

To critique the book further at a theoretical level, it seems to me that the theorem *every performance is new* (see above) is Derridean and, therefore, the choice of Badiou as the principle theorist upon whom Loss draws is a mistake. The statement that ‘every performance has the possibility of becoming an event’ (p. 13) is a poor fit with Badiou’s theories; to link Badiou’s work with rap (p. 26), jazz (p. 13), rock and pop does not fit with Badiou’s stated preferences (Western art music, in short). Loss knows that he doesn’t really understand Badiou properly: comparing the latter with a ‘howitzer’, Loss admits he is ‘not sure I know how to operate the howitzer’; ‘we’ll leave out the set theory’, he adds, dismissing what Badiou himself would certainly see as a central and indispensable part of his theory (p. 11). Like Badiou, Loss will dismiss what he doesn’t like as being ‘weak’ (pp. 24, 59, 138) and deploy language around being ‘faithful’ (p. 24), ‘forcing’, ‘naming’ and so forth. However, he understands Badiou’s terminology and theories in a ‘commonplace sense’ only, by his own admission (p. 237); that being the case some readers may feel that it would have been better to leave the French theory to one side.

Overall, I would suggest that the book is likely to introduce many readers to interesting and valuable music from the 21st century (I myself googled and enjoyed several songs and artists of which I was previously unaware). The writing is often engaging, furthermore. As a scholarly text, however, it has major failings which are unfortunate as I for one consider the theoretical area on which Loss has centred his book to be an important one which I suspect will captivate scholars in the coming years.

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Reference

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***The American Song Book: The Tin Pan Alley Era*. By Philip Furia and Laurie Patterson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 264 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-939188-2**

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The American Song Book: The Tin Pan Alley Era is an accessible introduction to Tin Pan Alley’s first three decades. The book reprints public domain sheet music of 34 standards originally published between 1890 and 1922, from Charles K. Harris’s ‘After the Ball’ to George Gershwin, B.G. DeSylva and Ira Gershwin’s ‘I’ll Build a Stairway to Paradise’. The selections emphasise music published after 1914, the date of Irving Berlin’s ‘Alexander Ragtime Band’ (even the edition of ‘After the Ball’ is a reprint from 1919 with a new piano part). Earlier examples focus on ragtime, coon songs and the early songs of George M. Cohan, although songwriters associated with turn-of-the-century operettas such as Harry von Tilzer or Victor Herbert are conspicuously absent. Each song is introduced through a brief prefatory essay, usually covering composer or lyricist biographies with occasional forays into genres (ragtime) or institutions (the Princess Theatre and ASCAP). Furia and Patterson also

provide a short introduction to Tin Pan Alley style and a short epilogue to bookend the 'song book'.

Creating an edition of sheet music reprints, taken from the UCLA Archive of Popular Music, not only nods to the titular colloquial name of Tin Pan Alley standards, but provides a fascinating lens into the repertoire. Much like the famous Dover reprints of Stephen Foster's sheet music, the reader will find it illuminating to see 'You're a Grand Old Flag', 'St. Louis Blues', 'Hello Ma Baby' and others in their original format. The layout, probably directed by Patterson, is crisp and clear, with easily readable greyscale covers and legible sheet music. The chronological order allows the reader to grasp stylistic trends in Tin Pan Alley such as the shift from the parlor and vaudeville stage to Broadway and the growing influence of ragtime and early jazz in the musical language of popular song. Printing the songs in their original commodity forms also retains the paratextual material illustrative of cultural and economic contexts: sheet music covers, references to original plays, advertisements for other songs long forgotten or products for the contemporaneous musical and theatrical economy, the names of singers and theatres, even the use of pseudonyms for now-famous composers and lyricists. This paratext also prevents elision of the inherent racism of turn-of-the-century American culture – the Sambo imagery on the cover of 'Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?', the discomfiting patter section of Fred Fisher's 'Chicago (That Toddling Town)' and the minstrel dialect in the lyrics to 'Hello Ma Baby' and 'St. Louis Blues' remain *in situ*.

The epigraphs, likely written by Furia, draw upon his prior research on Tin Pan Alley lyricists, including monographs on Johnny Mercer, Irving Berlin and Ira Gershwin, as well as *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley: A History of America's Great Lyricists*. They are well-written, accessible and entertaining, and they are most engaging when discussing lyric writing techniques. Analyses of the tango rhythms in 'St. Louis Blues' (p. 103) and the internal rhymes and syllabic elisions of Irving Berlin's 'I Love a Piano' (p. 126) offer perceptive insight into lyrical craft. Furia handles the complexity of racial issues well, emphasising how black songwriters such as W.C. Handy, Noble Sissie and Eubie Blake, and Bob Cole, J. Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson used coon songs and ragtime as vehicles for their songcraft while working within racist stereotypes endemic to the repertoire. Furia also inserts lively anecdotes from composer and lyricist autobiographies, which make for entertaining reading but could be taken with a few additional grains of salt.

The passion Furia and Patterson have for this repertoire throughout is clear, but the danger with publishing the 'great American song book' as a song book is its construction of Tin Pan Alley as a canon of great artists and songs. Much of the book's scholarly apparatus, aside from primary source biographies or Furia's prior publications, rests on scholarship from the 1970s to 1990s by scholars like Alec Wilder, Charles Hamm and Robert Kimball, who were primarily concerned with proving the compositional integrity of popular song. Over the past decade, musicologists including Daniel Goldmark, Erin Sweeney Smith, Larry Hamberlin and Jane Matthieu have sought to reposition Tin Pan Alley as a practice intersecting with contemporaneous cultural landscapes and urban geographies. The push to canonisation is unfortunately foregrounded in the introduction, which opens by arguing why these songs have stood the test of time. The two argumentative points, artistic specialisation and the range of harmonic and melodic possibilities afforded by the piano, read as positioning Tin Pan Alley as superior to later genres such as rock or hip-hop (and one cannot credibly argue that the piano offers a wider compositional

gambit than the sampler or computer). It also forgets that Tin Pan Alley songwriters produced reams upon reams of forgotten dreck on those pianos. A reference to Irving Berlin's reminder that only a half dozen or so of the thousands of songs published in a given year actually sell well (Tick 2008, p. 380) would have made for a refreshing bit of deprecatory awareness.

There is one other concern with *The American Song Book* that cannot be overlooked. The book's historical range is obviously limited by copyright considerations. Since anything published before 1922 is unambiguously in the public domain, the book plays it safe and omits publication of later repertoire. Yet the cover material and introduction insinuate that the authors will cover the whole of the Tin Pan Alley era by referencing performers including Frank Sinatra, Rod Stewart and Bob Dylan. The respective 'Great American Song Books' of these singers are suffused with repertoire from the 1920s to the 1940s that are necessarily absent from this collection. Rather than explaining this limitation with a perfectly defensible statement of copyright limitations, though, the conclusion doubles down by claiming that the book ends where it does because the rise of jazz and recording technology marks the denouement of Tin Pan Alley! The burdensome restrictions of US copyright laws, especially in regards to sheet music long out of print, surely introduced frustrating constraints into the project: no discussion of Johnny Mercer or Cole Porter, no printing of 'God Bless America', 'Cheek to Cheek', 'Summertime', 'My Funny Valentine' and many others. Avoiding discussing logistical limitations by sublimating them into a dubious historical narrative, though, is problematic.

The utility of *The American Song Book: The Tin Pan Alley Era* ultimately depends on the reader's purposes. For general readers passionate about this repertoire, this book is an engaging and accessible introduction into the genre's early history that provides interesting information about old and new favorites alike. For teachers of American popular music and American music courses, this book's scores are illuminative primary sources that can enrich classroom discussion and allow for pedagogical engagement with a wider reportorial range. Scholars of Tin Pan Alley music will certainly welcome a collection of original scores in such a clean format, but the book's lack of engagement with contemporary scholarship may inhibit its usefulness as compared with pre-existing reference materials.

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Reference

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***Folk Song in England*. By Steve Roud with contributions by Julia Bishop. London: Faber and Faber, 2017. 764 pp. ISBN 0571309712
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I think you might be forgiven for wondering if Steve Roud was partly in the business of rewriting Bert Lloyd (Lloyd and Vaughan Williams 1959 and Lloyd 1967), first in Roud's *New Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* (2012) and now in *Folk Song in England*. Indeed,