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squabbles and personal disillusionment in ways that evoke universal themes for musicians, but which are filtered through a Pompey lens. Thus when another of Allen's bands – Rosemary – breaks up, he is able to find work labouring in the city's seaside parks, an uniquely local option. Although he does not explain his methodology – the book is not 'academic' in that sense – quotes from local scenesters, many Allen's personal friends, feature throughout and add a great deal of colour.

Personally I could have done without Allen's eulogies to Buddhism which come later in the book, although that may be a reflection of both my Marxism and my age. However, it's not helped by a naff chapter title – 'Spirit in The Sky'. Elsewhere Allen engages in critiques of commentators such as Cohn and Hewison and while these are not always systematic, they are always engaging and overall this is a very welcome addition to the literature on local music scenes. It's a good read and never less than stimulating. Its success is built on the fact that Allen never lets local become parochial. He is keenly aware of broader national and international trends and links and does a good job of explaining their local impact. This is a story of interaction, not simple reception, for not only was pop put in to Pompey but, as Allen shows, Pompey had its input in to pop. Thus this is not simply a history of Portsmouth pop, but a history of pop itself – something which should be of interest to all readers of this journal.

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Players' Work Time: A History of the British Musicians' Union, 1893–2013.
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What constitutes music's history? Until relatively recently, musical history was understood to be the history of composition, peopled by its composers. The reason was self-evident: notation gave composition a stable identity and a durability that was in contradistinction to the evanescence of performance. It was only through dissemination by recording and broadcasting that performances, and so the work of performers, became available as substantive objects of investigation and study. While the explosion of interest in performance practice and the history of performance has rectified one previous shortfall, the emphasis remains on 'great' composers and 'great' performers at the expense of musical life in the round, as it were. All too often, the factors shaping musical tastes and musical values have been ignored, as have the economics and practices of musical cultures and their constituent 'art worlds', as Howard Becker so memorably identified them. In this sense, an account of the Musicians' Union (MU) presents a wonderfully specific opportunity to examine musicians' labour history from 1893.

Players' Work Time – a pun that makes for a truly relishable title – details how, through the MU's agency, musicians have seized new opportunities, or have been forced to adjust their traditional practices and work patterns, in order to accommodate an astonishing kaleidoscope of technological, economic and socially driven change. Accordingly, the history of the MU tracks the progression of a substantial

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aspect of British musical employment since 1893. This history takes its departure from the stable musical environment of Victorian Britain, and – via the arrival of recording and the BBC – reaches the ever-fluctuating diversity of today's musical cultures. It is a span that has seen music and its consumption completely transformed. In 1893, music was condemned to 'perish in the very instant of its production', and so, because the only condition of performance was live performance, there was employment for very large numbers of musicians of variable skills. Now, in defiance of Adam Smith, technology has made music a 'vendible commodity, which endures', and so has recast it into a very different sort of consumer good that requires fewer musicians with higher levels of executant skills, performing repertoires that are no longer bound to their original settings, but are able to be consumed independently of any social context at all.

These far-reaching changes have had aggressive consequences for musicians' employment. Accordingly, a history of the MU is also about the ways that professional music-making has continuously had to adapt itself in order to survive. As the authors explain, the MU's motto, 'keep music live', is less a slogan than an underlying philosophy, because 'recorded music has only ever provided significant income for a minority of the Union's membership'. In recent years, though, only 10% of the MU's membership of some 31,000 worked (either freelance or on contract) as orchestral musicians, while, coincidentally, the proportion of full-time, salaried employees has also dropped to just 10% – the other 90% being self-employed or freelance musicians. The themes running through this 120-year history are the frames that have affected musicians' working conditions: 'technology, the contemporary state of the music profession and its related industries, changing musical tastes, competition, and gender' (p. 10). The authors define their MU subjects as 'particular sorts of workers seeking paid employment' (p. 8), which is helpful in avoiding such issues as individual celebrity, economic success, the type of music they play (so avoiding the privileging of any particular repertoires) and instead focusing attention on the factors that characterise different music employment contexts.

Despite the fact that the MU has been a central institutional presence in British music-making since 1893, its role and significance has been surprisingly little considered (Cyril Ehrlich's (1985) *The Music Profession in Britain* being an important exception). For primary material, the authors have drawn on the Union's own archives and those of some of the employers' organisations with whom the Union negotiated, such as the BBC and the Association of British Orchestras. These archival sources have been amplified by interviews of a spread of MU personnel and other commentators, as well as drawing on trade magazines and newspaper accounts (including some very effective cartoon observations). What results is a rewardingly contextualised history that is both absorbing and very readable. UK musical practice is set within the backdrop of many of those largely unconsidered orchestral and dance band musicians who performed the music that consumers enjoyed. There were musical tensions – inevitable given the breadth of members' activities – such as the derogatory attitudes of some orchestral musicians to dance band and jazz musicians, requiring strenuous efforts at rapprochement in order to prevent the latter splintering off into a separate dance musicians' union. The Union dealt sometimes successfully with the innovations and sometimes less so. The 'boom and bust' that saw the talkies ending cinemas as major employers of musicians had its counterpart in the opportunities the authors capture in the chapter, 'The Politics of Dancing: 1934–45', marking a recovery of ground made possible by the greater politicisation of musicians,

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especially dance musicians. However, the anti-fascist mood of this period was a potent radicalising force that carried over into orchestral music, and as the authors note, with the fact that the Communist Party of Great Britain was serious about its cultural work, and with associations like the Gollancz-published Left Book Club and the Workers' Music Association, it is not surprising that there was significant support for the Communist Party of Great Britain within the Union.

Given that its subject is the employment of performing musicians, it may seem perverse to suggest that this history is about music's silent voices, but as Ruth Finnegan demonstrated in her classic study, *Hidden Musicians* (1989), most musicians' lives and their activities remain essentially unrevealed. The idolisation of megastar musicians in all fields is paralleled by the public's astonishing ignorance of the formation of musicians' skills, their working conditions and their employment. As this review was being written, the General Secretary-elect of the MU, Horace Trubridge, published a letter in the *Guardian* (20 June 2017) welcoming the aspiration of the Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, that every child should have the opportunity to learn an instrument. However, as Trubridge pointed out, this could not become a reality unless a properly funded system of instrumental tuition was reintroduced. What now seems to have passed into collective amnesia is that – until the effects of the 1988 Education Reform Act took hold – Local Education Authority music centres not only provided an abundance of music lessons at all levels, but that their activities of orchestras and ensembles were the essential means of both stimulating pupils' achievements and of sustaining their interest when the learning process got tough. Today, in the mind of politicians and most of the public, all that is required in order for music education to flourish are some well-meaning instrumental lessons. The corresponding lack of understanding about a musician's professional life is equally profound. The level of ignorance was recently captured by the MU's campaign, 'Work not Play', which was prompted by stories of musicians being asked to play for free at the London Olympics. One of the significant achievements of *Players' Work Time* is its scope. In this admirable history, its authors demonstrate the complex of influences – social and political, economic and cultural – that govern the employment of those seeking to make their livings as musical workers.

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Dig: Sound & Music in Hip Culture.

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Phil Ford is well-known for the searching and sometimes raw posts that, over many years, he has contributed to *Dial M for Musicology*, the blog he runs with Jonathan

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