

specific forms of communication, testimonies, or narratives favored by donors will survive, while others will be left out.

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LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND THE ARTS

Steven Feld. *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012. xii + 312 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. CDs. \$84.95. Cloth. \$23.95. Paper.

It is fortunate that Feld includes two marvelous CDs with his fine book. I had begun reading it and was wondering how the music described by the author would sound, until I realized that the CDs were right there! The music has the same beauty, cross-rhythms, and depth of thematic development that had delighted me on many trips to Africa and which I have also heard in the United States. Some previous reviewers have touted the book as offering an alternative view of the development of jazz, although that claim, which is not made by Feld as far as I can see, does not hold up. There are some claims here that African Americans have neglected African musicians or that they have not learned from the best of them, but that argument, I have to say, seems somewhat tiresome and outdated.

Jazz musicians, especially African Americans, have always paid tribute to the African roots of jazz. Louis Armstrong was clear in stating that his grandmother came from Ghana and his roots were there. He clearly stated the influence of European concert music on his music as well, but so have musicians such as the superior African drummer Nii Noi Nortey, who accuses some African American musicians of choosing inferior African musicians for their groups. Some of this kind of criticism clearly falls into the category of sour grapes on the part of musicians who were not always the first choice of American musicians. It is hard to dispute the quality of many Africans who have played in African American jazz groups, including Hugh Masakela, Abdullah Ibrahim, Olatunji, Fela Kuti, Femi Kuti, Peter King, Kimati Dinizulu, among others. And Dizzy Gillespie was a major influence in alerting Americans to the importance of African music.

As Feld notes repeatedly, however, once one gets below the rhetoric and put-ons, the real beauty comes out. There is more to African music than rhythm, and most serious jazz musicians know this. Fortunately, Feld, a musician as well as an anthropologist, spends most of his book on great ethnography. We do get to know the musicians well; along with the CDs there are seventy-eight photos to peruse.

I strongly recommend this book. African jazz is but one part of the world of jazz, but it is a very important part. As the musicians who speak in the book know, jazz is always changing around its African core. It was the first modern fusion music and it still incorporates material from all over the world. The best musicians have “big ears,” and it is only right that African jazz bands get their proper due. Let their wonderful music speak for them, as the powerful CDs with this book demonstrate.

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MEDIA AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Jenna Burrell. *Invisible Users: Youth in the Internet Cafés of Urban Ghana.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012. ix + 236 pp. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$30.00. Cloth.

With every rollout of a new communications technology comes handwringing. How do we use it? Should we? What can it do for us? How might it change others and us? In the United States, popular discourses about the Internet are often myopic and determinist, boiled down to unhelpful binaries: The Internet makes us smarter and more productive or, as one wag said, “stoopid” and lazy. The Internet makes us passive or aggressive, sociable or alienated. In Africa, popular discourses about the Internet acclaim it as an engine of development and democracy or a portent of cultural imperialism and local disconnection. Thankfully, Jenna Burrell’s smart and engaging *Invisible Users: Youth in the Internet Cafés of Urban Ghana* sidesteps these numbing binaries. Instead, she asks us to consider what happens when digital or networked communications technology travels the world, in this case to Ghana, to new users, to otherwise marginalized young people for whom the technology was not initially designed or intended. How are the experiences that young, urban Ghanaians have with computers and the Internet shaped by the historical, political, and economic inequities that have shaped so much else in their lives?

A first glance at the book’s table of contents might lead the reader to think that *Invisible Users* is a series of interesting, discrete case studies of various aspects of computers and the Internet in Ghana. In fact, it is a rich ethnography of the interface and interaction of Ghanaian youth with networked technology told at three levels: first, in Internet cafes and in the online encounters negotiated there; second, in the understandings, interpretations, and meanings that youth in Ghana attach to the Internet and what they do with these understandings; and third, in the shifting economic and political landscape of globally networked Ghana.