can fairly claim an on-going tradition. This is where I establish *my* authenticity as part of that tradition: A blues band, fronted by Angela Brown and Erwin Helfer, played in my mother's living room for my eighteenth birthday party; later that year I got the name 'Mad Dog' singing 'Minnie the Moocher' with Casey Jones at Kingston Mines, famous among Chicago blues clubs. The point is dual: (i) the blues in Chicago exists independently of attributions of authenticity; and (ii) authenticity may be defined as participating in/passing on a musical tradition, even when that tradition is maintained or propagated with the assistance of arguably artificial means, like theme-park-style tourist strips.

One of the things Grazian drives at throughout the book is that people bring fantasies of authenticity *to* the blues in various ways, comparing the locales, musicians, and other fans against their own expectations and desires. But does authenticity serve as more than mere handmaiden to a tourist-oriented economy? What does its search mean to us as individuals? A new twist on fantasy that Grazian brings to his study of the search for authenticity is the 'nocturnal self' – the identity we inhabit when cloaked in the imagined umbra of night, smoke, streetlamps, hats and heels clicking on concrete. The noir desire pulls people to Chicago's alleys and fire escapes in the hopes of hearing a forlorn sax or weeping mouth harp. As scads of tourists tell him, they look for the blues in Chicago, because they know it's real there. And they appropriate this attributed authenticity for themselves to increase their own, yes, 'nocturnal capital', earning them bragging rights back home.

If they leave fulfilled, that is, and this is where Grazian takes on a central feature of the debate over authentic blues: the performance of race. He looks at how assertions of race-based authenticity affect the entire blues economy, including musicians, clubs, tourists, and said 'trusted messengers'. This is an aspect of the study that could be more deeply probed, theorised. The importance of race/ethnicity/nationality as

credentials in the music world is apparent in terms like ‘culture bearer’ and is a chief reason for my acceptance and success as a blues singer in Brazil – surely an irony for many of the blues tourists Grazian interviewed.

All in all, this book is a good case study of how authenticity meets music, or better still, a music scene, on the ground. The problematic of authenticity is not resolved, but schematising how it works in general has been made easier. Musical analysis of blues songs is missing, and it would be interesting to see how notions of authenticity are composed into pieces: what motifs, for example, are repeated or avoided to communicate authenticity. In this way a connection between set lists – such as the musicians’ ‘Set List from Hell’ that includes, among other must-play standards, ‘Sweet Home Chicago’ – and song compositions could be drawn. This book will interest a wide audience, from sociologists, anthropologists and ethno/musicologists, to blues fans, musicians and historians. And, of course, die-hard Chicagoans.

Jesse ‘Mad Dog’ Samba Wheeler

UCLA, Los Angeles, USA
UnB, Brasília, Brazil

***Gender and Qualitative Methods, Introducing Qualitative Methods.* By Helmi Järviluoma, Pirkko Moisala and Anni Vilkkö. London: Sage, 2003. 138 pp. ISBN 0 7619 6584 9 (softback)**

***Music and Gender.* Edited by Tullia Magrini. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003. 355 pp. ISBN 0-226-50165-5 (softback)
doi:10.1017/S0261143006220920**

Both these books have been heavily annotated and well used since first coming into my hands and I offer profuse apologies for late reviewing due to my own ill health, thankfully now over. As anyone who takes on the editorial role of book reviews editor for a journal knows, it is (almost without noticing) oh, so tempting to place to one side the books you yourself want to read out of the ones that arrive, and then oh, so difficult in these no ‘spare time’ days to find the time to do that few hours of essential writing about them, healthy or not!

Both these books will have a long shelf life and it is to be hoped that anyone reading this review with any interest in gender or women’s studies will go straight out and acquire them. Indeed *Gender and Qualitative Methods* is an ideal primer for academics involved in research of any kind who want to be bang up to date. It could easily act as a ‘bluffers’ guide if only because of the book’s ability to synthesise in an accessible language and size that make it easily readable. There are a lot of ideas here and complexity too of course which means that each time you come back to it another window opens in your own mind as another set of percolating thoughts present themselves (well certainly for me).

The Finnish authored volume, if Helmi Järviluoma, Pirkko Moisala and Anni Vilkkö will forgive a ‘national’ shorthand, is a practical guide for recognising gender/ing in different kinds of research materials and will be required reading for any gender course. The approach is social constructionist and the perspective is that the task of the researcher is to investigate how gender can be defined, negotiated and

performed within specific situations and locations. Via six short chapters the book deals with the practical and epistemological issues of gender in qualitative research. Each chapter has an intensely well-planned structure involving an introduction to a specific research subject ('Performing and Negotiating Gender', 'Gender and Fieldwork', 'Gender and Life Stories', 'Gender in Membership Categorization Analysis', 'Not only Vision – Analysing Sound and Music from the Perspective of Gender', 'Research Reporting and Gender'), followed by a discussion of gender as an analytical category in relation to these methods. Written in accessible language this involves methodological and theoretical discussion, pithily illustrative case studies, subsequent analysis, conclusion and appropriate exercises (such as 'write your own biography from the perspective of gender', 'analysis of an advertising jingle') to neatly round off each section and bring the 'message' of each chapter home. The structure is 'accumulative' in that the material from each chapter and the exercise(s) is used as material for analysis in subsequent chapters.

I am sure I am not the only mature female academic who despite being a participating student of the feminist 1960s and 1970s and an early reader of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and others realised at least ten or so years ago that their own original PhD field work would have been analysed and written up differently under a more open, less unequally gendered academy working more under the vision of Women's and Gender Studies. In my own case in the 1970s as a then pregnant mother analysing the performances and composing of music for performance of an exiled group of Chilean musicians and artists who worked collectively but whose main composer was female, there is no chapter in my thesis on gender or gender issues. This despite the fact I gave various papers soon after completion on the 'feminine discourse of composition'. I have worked closely with musicians for over thirty years and yet have really only recently truly begun to get to grips with gender issues. This book is a tremendously useful pathway for anyone who does research and fieldwork: it has been an illuminating experience to use personally and is very useful as a teaching tool.

An essential reason the book is such a joy is because the reader benefits from the accumulative fieldwork, experience and wisdom of the collective interactions that created it: the three writers worked as a team, planning and completing specific parts of chapters individually and then commenting on each other's texts. Is this itself an embodiment of a 'feminine' process? As they write, the sense of co-operation and the way the book is itself 'a performance', the result of 'countless negotiations', writing large the authors' main ethos and thesis – that gender is not something that is given but which is always negotiated and performed – means that the book is itself the product of 'five years of planning, collecting materials and biographical information, writing, re-writing, translating, negotiating, getting inspired, being desperate, arguing, sulking, melting, laughing and editing' (from Preface). In a sense the Finnish origin of those concerned does not surprise: if I may be personal, having made a BBC World Service radio documentary back in the early 1990s at the time when Finland was entering the European Union and celebrating seventy-five years of independence, it was clear from the strong musical voices of female-led group Värttinä to those of female authors, poets and musicians that Finnish women had not only a special historical position in Europe, being first to gain the vote, but also a very special voice and perspective to offer.

The book also works as a springboard into the heart of influential feminist theorists and those writing on gender – a host of names including Barbara Marshall, Ann Oakley, Judith Butler, Susan McClary, Anahid Kassabian, and Tia De Nora, to

name just a few. There are also male names: this is not a book that references only female scholars. Having said that, it is a great experience, if not unusual as a woman reader, to have a host of female names and their work cited in a text. The perspective is inter-disciplinary, drawing on the work of scholars from sociology, anthropology, musicology, popular music studies and ethnomusicology. Each chapter is dynamically informed by theory and illuminated by deft synthesising of relevant issues.

If the final chapter 'Research Reporting and Gender' had the most impact on me, it is because its parts – 'Locating myself in the text', 'Searching for feminist styles of writing' and 'Experimental representations' – while deftly addressing itself to the female with a profound yet light touch – furthers the 'dense' international inter-disciplinary debate on the act of 'writing' itself, revealing so much of what goes on in the mind when writing, male or female. At the end, while the authors say they 'wave goodbye', I for one re-assuredly feel they are still 'shaking my hand' (p. 116). Sage must be proud to have the book in its series.

It is a book that is in many ways complemented by the superb volume edited by Tullia Magrini. Its aim in concentrating on musics from territories that border the Mediterranean is not to provide a survey of gender issues across the whole range of Mediterranean musics, but to use case studies approaching a series of questions in relation to representative repertoires born and developed in European, African and Asian countries bordering the Mediterranean. It tackles if not shatters the long-established academic myth of pan-Mediterranean 'honour and shame', revealing thereby the contrast between the 1950s academic search for coherence and 'modes of thought' with an end of the twentieth/twenty-first century approach. The latter brings out the multi-faceted 'modes of thought' about gender encountered in the musical of the life region, by embracing ethnicity, religion, class difference, life-style rural/urban contrasts, oppositions such as monogamy/polygamy, and other related issues in accounting for the deeply differentiated male–female relationships in Mediterranean society today as well as in the past.

The book interlaces a host of thought-provoking papers celebrating the ways that women's repertoires and musical practices for so long on the outskirts (sic!) of anthropological and ethnomusicological research because of 'their "private" and "marginal" characters are now at the centre of the scholar's critical inquiries' (p. 2). For Magrini the book is not simply about completing a picture of the musical world by accounting for women's musical practices, but a much wider perspective of 'what might be considered a new phase in the study of the music of the world, moving from "music as culture" to music "as a gendered culture"' (*ibid.*). The goal of the work of this assembled group of scholars is to discover and emphasise the richness of various concepts of gender as they relate to Mediterranean cultures and examine how certain practices in these countries have been effective in creating and perpetuating or transforming specific ideas and roles related to issues of gender. The embedded-ness of gender in everything people do is borne out in all chapters from Joquina Labajo's 'Body and Voice: The Construction of Gender in Flamenco' (pp. 67–86), which looks at how the evolution of style in flamenco can be interpreted in terms of changing power relations, to Caroline Bithell's 'A Man's Game? Engendered Song and the Changing Dynamics of Musical Activity in Corsica', which looks at the gendered world of Corsican music and how women have transcended their traditional identification with lamenting to sing both for the joy of singing and as an expression of a new-found sense of female togetherness and solidarity.

The stereotype of women, once represented as silent, passive and marginal figures secluded in their houses modestly covered head to toe in order to exorcise the potential sensuality of their bodies and somehow foreign or isolated from the 'real life' of the community (p. 13), is sensitively explored and challenged, showing how women customarily play(ed) an important cultural role as transmitters and elaborators of their musical traditions. Chapters deal with the economic role of women as professional singers and dancers, and most significantly on what Mediterranean women themselves can tell us about their roles in society and how they express their feelings, ideas and protests through symbolic forms of song, dance and ritual. Challenge to social norms and controls over women through music-making is the book's sub-text. Case studies show how music can empower women even in societies where they are believed to be totally under male control, including crucial issues of pre-marital relationships. Issues around globalisation are considered. Each of the fourteen chapters merits celebrating separately (Bithell/Corsica; Labajo/Flamenco; Sugarman/Albania; Silverman/Rom; Plastino/Calabria; Holst-Warhaft/rebetika; Seroussi/Sephardi traditions; Viroille/Rai; Brint Joseph/Berber; Kapchan/Morocco; van Nieuwekerk/Egypt; Pettan/Kosovo; Stokes/Turkey; Bohlman/sacred music), extolling the author's material arguments, passions and virtues.

The richness of the various chapters and of the overall text owes much to the fact that many of those involved met and listened to each other's work in international study groups, which provided the book's starting point. In addition, Magrini's rigorous précis-introduction ensures its ultimate coherence. Each well-argued chapter involves analysis of field work, yet ultimately while each piece is a world-in-itself, because of the collective moments in the process of analysis and writing, each intuitively references other chapters. A host of threads run through to be picked up and run with as appropriate. This is a book that will find great use in university courses as well as nurturing comparative research: chapters can be read in sequence or dipped in and out of depending on one's own work, needs and interests.

The whole is well rounded off by Philip Bohlman's exploration of the notion of the 'sacred' in the region, whether conveyed by Christianity, Islam or Judaism, and how it can be differently gendered through musical activity. The spirit of Bohlman's beautiful quote from the oldest ballad that maps the sacred landscape of the Mediterranean sums up a book that can be read from a multitude of perspectives: 'So she played on the harp/ And she sang a new song' (pp. 329–30).

Jan Fairley

University of Liverpool, UK

***The British Barbershopper: A Study in Socio-Musical Values.* By Liz Garnett. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. 214 pp. ISBN: 0 7546 3559 7
doi:10.1017/S0261143006230927**

Liz Garnett's book on the musical practices and values of barbershop joins a growing body of scholarly research focused on this distinctive genre, notably Gage Averill's (2003) historical and ethnographic study of North American barbershop, and Robert Stebbins' (1996) theorising of barbershopping as an example of a 'hobby' – that is to say, an amateur musical practice which has no professional equivalent. Given the

existence of those two substantial studies of a minority musical interest, a reader might be forgiven for wondering what else there is to say. Garnett tackles this question head on in her introductory chapter, framing her study within musicological research traditions, and focusing on UK barbershop practices and in particular on the experiences of women. In her pursuit of these themes, she makes a new contribution to the literature which is thought-provoking in its appraisal of musicological and ethnographic research, as well as in its insights on a musical phenomenon which is little known to those not directly involved in its performance.

Garnett's descriptions of the barbershop world in which she has participated as a singer and judge as well as a researcher are well written and accessible to readers with limited prior knowledge or experience of the genre. There are glimpses of the formalised and sometimes archaic practices within which barbershop singing is embedded: the societies with rules defining what counts as barbershop and how members should conduct themselves; the 'walkout' uniforms that precede the glittery stage costumes at public events; the emphasis on competition and ranking that holds the wider barbershop community together. The twelve-point code of ethics adhered to by barbershoppers enshrines the preservation of 'the barbershop style as defined' and promises to 'spread the love of barbershop and its spirit of harmony throughout the World' (pp. 20–21). An almost evangelical enthusiasm for the genre appears to be compulsory for participants, who will often round off a busy day of rehearsals and competition singing with several hours of 'tag singing' – the quick learning of short cadential phrases that epitomise the barbershop style. It is hard to imagine this phenomenon translating easily to other musical contexts; although Article 7 in the code of ethics – 'We shall refrain from forcing our songs on unsympathetic ears' – might usefully be given wider application beyond barbershop. The world depicted by Garnett appears to an outsider to be both distant and yet curiously logical, with a defined purpose and ethos that ensures a strong degree of shared values amongst those who choose to join.

By focusing on the British barbershop scene, Garnett is able to reappraise the notions of nostalgia and invented tradition that are embedded in both the repertoire and its performance practice. Self-referential song titles such as 'I Love to Hear that Old Barbershop Style' ensure that the sense of tradition is uppermost in participants' minds, and the use of opening and closing numbers in rehearsal helps to reinforce a sense of continuity and ritual. In North America, these attitudes lead to an emphasis on preservation of the genre, but Garnett suggests that UK barbershoppers are more distanced from the 'imported tradition' and use the ritual practices principally to generate a feeling of group membership. In a chapter on sexual politics, Garnett examines the way in which these questions of identity and tradition are further complicated for female barbershoppers, a sphere in which British practice is most distinctive from its North American counterpart. Since 'gender segregation is a fact of life in British barbershop' (p. 91), there are some uncomfortable dissonances with wider social views and Garnett is not afraid to tackle these, exploring the discourse and organisational structures which present women's barbershop as derivative and secondary to the more established male performance traditions (p. 96). She argues, however, for the musical parity between men's and women's barbershop, contrasting the full four-part texture of female barbershop performance with the 'gendered hierarchy' of nineteenth-century opera, in which female choruses often sing in thirds or sixths and require instrumental accompaniment to complete the harmony. I was somewhat unconvinced by this argument, since it becomes clear elsewhere in the

chapter that far from being granted equal status by composers and arrangers, women are usually left to adapt or appropriate repertoire written originally for men – so the equality is of their own making rather than more broadly agreed.

Another theme worth noting in Garnett's study is that of the researcher's position and responsibilities in investigating contemporary musical practices. The author declares her personal interest and participation in barbershop, but appears ambivalent about its relevance to her study, at times presenting her views explicitly as those of an 'outsider' (p. 128) and at other times drawing on her performing experience. Towards the end of the book she addresses this ambiguity, stating her reluctance to describe herself as a participant-observer, 'since at the times of participation I have not been in the role of observer: I have been singing with friends' (p. 137). Garnett retains a musicologist's distance from her subject matter, rather than embracing the ethnographic potential of her position, and in doing so highlights the ethical tensions of researching musical events rather than texts. A growing interest in 'empirical musicology' and 'ethnomusicology at home' make this a timely debate that is affecting increasing numbers of researchers, and 'the problem is likely to be less which standpoint to choose, but how to juggle them both' (p. 182).

Garnett's book makes good reading both for those interested in barbershop, and those researching other kinds of musical practices and struggling to connect them with established musicological discourse. It at times reads as a rather anguished book, in which the author's role is not an entirely comfortable one – but this is no bad thing, since it will engage readers in similar questioning of their own research practices. Above all, it is a vivid and frank depiction of a fascinating musical world, which will stimulate welcome debate about the relationship between repertoire, performance practices and contemporary social values.

Stephanie Pitts

University of Sheffield, UK

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***Brimful of Asia: Negotiating Ethnicity on the UK Music Scene.* By Rehan Hyder. Aldershot, UK & Burlington, VT, USA: Ashgate, 2004. 208 pp. ISBN 0 7546 0677 5 (hardback); ISBN 0-7546 4064 7 (paperback)**

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In recent times, commentators across the political spectrum have suggested that the UK and other parts of Europe should come to the end of their respective experiments with multiculturalism. The US-led War on Terror has thrown into relief the differences and tensions between white Europeans and darker-skinned fellow citizens who may continue to have ethnic and religious affiliations with places, peoples and ideas outside the continent. The debates around asylum seekers and migrant workers, the

Islamist bombings in Madrid and London, secular education, and the policing of poor non-white communities and neighbourhoods, have led some native Britons and Europeans to argue that the ideas of Britain and Europe are under threat from the enemy within. Identity politics and the cultivation of cultural particularities should therefore be replaced by assimilation into the mainstream.

With the quintessentially British gesture of a two-fingered V sign (palm out), the young British (South) Asian boy on the cover of Rehan Hyder's book offers an appropriate vernacular response to this line of argument. Wearing a *shalwar kamiz* and Sindhi *topi*/cap as he flicks a V at the camera, this lad also personifies the hybridity of a multi-ethnic society. Admirably combining economy with nuance, the book itself demonstrates how an Asian presence has irrevocably transformed British popular music culture through some difficult but adept negotiations. Musicians navigate a matrix of discourses about ethnicity produced by the culture at large and, more specifically in the field of popular music, by the music industry and media.

Brimful of Asia focuses on several musicians who achieved some commercial success through major and independent record companies during the 1990s. Hyder primarily interviewed Tjinder Singh and Ben Ayres of Cornershop, Anjali Bhatia of the Voodoo Queens, Choque Hosein of Black Star Liner, Aki Nawaz and Dave Watts of Fun^Da^Mental, as well as various 'cultural intermediaries', including writers at *The Guardian* and *Melody Maker*, and record company workers at Wiija and Too Pure. These voices are integrated into a careful theoretical and historical analysis.

To contextualise the music, Hyder first outlines debates about race and ethnicity in British culture and cultural studies. He charts the politics of mutating terms such as 'black' and 'Asian', the perspectives of diaspora, and the contested notion of hybridity. In this respect, *Brimful of Asia* builds on Stuart Hall's notion of 'new ethnicities', and alongside the scholarship of Paul Gilroy, Les Back and others, adopts a broadly anti-essentialist perspective that resists 'ethnic absolutisms'. Hyder argues that musicians are 'reflexive' in their use of a wide and differentiated 'ethnic resource', which they draw upon in multiple ways in the creation and development of 'syncretic' and 'multi-accented' music and selves. The ethnic resource is only one of many cultural resources used by these artists. Cornershop uses the sitar and harmonium, but also the form of country music. Samples of Arabic music filter through the sounds of Black Star Liner alongside references to English television shows and sporting figures. Anjali Bhatia's solo recordings evoke the 1950s exotica of Martin Denny and Les Baxter as much as an exoticism for India. Fun^Da^Mental samples the film *Gandhi* but also Louis Farrakhan.

Hyder criticises 1970s subcultural theory for both its rigid and unmusical conceptualisation of subjective and collective identities. *Brimful of Asia* also suggests that journalists and academics are often guilty of overburdening their commentary on Asian musicians with political content, purely on the basis of ethnic marginality, when an engagement with the political may represent only one element of the musician's work, if at all. An Asian musician's work is first and foremost considered for its political value, because being Asian is only about the politics of race and ethnicity. This critical impulse towards 'politics' is as prone to imagining ethnic identity as a desirable and 'authentic' commodity as the fantasies of otherness that generate discourse about world music. Musicians deploy various strategies against these dominant ways of defining the British and Asian together. Some artists gain a public profile due to their pronouncements about the politics of being Asian, others deny or evade their Asian identities, while some wear masks for the media, or

disappear from its gaze into that territory where you don't do interviews with the press. As Hyder points out, these circumstances arise if Asian musicians manage to move beyond their treatment as exotic novelties. For the banal nationalism of the rock press, Asians mainly add a pinch of spice or a whiff of spiritual incense to Brit-pop.

Brimful of Asia makes another incremental intervention in the rewriting of British pop history with a chapter on the Asian presence in British rock and pop music. This isn't something that began in the 1980s and 1990s with bhangra, the 'New Asian Kool', and the Asian Underground. South Asian sounds have played a largely unacknowledged part in British pop music for many years in music hall, psychedelia, hip hop, R & B and other genres. The Beatles are a well-known case. But how would Echo & the Bunnymen's song 'The Killing Moon' work without that memorable sitar riff? Or Missy Elliot's 'Get Your Freak On' without the bhangra rhythm? Or even the many other hip hop tracks that integrate samples of the Hindi film playback voices of Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle? Black Atlantic scholarship has shown that African diasporic culture and music have been integral to the formation of western subjectivities. That postcolonial critique could be extended if popular music discourse in journalism and the academy was more attuned to the long history of South Asian refrains and resonances in the soundscape of western modernity.

This book began life as a doctoral project in the northern city of Bradford, one of the most well-known sites of recent and often violent conflict over what it means to be British. Many of the musicians interviewed by Hyder hail from the north. For a book with the word 'scene' in its title, the emphasis on the local conditions of musical practice – gigging and recording – seems slight. Though Hyder aims to reframe the national, the regional perspective of some of these British Asian musicians could have been more explicitly examined. A north–south divide continues to be one of Britain's fault lines. At times Hyder also appears too gracious to reflect negatively on some of the statements of his interviewees. Otherwise this excellent book should become one of the standard texts on British popular musicianship at the end of the twentieth Century. We can look forward to further Asian revisions of the national music that include the histories of listening as well as those of making music. Scholarship will also have to consider the impact of digital technologies on discourses of race and nation in music. These reconstitutions will replay some of the same old debates, but also force musicians and listeners into new and unforeseen negotiations of ethnicity.

Nabeel Zuberi

University of Auckland, New Zealand

***Popular Music Genres: An Introduction.* By Stuart Borthwick and Ron Moy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2004. 246z pp. ISBN 0-74861745-0 (paperback)**

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How often, when browsing in a library or bookstore, do we pass books over, purely because their titles may seem somewhat less than enticing, preferring instead, to pick out a more catchy or colourful offering to read? How many hidden gems do we miss, if selection is influenced in this way? To be honest this was my initial thought when

encountering the seemingly ordinary book title *Popular Music Genres*. Such pre-conceptions proved to be completely unjustified – this is a book that really does deserve to be picked up, to be read, and to be recommended!

Given that there are competing publications that also survey the various influences, developments and socio-musicological aspects of popular music genres, a specific purpose of this book, the authors explain, is to combine the examination of musical texts and characteristics of each genre with their social, cultural, political and economic contexts. They reject a ‘unidisciplinary’ approach to examining popular music, for example by using a purely musicological or purely historical account.

Exploring genres through this combination of approaches in *Popular Music Genres* works well, resulting in a balanced, concise and very readable publication. The writers achieve a synthesis in their multi-disciplinary approach through using a template of subheadings for each genre. These subheadings are: ‘Overview of the Genre’; ‘Historical Roots and Antecedents’; ‘Social and Political Context’; ‘The Musical Texts’; ‘Visual Aesthetic’ (performers/audiences); ‘Subsequent Generic Development’; ‘Recommended Reading’; ‘Recommended Listening’. And of the genres themselves? Borthwick and Moy devote a chapter (around twenty pages) to each of the following: soul music, funk, psychedelia, progressive rock, punk rock, reggae, synthpop, heavy metal, indie, rap and jungle. The authors’ conciseness and range of information in their descriptions of each genre is excellent; every chapter is packed with the key texts and concepts of each genre that, although dense in places, always remains digestible.

Deciding upon a list of genre labels in order to present a chapter-by-chapter introduction to popular music genres is by no means straightforward. Although their selection is a perfectly sensible one, it would have been interesting, nevertheless, to have known the basis upon which the authors concluded that a particular genre or sub-genre was unworthy of receiving its own distinctive chapter. Music critics will have their own personal tick lists, the ‘average person in the street’ will have another, whilst a visit to HMV, for example, would reveal how a music business chooses to categorise CD recordings using genre and sub-genre labels in order to guide their customers. I wonder why, for example, a separate chapter is not provided for grunge, rather than it being incorporated within punk rock? Yet psychedelia, on the other hand, rather than being regarded a relatively brief phase that began the development of prog rock, is awarded its own separate chapter. Given that this book is particularly aimed towards students on popular music courses, for many current undergraduates, grunge remains a formative musical influence. Could a case be made for the distinctive genre of grunge as embodied by Nirvana, Mudhoney, Pearl Jam and Soundgarden, I wonder? The Seattle Sound forms a quite distinctive *musical oeuvre*, that could be considered as ‘tightly categorised’ (p. 3) and with a *Zeitgeist* very different from 1970s punk rock. Had this book been written, say five or more years ago, grunge would surely have claimed its own chapter!

This publication contains much that impresses: it is a highly readable and clearly written book, with a uniformity of writing styles between the co-writers from chapter to chapter. As well as the range of genres that are discussed, there is also plenty of detail, for example when examining reggae, where reggae’s historical roots and the developing socio-political context of Jamaica is necessarily explored in more depth (pp. 99–106) than in the equivalent sections elsewhere in the book. There is also some interesting and fresh information within the examination of indie as a genre and its politics of production and distribution. This chapter is excellent in both grasping and

distilling the very diverse range of music that might be loosely categorised under the 'indie' umbrella. Here, Borthwick and Moy offer a considered account of the many various strands and sub-genres of indie, including a useful summary of the musical characteristics of the 'shambling bands' of the 1980s (p. 185), a concise retrospective of the indie-dance/baggy period, as exemplified by the Stone Roses, Happy Mondays and Inspiral Carpets, etc., plus interesting developments in the post-Britpop scene as illustrated by the Liverpool act Ladytron (p. 191).

Each chapter contains a 'Musical Texts' section in which key songs representative of the genre are described. Although this book is remarkable in its breadth, in this section perhaps, further space could have been given to performance characteristics. For example, by expanding the discussion of groove development or, by dissecting and putting back together the usual rhythm section – kit, bass and rhythm guitar – in order to explain how they typically fit together in each genre as appropriate. This is not a criticism but rather a suggestion, however, for a future reprint! In addition to the recommended reading and listening provided at the end of each chapter, there is also an explanatory glossary of key theoretical terms and extensive bibliography.

In conclusion, *Popular Music Genres* admirably fulfils its primary objective of providing a key text for students of popular music/popular music studies. This very readable book ought to become an essential addition for libraries and on student recommended-reading lists.

Mark Pulman

University of Huddersfield, UK

***Pop Music: The Text Book.* By Julia Winterson, Peter Nickol and Toby Bricheno. London: Peters Edition Ltd, 2003. 184 pp. ISBN 1-84367-007-0 (paperback)**

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At first glance, *Pop Music: The Text Book* by Winterson, Nickol and Bricheno instantly demands attention, primarily through the use of psychedelic pink lettering on a black background for the cover. On closer inspection, the broad claims of the title seem contradictory to the more focused nature of this edition (184 pp.). In fact, the authors specify that this book was never intended as an encyclopaedic chronology of pop through the ages; *The Guinness Book of Hit Singles* can rest easy! Rather, this text traces the historical roots of modern pop music by highlighting the delicate and reciprocal relationship between progressive musical factors (e.g. genre, media type) and wider social and cultural advancement. From Bill Haley and the Comets to Eminem, the authors repeatedly demonstrate the extent to which our most influential artists have both shaped and mirrored peoples' experiences and perceptions.

Four main sections comprise the history of pop (via a review of the decades); technology (with electronic and digital recording chapters); style & structure (illustrating genre-specific chords and styles) and the music business (detailing role descriptions and production practicalities). This format works well and permits the reader to either delve chronologically into a particular musical decade or to consult it as a useful subject-specific reference text.

The decade by decade review (chapters 2–7) of the culturally significant music that shaped the latter half of the last century provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the musical and social processes by which modern pop music has come about. The authors usefully explain the development of pop music from the major founding genres of blues, folk and country, gospel, entertainment music and jazz (p. 9). At regular intervals, the book fearlessly removes itself from discussion of matters purely musical and attempts to explain the related social climate. Interesting sections on, for example, black slavery, World War II and the Depression enhance the reader's understanding of this inextricable link between music and society.

Brief but detailed profiles of those acts that had the greatest influence on the progression of their sub-genre make for interesting reading in themselves. Following the collection of biographies relevant to each decade, the authors offer a section entitled 'Further Listening' – never has homework seemed so inviting! Intertwined with these artist profiles are descriptions of the emergence of related major pop sub-genres. These provide a richer comprehension of the social and musical antecedents of, for example, British beat (p. 33); disco's legacy (p. 54); the birth of indie (p. 71), and the popularity of rave music (p. 93).

Chapters 8 to 10 deal comprehensively with the history of recording and with electronic and digital instrumentation. This is accomplished in a highly accessible manner. As a non-musician pursuing psychological research into the multifaceted ways in which music can shape our everyday experience of the world, *Pop Music: The Text Book* has been most useful in concisely and clearly defining some key musical concepts (glossary, p. 156). Indeed, upon presenting the book to an aspiring professional musician friend, he was most interested in the sections on technology (p. 107) and the music business (p. 154), expressing particular interest in the highly accessible flow charts depicting the 'how to' of putting together a gig to marketing a CD (pp. 171–4).

Together, Winterson, Nickol and Bricheno bring skills from an impressive array of disciplines (e.g. composition, book editing, music education) and as such bring a wide range of perspectives to this interesting subject in both their individual and joint chapters. One might suggest the speedy release of a second updated edition to take into account the effects of new music technologies and consumption methods on the progression of modern pop. However, this sparks a perennial debate in terms of the publication of pop-related texts. The vast rate of change of pop music technology and pop music itself ensures that there will always be a gap in knowledge in the time between writing up and publication. Indeed, Winterson comments on the recording industry's struggle to combat illegal downloading in 2003 (p. 114), but mention of the ubiquitous iPod is nowhere to be found. Any second edition could perhaps also include more of the wonderfully illustrative photographs incorporated into the book. Pictures of Woodstock (p. 37), Dylan (p. 41), Bowie (p. 62) and even an old Dansette record player (p. 109) really serve to entice the reader into the spirit of the times and facilitate comprehension of the accompanying text.

In summary, *Pop Music: The Text Book* is a wonderfully accessible read, a useful reference text and remains concise yet comprehensive throughout. In addition to researchers finding specific areas of interest, any student of popular music and culture will find this a valuable and enjoyable addition to their reading list. Pop fans everywhere will find something of interest and perhaps understand more clearly where pop has come from and postulate on where it might be going.

Lana Carlton

Glasgow Caledonian University, UK