Popular Music (2018) Volume 37/1. © Cambridge University Press 2017, pp. 130–155

Reviews

San Francisco and the Long 60s.
By Sarah Hill. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. 357 pp. ISBN 9781628924213
doi:10.1017/S0261143017000617

Once considered a forbidding and forbidden cultural terrain, the counterculture of the 1960s and its Haight-Ashbury origins are now firmly established academic areas, safe to study albeit still challenging on many levels. Sarah Hill joins this growing bibliography with her exploration of how the counterculture's *genius loci* in San Francisco in the 1960s casts a far longer shadow than the periodisation of the era has permitted. Her substantial monograph makes a thoughtful, useful contribution to the literature.

Organised into 13 chapters (including the introduction), *San Francisco and the Long 60s* consists of two sections, the short 1960s and the long 1960s. 'The Short 60s' covers 1965–1969, with a chapter devoted to each year, along with a prefatory chapter. Each year includes two interludes devoted to representative songs that trace the development of the region's music as it moved from the folky teen-pop of the Beau Brummels' 'Laugh, laugh', a 1965 hit for the local Autumn Records label, through Sly and the Family Stone's 'Everyday people', which charted in 1969. Her choice of songs is thought-provoking, from the pre-Grateful Dead's 'The only time is now' (a demo for Autumn that remained unreleased until decades later) to It's A Beautiful Day's 'White bird'. Hill knows her San Francisco music and the songs she selected frame her narrative effectively, even as they make deeper points about the scene's diversity and range.

'The Short 60s' covers the history of the Haight thoroughly, coupling a nuanced reading of contemporary journalistic and archival sources with interviews that often veer from accepted tropes, and her approach is refreshing. Her command of the music, and the primacy of its place in the story, is the book's greatest strength. A particularly insightful example of this is her use of the Dead's 'Ripple' as an organising rubric and connecting metaphor, which she deploys evocatively and effectively throughout. One might assume that her skills as a musicologist might incline her to miss the significance and implications of the ways that these songs expressed their context and times, but she leavens sharp-eyed discussion of the often simple mechanics of popular song structure with a real appreciation for how this worked on audiences, then and now. While some readers may find that the isolation of those chapters breaks up the book, that approach underscores one of the book's greatest achievements, which is to take that music seriously and demonstrate that it warrants and can sustain high-level musicological treatment in its own right.

The second section, 'The Long 60s', is more ambitious and necessarily less comprehensive. Hill's five chapters argue for the continuation of the Haight's counterculture in many ways and on many levels, from the individual and communal impact of psychedelic drug use to the marketing and commercialisation of hippie accoutrements, icons and lifestyle accessories. Scholars have assayed many of these themes in much longer treatments, with varied results, and if Hill's forays here read as

more tentative than her first section, that reflects the density of those topics as well as their ongoing nature. Her chapter on music festivals and concerts is persuasive, for example, but the complexity of the audiences and the diversity of bands involved complicate and undercut generalisation on the level that she seeks.

Interdisciplinary efforts always risk field-specific criticism, however, and *San Francisco in the Long 60s* represents a deliberate and careful mix of methodologies and perspectives. Hill's approach combines tools and techniques from history, musicology and social science, and manages to do so in a way that remains accessible. Her writing is often graceful, and is steeped in a profound appreciation of and affection for her subject that is a refreshing change from the polemics and stentorianism that still peppers the literature. Yet the prose also shows her training in the social sciences, and humanities readers will find jarring her occasional tendency to allow quotations to stand on their own with minimal narrative contextualisation.

Hill's research is deep, and she is to be commended for undertaking numerous interviews to flesh out her extensive archival research. In many ways, those interviews are one of the book's greatest strengths, since they connect the short 1960s to the legacy she traces. Indeed, it is the often gossamer connections that link the personal to the broader machinery of cultural transformation that Hill manages to tease out with particular skill.

There are a number of nice touches. Her cover adapts pioneering poster artist Wes Wilson's famous design for the flyer advertising the Trips Festival, a major event in the emerging San Francisco scene, and throughout, she makes sly references to lyrics and events and currents that reveal a project long in the making and long in reflection. That characterises some of her larger arguments as well. Hill captures much of the scene's uniqueness and does a fine job of placing it within the broader arcs of the counterculture and the 1960s. She notes that 'In the microhistory of the Haight community the bigger international picture of the 1960s can seem remote' (p. 306), and provides a perceptive way of appreciating that myopia, sidestepping the easy slings and cliched arrows. Ironically, for some readers the book may make its greatest contribution on that microhistoric scale, framing the short 1960s better than connecting them to the long 1960s.

Decades of polemical work confront scholars working on the 1960s, and the lack of good counterculture archives continues to hamper fresh assessments. Often good work undertaken by amateur scholars focused on bands and poster artists tends to be obscure as well, making it easy for scholars to make mistakes. Although Hill does a fine job of noting many of these more obscure sources, she occasionally falls prey to this miasma of misinformation, such as the suggestion that the lyrics to the Grateful Dead's 'Dark star' were written in the studio, when they were almost entirely not (p. 7), or calling Burton Wolfe's *The Hippies* an academic effort (p. 11) – Wolfe was a trained journalist and his book began as a series of articles.

Some broader points might be considered contentious as well. Many participants and commentators date the start of the exodus from the Haight-Ashbury to 1966, much earlier than she does, for example (p. 157), and her dating of the ballroom scene in the city is neater than history allows – Bill Graham's Fillmore West lasted until 1971, and he began promoting shows at Winterland in 1967, both undercutting her claim that the scene shifted in 1969, with Graham turning to Winterland only then (p. 307). However, the larger point is that her research is thorough and thoughtful, and makes possible high-level scholarly discussion of topics and details that have been too often handled carelessly.

Counterculture archives are still in their infancy, and even those in institutional settings face problems, such as the Grateful Dead Archive, which Hill addresses specifically at the end of the book. (Full disclosure: Hill interviewed me, which she acknowledges in the book, when I was in charge of the Grateful Dead Archive, even as the library was scaling back its commitment to the collection.) The story of the Archive's difficulties are not a part of Hill's book, but those can be seen in some ways as underscoring the basic point of her thesis, which is that the 1960s remain an unfinished legacy, whose transition into history is marked by the same kind of friction, turbulence and unease that attended its creation. Hill's conclusion, that 'the long Sixties are about letting history breathe in everyday life' (p. 312), reminds scholars that the tangle of the era continues, and while that complicates and in some ways frustrates her thesis, it also helps to establish it. Hill may not have answered all of her questions, but she is to be commended for addressing one of the most central, defining issues of her subject. *San Francisco and the Long 60s* makes an essential, welcome contribution to the conversation.

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Autumn of Love: how the Swinging Sixties and the Counter-culture came to Portsmouth.
By Dave Allen. Bury: Mayhill, 2017. 294 pp. ISBN 9781905597758
doi:10.1017/S0261143017000642

Dave Allen is a man on a mission. A long time musician, more recent academic and 1960s survivor, in this book Allen seeks to do two things: first, to make the case for Portsmouth as an important site for popular music and, secondly, to reclaim the 1960s from its detractors. In both cases he succeeds admirably.

This is a very good book and one which should find its place on any reading list which examines popular music and locality. It shows Portsmouth not only to have its own important musical traditions but also to be linked to both national and international trends. For example, the links which Allen has made with Country Joe MacDonald are a highlight towards the end of the book and illustrate how Portsmouth's local scene interacts with one of the Woodstock festival's key performers in perhaps unexpected ways.

The focus of Allen's book is his beloved home town of Portsmouth, which he describes as being Britain's only island city (p. 14), and which is often known by its vernacular name of Pompey. Allen outlines its history and its place within both popular culture and media accounts. In emphasising Portsmouth's role, Allen seeks to challenge dominant narratives of the 1960s which tend to associate the key experiences of popular music during the decade with major cities such as London, San Francisco and New York. He concedes that his account is both highly personal – this is his story and 'essentially celebratory' (p. 4), being 'a celebration of a time and a place that meant a great deal to many people … and continues to resonate' (p. 11).

This does not mean that Allen's account lacks a critical edge. One of the best parts of the book is his wonderful demolition of right-wing critics of the 1960s