

Williams is careful to distance his work from the equally influential Afropessimist theory of Frank Wilderson and its core ideas of Black social death and exclusion from humanity.⁵ Indeed, Williams finds Wilderson's stark conception of Black inhumanity to be fundamentally incompatible with the vibrancy and global impact of Black music and with his subjects' dedication to affirming their humanity through their art (18). He points instead to moments of multiracial collaboration from jazz history to illustrate Black musical space's as-yet-unrealized potential to include all of humanity (19).

Crossing Bar Lines is an excellent and timely addition to the literature of jazz studies, critical improvisation studies, and Black studies. With his insightful combination of cultural theory and music analysis, along with his engagement with urgent contemporary issues of race and gender, Williams has provided an especially illuminating look at Black musicians as improvisers and as theorists of politics and culture. His book will be useful for scholars in fields like Black Studies, American Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies who seek a deeper understanding of contemporary Black improvised music and its relevance to ongoing social justice struggles.

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Got To Be Something Here: The Rise of the Minneapolis Sound

By Andrea Swensson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021.

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doi:10.1017/S1752196323000238

Among the most exciting books about R&B history published during the last decade is Andrea's Swensson's *Got to Be Something Here: The Rise of the Minneapolis Sound*. Swensson is known best as a print journalist and radio personality in the Twin Cities. She was an editor at *City Pages* and then a correspondent for KCMP ("the Current"), a Minneapolis-based Adult Alternative radio station that is one of a few National Public Radio affiliates featuring popular music. Her focus at the station was local music, which extended into a number of important projects attempting to document music histories of the Twin Cities.

A white woman with an obviously Scandinavian surname, Swensson quickly became one of the most knowledgeable local sources for information about Black popular music in Minneapolis and St. Paul. She has created several large-scale podcasts on the subjects of Prince album suites, like *1999* and *Sign O' the Times*, in conjunction with the Prince estate, the Current, and two record companies. She has also covered the music and work of many other Black musicians in the area.

Swensson's work is on the scholarly side of a large-scale trend that revisits Black histories in music on a local level. Her audience is, in part, the same listeners who support radio stations like KCMP, but also extends into communities of record collectors, soul fanatics, local music buffs, and those interested in recovering lost histories of Black communities. This esoteric soul movement is a cornerstone of the retail music reissue market, for example, where elaborate portfolios of rare Black pop are commonly offered in small batches by labels like Numero Group and Dust to Digital. One popular collection of this sort, *Twin Cities Funk and Soul: Lost R&B Grooves From Minneapolis/St. Paul*, was issued in

⁵Wilderson's most extensive discussion of Afropessimist theory appears in Frank Wilderson, *Afropessimism* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2020).

2012 on the (now-defunct) local imprint, Secret Stash.¹ Regional soul is also a topic of modern photo retrospectives, including the work of photographer Charles Chamblis, who created visual documentation of the musicians, clubs, and Black community of North Minneapolis during this same period. A 2015 Chamblis exhibition at the Minnesota History center was later published as the retrospective *Sights, Sounds, Soul*.² Overlapping with many of the people, places, and recordings discussed in Swensson's book, both *Twin Cities Funk and Soul* and *Sights, Sounds, Soul* are useful companions to this study.

Got to Be Something Here is a carefully researched exploration of the role of popular music among Black communities in Minneapolis and St. Paul during a 25-year period between the late 1950s and early 1980s. There are a handful of themes present throughout the study, including neighborhood segregation and urban displacement, the integration of non-Black spaces in downtown areas, the roles of community centers and community festivals, the venues that catered to Black musicians and the challenges they faced, the creative migration out of the Twin Cities, and the generational family connections within the musical community.

Swensson's view of the Black musical landscape includes a variety of non-musicians—audio engineers, promoters, radio personalities, photographers—whom she integrates beautifully into the story as necessary elements of the scene. The book features a variety of (sometimes esoteric) sources to tell this story, including newspaper clippings, city documents, and yearbooks. The reproduced images are impressive, demonstrating her extensive photographic research. Perhaps most important are the first-person perspectives that she collates into a strong and detailed narrative about how Black popular musicians used their art to express an immense creative spirit while simultaneously facing extreme challenges.

Music and musicians are at the center of the book's main chapters. Beginning with a history of Black communities in the Twin Cities after World War II, the book follows the most popular local groups that included significant African American members. Chapter 1 begins with a lengthy discussion of the Plymouth Avenue neighborhood of north Minneapolis, focusing on the interaction of Jewish and Black residents. It profiles a young recordist named David Hersk, who was the first from the area to commit the sounds of Black teen pop groups to disc, working with young local singing acts like Velquins and the Big M's. The next chapter turns to the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul and focuses on acts like the Amazers. It then details a number of large-scale highway infrastructure developments in the Twin Cities that decimated and severely changed both neighborhood centers discussed in the first part of the book.

A northwest community center, The Way, is the subject of Chapter 3. Its music program and instrument room helped to launch the careers of many Black musicians from the area. Swensson profiles local activist Harry "Spike" Moss, who started The Way with city support following a noteworthy series of rebellions in the Plymouth Avenue neighborhood in 1967. Chapter 5 similarly reports on a number of important community developments in the late 1960s, including KUXL radio and Black and Proud Records, both spearheaded by local DJ, promoter, and label owner Jackie Harris and featuring music by local acts like Maurice McKinnies and the Champions.

Spaces like The Way are vital to Swensson's story, creating a dense fabric of musical activity, performance venues, and geographical boundaries within the Twin Cities. Similarly, the book's several chapter-length studies focus on nightclubs and their stories of integration. Chapter 4 considers a range of activity at King Solomon's Mines, a downtown club that brought Black performers into a shared social space during the late 1960s but was shut down by municipal bureaucracy before the end of the decade. Chapter 6 recalls The Flame, a performance space with two stages that simultaneously offered country acts and soul groups like the Vandons. Integrated bands that variously challenged the boundaries of race are the subject of Chapter 7. These ranged from the Augie Garcia

¹Various Artists, *Twin Cities Funk and Soul: Lost R&B Grooves from Minneapolis/St. Paul, 1964–1979*, Secret Stash Records SSR-LP-25, 2012, long-playing record.

²Charles Chamblis and Davu Seru, *Sights, Sounds, Soul: The Twin Cities through the Lens of Charles Chamblis* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2017).

Quartet of the late 1950s, to late 1960s soul groups like Dave Brady and the All Stars, and the blues group Willie and the Bumblebees (who backed Bonnie Raitt's first solo album in the early 1970s).

The last three chapters will be the most important to readers concerned with the more immediate predecessors of the internationally known Minneapolis Sound of the 1980s. Chapter 8 is focused on The Family, which started as a house band at The Way and grew into one of the most important groups in the Twin Cities' small, Black music scene during the mid-1970s. Later known as the Lewis Connection, the group made only one LP that contains just six tracks.³ But their model was an important one for Prince, who performed as a guest artist on their cut "Got to Be Something Here" (the source of the book's title).

The relationship between a young Prince and his childhood friend and collaborator André Cymone is the subject of Chapter 9. Based on interviews with Cymone himself, this chapter begins with their time together in grade school, proceeds through instances of segregation and bussing, and concludes with a robust discussion of their group Grand Central, which also included drummer Morris Day (later of The Time). In the book's final chapter, Swensson discusses the impact of the song "Funktown" on the local music scene and the beginnings of much wider, national and international exposure for a number of groups from the area.

Got to Be Something Here is unabashedly framed around the emergence of Prince. Discussions of Prince form the bulk of the introductory and epilogue, and other references are sprinkled liberally throughout. Accordingly, historians of songwriters and producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis might quibble with the "Minneapolis Sound" moniker of the book. While Prince is undoubtedly a central character in the history of Black pop from the Twin Cities, he was also part of a larger movement that occurred during his own time in Minnesota. Jam and Lewis just as easily might have been considered central figures.

Many listeners know that Prince came from the Twin Cities, but prior to this book there was little easily accessible information about the Black musical scenes of Minneapolis and St. Paul during the 1960s and 1970s. The content of Swensson's study explains why. There was deep segregation in Minneapolis after World War II, and the musical and cultural communities that shaped Prince's musical sensibilities during his formative years were largely ignored, and often flat-out resisted, by the majority of the Twin Cities' non-Black residents. The first edition of this study was published before the murder of George Floyd, and it was remarkably prescient, explaining many of the structural factors present in Minneapolis that underscored the horrible series of events that made international news in 2020.

Prince is omnipresent throughout the narrative, but it is important to note that this book is a prequel to his career, ending with his national exposure. More significantly, the study reintroduces a number of local musicians and groups who are discussed far more rarely, including The Wisdoms, Willie Walker, Sonny Knight, The Blazers, Philadelphia Story, Purple Haze, Prophets of Peace, Dave Brady and the Stars, Back to Black, and Cynthia Johnson.

After a close reading of *Got To Be Something Here*, along with carefully listening through much of the music it discusses and spending time with the Chamblis photographs, I put the book to the test, listening closely to Prince's 1978 debut *For You* to see if Swensson's context helped me to hear this record differently.⁴ It certainly did. In one sense, knowing the world from which Prince came makes his artistic character more impressive and more obviously unique. He was a far better recordist than any of his local contemporaries, understanding and mastering the power of this medium before his peers. Prince was also a trailblazer in how he liberally applied this freedom of image, letting it infuse his musical persona, especially his approach to vocal performance. Given the rarity of this approach among his local contemporaries, his increasingly uninhibited and flamboyant image must have been all the more striking against the taciturn Midwestern cultural norms discussed throughout *Got to Be Something Here*.

³The Lewis Connection, *The Lewis Connection*, [self-released] 98–84, 1979, long-playing record. The band name is misspelled, "The Lewis Conection" on the cover.

⁴Prince, *For You*, Warner Brothers BSK-3366, 1979, long-playing record.

In another sense, Minnesota musical history is undeniably audible throughout *For You*. The disco and funk of tracks like “In Love,” “Soft and Wet,” and slow-jam “Baby” were among the styles of R&B that were right at home in Uncle Sam’s, the dance club that soon transformed into First Avenue. (The latter holds near-mythical status as the site where much of the *Purple Rain* LP was recorded, and additionally served as the visual setting of many club scenes in the film.) The precision of the playing, use of technological timbral and rhythmic characteristics, and melismatic, multi-tracked vocals that occur throughout the album all seem to be directly descended from the local scene.

Then there is the last track on the record, the raucous “I’m Yours,” which begins with a nasty funk bass and screaming rock guitar lead part. In themes that focus on relations of race and their resultant musical markets, Swensson explains clearly how virtuosic guitar performance and rock-oriented styles were audible to Prince during his formative years. The beauty of learning this background helps to clarify that he was not somehow calculating his musical offerings to simultaneously occupy multiple economic segments within the music industry. Instead, his mix of rock and R&B elements was far more organic, reflecting his understanding of the possibilities of popular music as a means of artistic expression.

Although written by someone with no official connection to higher education, Swensson’s book serves the mission of academic musicology as well as anything written by a university professor during the last half-decade. Using deep, historical investigation and carefully selected sources, *Got to Be Something Here* tells a fascinating story about music, race and region, filling a gaping hole in our public knowledge of this important musical scene.

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Christian Sacred Music in the Americas

Edited by Andrew Shenton and Joanna Smolko. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.

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doi:10.1017/S1752196323000184

The Society for Christian Scholarship in Music, “an association of scholars dedicated to exploring the intersections of Christian faith and musical scholarship,” celebrates their upcoming twentieth anniversary with Andrew Shenton and Joanna Smolko’s edited collection: *Christian Sacred Music in the Americas*. In the same way that the Society for American Music dedicates itself broadly to the “study, teaching, creation, and dissemination of all musics in the Americas,” this volume, too, reaches beyond the United States in its scope of musical subjects and source materials.¹ Chronologically, the collection ranges from studies of sacred art music sung in seventeenth-century Guatemala to present-day musical expressions throughout the Americas. In addition to Guatemala, much of the volume is focused on the United States, with some representation of multiple Brazilian musical traditions. Even so, the studies in this collection paint a picture of diverse Christian musical expressions of belief across the Americas. In addition to the many musical genres and phenomena considered here, the authors of the individual chapters represent a variety of backgrounds and methodologies.

¹Society for American Music, <https://www.american-music.org/>.