work points to the potential for an inclusive, participatory model of criticism, but not one driven purely by the economic necessities of the writers' marketplace. As he shows, the spirit of jazz criticism is as much about dialogue and communal response as delivering objective pronouncements from on high—perhaps the bending of a Western intellectual tradition towards African American culture values. Moreover, studies like *Blowin' Hot and Cool* have the potential to challenge the prevalent representations of "the media" as a faceless, monolithic entity. Further investigation of the contexts in which these critics have been embedded, the exigencies and constraints they have faced in their many and sometimes competing roles, would greatly assist our understandings of individual agency not only in terms of those being mediated, but also of the mediators themselves.

Lara Pellegrinelli

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*Music in Puerto Rico: A Reader's Anthology*. Edited and translated by Donald Thompson. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2002.

Donald Thompson, a longtime music professor at the University of Puerto Rico, has contributed a volume that, like the island, is much more important than its diminutive appearance suggests. By gathering together and editing narrative accounts and journalistic reportage of the island's musical life over the last five centuries, Thompson has given us a treasure trove of information to mine in examining issues of race, sexuality, and class. As the editor notes, "[L]ittle of the early writing is easily accessible through the more accustomed routes of bibliographic search" (viii). Thus it has escaped the notice of a wide range of readers and scholars who might otherwise be interested in and benefit from it.

Little can be said of the indigenous music culture of Puerto Rico before and at contact, because the native Taíno Indians died off shortly after colonization and the Spaniards had nothing to say about their music. Our assumptions about indigenous musical life are based on descriptions of practices found on neighboring islands in the Greater Antilles among related peoples. Even here, however, caution is necessary, because the early writers conflated one group of people or one island with another, and without the benefit of direct observation, they were all too willing to repeat verbatim what earlier writers may have said. Predictably, they viewed New World peoples and their music through the lens of their European experience. For instance, Fray Ramón Pané, in his *Relación de la antigüedades de los indios* (1571), commented on the religious beliefs and associated musical practices of the Taínos by comparing them to the Moors: "As do the Moors, the Indians preserve their laws in ancient songs by which they are ruled, as the Moors are ruled by their scriptures" (2). Others, such as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, in his *Historia general y natural de las indias* (1525), wrote sympathetic accounts by

drawing comparisons not with Moors but with Spaniards themselves: "This kind of dancing seems similar to the songs and dances of the workers, when in certain parts of Spain in the summertime men and women entertain themselves with kites and tambourines" (4). For every "they're a lot like us" account, however, there was another that portrayed the natives in starkly negative terms, describing their rituals as "useless" and their "sorcerers" as the perpetrators of "a thousand deceptions" in order to blind their people (8).

Examination of the folk and popular music of the island did not begin until the late eighteenth century. The most influential writer during the colonial era was Manuel Alonso, especially his *El gíbaro* (1849). Alonso's account of the *contradanza* dwells as much on the dancers as the dance, and his romantic gaze is directed towards "those dark beauties of languid glance, slender waist, and tiny foot [who cause a man's] heart [to] expand to the point of leaping from his breast" (14).

The contributions of Afro-Puerto Ricans received scant attention until the abolition of slavery in 1873, but even then, the portrayals were characterized by the sort of unthinking racism typical of the time. In his essay "El Carnaval en la Antillas" (1882), Luis Bonafoux also fixed his male gaze on a local woman, but with far less flattering results: "[O]ne sees the impudent and sensual mulatta: her hair undone, her lips compressed by the paroxysm of pleasure, her eyes soft and moist, her palpitating bosom threatening to escape from its tenuous and indiscreet barrier, her hips in lascivious undulations: breathless, sweaty, ardent, thinking only of pleasure and living only for pleasure" (21).

During the 1800s, concert life was centered in the cities, such San Juan, Ponce, and Mayagüez. Numerous opera and zarzuela companies toured Puerto Rico, as did a whole host of notable virtuosos, including Isaac Albéniz, Adelina Patti, and Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Patti and Gottschalk performed together in Ponce in December 1857, and they were feted by the local elite with a dance at the house of Don Jorge Lohse, Norwegian vice-consul. The event had to be postponed a week because of an outbreak of dengue fever, but it was a success nonetheless. Not all visitations of foreign culture made a positive impression. A San Juan critic commented on an April 1877 performance of *La Traviata* by a touring opera company in caustic terms: "*Traviata,* whose plot is tasteless and immoral as everyone knows, lacks dramatic scenes but instead possesses trifling and disordered arias" (37). Patti did not fail to please, however, and so great was her reputation that a local brand of cigarettes was named for her. Thus the world of commercialism and high art converged on the island, each new performance granting free advertising to commodities such as cigarettes, and the smoking of cigarettes conferring ever greater renown on concert artists like Patti.

Nervousness about "sexual immorality" focused more frequently on local dance styles than on Italian opera. The influence of the *danza puertoriqueña,* a derivative of the Spanish *contradanza,* has been pervasive over the century and a half since its appearance. And though it is closely bound up with the island's identity and is a source of pride, it has also been a source of controversy. Writing from Madrid in 1885, Carlos Peñaranda confirmed that there was ample reason for concern: "[I]n the *danza* love moans, the veins ignite, passion becomes aroused and honest

virtue trembles, crushed within the arm which encircles the waist." Thompson points out that it "has also formed a basis for concert music and a vehicle for love songs" (57). In fact, one *danza* melody, "La borinqueña," became the anthem of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in 1952.

In the aftermath of Spain's 1898 war with the United States, Puerto Rico came under the control of a new country and culture, an event that produced dramatic changes in its musical life. For one, the Americans had no intention of continuing European-style government subsidization of the arts. As a result, many institutions soon found themselves short of assistance. The era of the New Deal saw some improvement in this situation; moreover, the establishment of the Casals Festival in the 1950s attracted attention to the island and served as an enticement to industrial development and expanding tourism. Not everyone reacted with glee to this development, however. In 1972, years after its inception, Rafael Aponte-Ledée derided the Festival for "spreading a false image of Puerto Rico as a prosperous country, a model of progress and felicity thanks to its special condition as a protégé of the United States" (102–103). Thompson himself wrote an article on the subject in 1994 and took a much more benign view of the Festival, which he felt had invigorated the musical life and institutions of the island. Of course, classical music was not Puerto Rico's chief cultural export. The rise of urban and commercial music there, particularly the *bomba*, *plena*, and salsa, has transformed the way we view the country and its music. Many writers have focused on this phenomenon, in particular on the music of Rafael Hernández. Despite its obvious importance, the only study made to date of music criticism in Puerto Rico (and which is reprinted in this volume) is Sylvia Lamoutte de Iglesias's 1997 "La critica musical: origen y desarrollo," which contains an impassioned plea for a continuation of the tradition of musical criticism in the local press as a means of maintaining and expanding the musical public.

By Thompson's own admission, his compendium of excerpts represents but a small fraction of what has been written about the musical life of Puerto Rico. Nonetheless, this book provides a necessary foundation and vital impetus for future investigations. Above and beyond that, it is simply a pleasurable and fascinating read.

Walter Aaron Clark

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*Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context*. By Carol Vernallis. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Carol Vernallis's *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* is one of the most insightful and important contributions to the study of multimedia to