Clearly it is Barber's formidable talents as an actress – coupled with her beautiful Yoruba (spectators would never let her get away with mishandling their cherished language) – which allowed her to become so deeply immersed in the work of 'her company' that she could spell out the numerous challenging implications of this work. One of the most vivid scenes in the book is when, after long deliberations with Adejobi about what term to use, she enters on stage and tells the main actor, a protesting old man, 'stop abusing me ... you blind beast'. Apparently this was just the right term because audiences immediately sensed all its double meanings and could not stop roaring. I wonder whether such talents may come to full bloom in a Pentecostalist video. We must hope that someone else will undertake a similarly incisive study of this more recent form of popular theatre. Barber's book shows how far a study of popular theatre can take us. A true landmark!

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TEJUMOLA OLANIYAN, *Arrest the Music! Fela and his rebel art and politics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (pb $19.95 – 0 253 21718 0). 2004, 252 pp.

A confession from a 'serious' professional Africanist historian: the first time I became interested in Africa, as a college student in the 1980s, was when I heard the music of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. The sound thumped and grooved, practically grabbing hold of my body; the lyrics, when I could understand them, were riotous, audacious; the musician, when I learned about him, both attracted and repelled. In all its complexity, Fela's Afrobeat drew me in – to Lagos, the megalopolis I came to both love and hate; to the tragicomedy of Nigerian politics; and to fascinating and fraught gender issues in Yorubaland. But this is where my awe at Fela's musical genius stopped short: his gleeful misogyny, as well as his outsize egotism and tendency to proclaim anything he wanted as African 'tradition'. When I met him (and even got to play saxophone with his band!) in the mid-1990s, I was charmed, fascinated, amused, bemused, annoyed and appalled in continuous succession.

Olaniyan's study masterfully captures Fela's creativity in all of its brilliant and infuriating intricacy. Like Fela, Olaniyan is no simple praise-singer: although he describes himself as a 'passionate fan', he is also a critical scholar, and it is his combination of appreciation, analysis and astute critique that gives weight to this book. Unlike most of the other half-dozen or so books on Fela which now exist, *Arrest the Music!* is not merely a biography. It does offer a chronological account of the familiar narrative: Fela's elite origins and his activist mother, his early forays into highlife and jazz, his critical 1969 trip to the United States, the creation of Afrobeat in Lagos, the notorious 1977 military attack on his household, his marriage to twenty-seven women at once, his continued run-ins with the government over politics and drug use, and his death from AIDS in 1997. But this book is also a sociological account of the context in which Fela lived and worked as well as, most importantly, a serious analysis of his output using the tools of literary and social theory.

Olaniyan is most attracted to Afrobeat because of what he calls its 'intellectual density'. That is, in both its lyrical content as well as its overall sonic style, Fela's music cogently addressed a wide range of political, economic, sociological and cultural themes relevant to modern African life. 'Perambulator', for instance, lampooned the nature of the post-colonial state and the character

of its bureaucracy, while 'I.T.T.' linked neo-colonialism with the failures of the African bourgeoisie. 'Shuffering and Shmiling' criticized Christianity and Islam as foreign imports offering ill-gotten riches for religious leaders and a useless ideology of submission for common people. Other songs confronted such topics as sex, gender, class and oppositional politics; the city and citizenship; democracy and disempowerment; music and pedagogy; history, memory and cultural identity; authenticity and hybridity; language and cultural imperialism; and nationalism, afrocentrism and cosmopolitanism. Throughout his examination of such themes, Olaniyan gives full play to the contradictions and paradoxes (or 'antinomies') of Fela's life and work, using these as entries both into the psyche of one intriguing individual and also post-colonial modernity in a much larger sense. His culminating analysis of the relationship between Fela's seemingly opposing 'political' and 'libidinal' selves is both persuasive and strikingly insightful.

Like Afrobeat itself, *Arrest the Music!* is 'intellectually dense' – multilayered, theoretically sophisticated, demanding thoughtful engagement. But in what may be his best tribute to Fela, Olaniyan has also written a book that is a delight to read, full of linguistic verve and outrageous humor. Crank up your Fela recordings, settle down with this book, and enjoy!

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DIDIER NATIVEL, *Maisons royales, demeures des grands à Madagascar: l'inscription de la réussite sociale dans l'espace urbain de Tananarive au XIXe siècle* (with preface by Françoise Raison-Jourde and postface by Faranirina Rajaonah). Paris: Karthala (pb €29 – 2 84586 539 2). 2005, 377 pp.

Madagascar's capital city, Antananarivo, is full of character. Whatever angle it is viewed from, the city is dominated by the long, high ridge that is crowned by the carcass of the old royal palace, destroyed by arson in 1995. The winding streets and narrow alleys of the old town are lined with two-storey buildings of an original style. The older churches in particular have a distinctly Victorian look, easily recognizable for anyone who has ever lived in the suburbs of an English industrial town.

Didier Nativel examines in detail the architectural history of nineteenth-century Antananarivo, showing how the royal palace, completed in 1840, inaugurated the spread of new styles of building and living among a new bourgeois class – if that is the right word – that clustered around the court and the government. Previous authors have tended to study the royal palace Manjakamiadana (the name means 'tranquil rule') as an object divorced from any social context, and they have generally been drawn especially by the role of its architect, the extraordinary Jean Laborde. Nativel, by contrast, gives full attention to the work of the thousands forced to labour on the building and considers this and other royal buildings in a much wider context. Above all, he places the construction of the royal palace and other monumental buildings in the political and social milieu of the capital. After the conversion to Christianity of the queen and prime minister of Madagascar in 1868–9, Antananarivo's grandees affected a style of life that reflected both traditional modes of being and a Victorian sense of decorum. Drawing on the example of the royal palace, they built their own residences in an emerging new style. It was not only the architecture that changed, but also the world-views and social milieu of an