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Pop Idols and Pirates: Mechanisms of Consumption and the Global Circulation of Popular Music. **By Charles Fairchild. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. 182 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-6383-6**

Fairchild's *Pop Idols and Pirates* is a good read for those wanting an introductory examination of the consumer/producer relationship within the music industry as it relates to Australian Idol, but it falls short of an in-depth analysis. Fairchild 'focuses on all that happens in between the musician and the fan in an effort to better understand how the links between the two are produced and maintained' (p. 2). Two seemingly unrelated arenas of the music industry are described and compared in order to demonstrate what the music industry sees as 'right' (the 'Idol' phenomenon) and 'wrong' (music piracy) ways of consuming popular music. Fairchild argues that: 'The handling of both reveals explicit attempts to control and justify the ways in which the music industry makes money from music' (*ibid*.).

Part I focuses on the link between production and consumption through a comparison of two distinctly different venues: a Virgin Megastore and a small-scale independent record store. Here, Fairchild argues that the relationship between the consumer and producer is a cyclical process, and much broader than merely purchasing a CD. While the description of the two sites is of interest, it is not really adequate, as Fairchild does not take into account other viable sites, most notably online stores, which are relevant to the topic at hand.

Part I continues with a critique of the field of popular music studies. Fairchild asks 'what the ontological status of "the music itself" is, what counts as part of a musical work, and how these ideas relate to the ways in which that work is made meaningful as it moves through the world' (p. 36). As with most of this book, these are quite lofty goals, and ones that would best be dealt with separately, as opposed to discussed within a short chapter. Through the views of Lawrence Grossberg, Allan Moore and Theodor Gracyk, Fairchild concludes that there is no coherent definition of popular music but, while it is fine to critique the field of popular music studies, it would also be beneficial if Fairchild offered some constructive contributions.

Part II looks at the phenomena which bridge the gap between production and consumption, the struggle over control of technology (CDs, MP3, downloading), and the power of branding/advertising (consumer relationships). Fairchild traces the history of the MP3 and how the music industry has struggled to maintain power over the piracy of its products. Here, Fairchild notes that 'consumption is the reality of the music market. Each time we consume music we are a central participant in the material expression of a system of power' (p. 73). He argues that advertising and the power of branding are a major aspect of this system of power – the music industry is having to rely on 'cool-hunting' and 'trend-spotting' in order to break into the youth market, 'whose behaviour is often poorly understood' (pp. 81–82). In terms of relationships, power falls at the hands of these youths through the power of consumption.

Part III examines the spectacle of Australian Idol as a site of consumption. Fairchild notes that the 'Idol' phenomenon demonstrates the importance of branding, and compares it to another omnipresent brand – Starbucks. 'Starbucks did not invent coffee, they reinvented the experience of the coffee house. "Idol" did the same with televised talent quests . . . It has been the ability of each brand to manage the experience of consumption in novel ways that has made them hegemonic' (pp. 97–98). The last two chapters of part III give a prolonged description of what fans see when they watch Australian Idol, followed by detailed narratives of two winners and their respective runners-up. As opposed to the short histories Fairchild provided for MP3s and sites of consumption, these descriptions seem out of proportion, and possibly quite confusing for anyone who has not seen a production of Idol before. Whereas an examination of 'the music itself' was not provided in the music analysis chapter, here there are detailed musical descriptions of how the 'Idol' participants performed their songs. Where this chapter succeeds, however, is in identifying the important relationships fostered in Australian Idol: 'between the Idol performers and the show, and the Idols and the public, as made meaningful through their love of performing and "communicating emotions" through music, and between the music industry and consumers, as facilitated by the contestants through the long months of competition' (p. 124).

In his conclusions, Fairchild notes that 'Idol' can be seen as a solution to the piracy problem facing the music industry. As with the music industry, 'Idol' promotes a 'right' way to consume popular music, by engaging its consumers emotionally through a powerful system of branding and advertising. 'Its multiple revenue streams mean producers can worry less about fighting "pirates" and more about enticing "consumers"' (p. 157).

This book succeeds in providing a basic introduction into such diverse areas as music piracy, the Idol reality phenomenon, popular music studies, sites of consumption, branding, consumer relationships and technological control. The problem is that breadth is achieved at the expense of depth. Thus, while each topic is introduced, there is no room to expand on any one of them thoroughly. The reader is left wondering how piracy and Idol are actually related, and why those two particular fields were chosen. Ultimately a lack of focus undermines a book which would have benefitted from focusing on the Idol phenomenon – a largely misunderstood and understudied area which this book has begun to help us understand.

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The British Pop Dandy: Masculinity, Popular Music and Culture. **By Stan Hawkins. Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009. xxi + 222 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-5858-0**

'Dandyism is almost as difficult a thing to describe as it is to define', wrote Barbey in his classic 19th-century text on dandyism. Hawkins opens the first chapter of *The British Pop Music Dandy* with this quotation (p. 15) and it is an apt beginning for what proves to be a complex and sophisticated treatment of the subject. If one is looking for a cut and dried exposé of dandyism in British popular music – a