

approximating slavery, on the Polynesian men and women with whom they settled Pitcairn Island. In the end, almost all involved met a violent end. Despite efforts in the British and American press to portray Pitcairn as a utopian community, new imperial ventures in the Pacific could not escape the legacies of violence and dispossession so central to Britain's Atlantic past.

The fragmented and subjective experiences described in this volume suggest that political revolutions accelerated a number of developments that were bringing an early modern British Atlantic world to an end. While revolutionary turmoil, as the introduction argues, did indeed rearticulate and at times extend premodern ideas, it is less clear that this period produced outcomes as varied and inscrutable as the editors suggest. In his contribution, Randall McGowen argues that the penitentiary developed broad political appeal in Britain because it could be seen either to severely punish offenders or to offer a humane alternative to transportation and capital punishment. As the dynamics of power shifted, in ways both imagined and very real, states and empires adapted to new circumstances. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, then, that the prison stands as one of the most enduring legacies of this period of revolutionary reform.

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JOHN MULLEN. *The Show Must Go On! Popular Song in Britain during the First World War*. Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 250. \$34.95 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.167

Until very recently, the music of war had attracted little scholarly attention. Where elite genres were concerned, the explanation was largely ideological: as long as musicology remained invested in the doctrine of transcendental art, the idea that art music might have been co-opted for war was too hard to stomach. In the case of popular music, the oversight has likely been more circumstantial: a relative latecomer to the discipline, popular music studies had more uncharted territory to explore. British music hall of the First World War has followed these trends. While the pioneering research into music hall by the likes of Peter Bailey tended to focus on the Victorian era, what happened post-1914 has only recently begun to garner interest. John Mullen's *The Show Must Go On!*, the translation of his *Le Chanson populaire en Grande-Bretagne pendant la Grande Guerre, 1914–1918* (2012), marks a significant step in establishing this emerging field.

Loosely situating his work as “history from below,” Mullen seeks to use music hall repertory to recover “popular attitudes” in Britain during the First World War (4). After a brief introduction, Mullen's two opening chapters provide an overview of the music hall scene: the first weaving a rich tapestry of the people involved in the industry, from performers to audiences, impresarios to publishers; the second introducing the many genres on show. Mullen's main contribution, however, comes in the remaining four chapters, in which he provides a thematic analysis of wartime music hall song lyrics, based on a corpus of more than one thousand songs drawn from archival and published sources. Mullen deals with the most common subjects, love and the war, in separate chapters (4 and 5 respectively), allowing himself to set these topics within the context of broader sociopolitical developments. Meanwhile, a final chapter deals with several noncommercial genres, ranging from the hymn to the soldier's song. The encyclopedic purview enables Mullen usefully to revise some of the impressionistic misconceptions about wartime singing. For example, while statistical analyses demonstrate that the public was more interested in love songs than war songs (88–89), textual analyses reveal that the belief that music hall songs were jingoistic whereas soldiers' songs were sardonic is unfounded

(151–52). The picture that emerges offers a more accurate perspective on what the working classes listened to and sang, both at home and on the battlefield.

The inevitable downside of sketching broad trends in this way, however, is that any sense of particularity is lost: generalizations have to stand in for individual experiences and encounters; regional and municipal variations are smoothed out; peculiarities arising from the interplay of items on a given program vanish. Only the four “Star in Focus” snapshots, which are interspersed between the main chapters, offer tantalizingly brief glimpses of individual stars’ personas, including Harry Lauder, Vesta Tilley, Marie Lloyd, and Harry Champion. What is more, despite acknowledging that the act of performance is central to the creation and interpretation of meaning (73–76), Mullen focuses his analysis almost exclusively on the lyrics. In addition, the sounds of the songs—how they were orchestrated, how they were harmonized, variations in speed and ornamentation, intertextual references to other genres and styles—are all but absent from his account.

Why such musical and theatrical details matter more than Mullen’s account allows is suggested by contrasting two contemporary performances of “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” available on YouTube. In the first, the classical training of the singer, Irish tenor John McCormack, comes through in the rolled *r*’s, the use of vibrato, and the breath control; the operatic sound, combined with that of the accompanying marching band, gives the performance a patriotic air. In contrast, American recording industry star Billy Murray’s “Tipperary” has more of the comedic about it: the nasal part-sung, part-spoken style of delivery and the use of a mock-Irish accent for the moments of dialogue heighten the humor suggested by the lyrics. To be sure, in both instances it remains a song about a homesick Irishman, but the impact is arguably very different. A discussion of an audience member’s relationship to the singer, to the stereotype of the Irish soldier, and to the conflict would have added further shades of meaning.

Of course, one of the challenges of writing “history from below” is that the voices of ordinary people can be notoriously hard to recover. Even allowing for this, for a book concerned with popular attitudes, this one offers too little in terms of public opinion. This silence is especially notable in the moments when Mullen does touch on reception. For example, Mullen writes, “[t]o hear a pro-war message among friends on a relaxing night out could move people in a particular manner” (153). If such observations appeal to a common sense of humanity, they offer a frustratingly vague sense of how these songs performed their cultural work.

Finally, I was left wondering for whom the book was written. Near its beginning, Mullen remarks that, despite fifty years of academic advocacy, “history from below” has been slow to infiltrate public history forums (3). This rhetorical gesture, combined with a sparse index and the absence of a comprehensive list of song titles such as that in James Nott’s *Music for the People* (2002), suggest that the book is aimed at a general audience. On the other hand, its inclusion in the Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series, which seeks “to present the best research in the field,” implies a more academic readership. Compounding this uncertainty is the way in which the author negotiates the dual appeal to history and musicology. While ready to invoke musicological tools where historical ones are lacking, Mullen tends to rely on comparatively old secondary literature. This literature does not provide the timeliest backdrop for his interventions: at least in an Anglo-American musicology context, the claim that the academy continues to show a “dismissive attitude” towards popular music (72) seems rather outdated. Nevertheless, Mullen’s broad brushstrokes paint an enticing picture of a vibrant industry; I hope that his work will encourage future studies that magnify some of the finer details.

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