

The style of the writing indicates that Charters addresses a broader public, reaching far beyond the scholarly or even musical fields. On the one hand, the book is a travel journal full of landscape descriptions, poetic comparisons and impressions; on the other hand there is a great amount of valuable musical, historical and geographical information on the cities and countries visited. The researcher's perception is always present, but the traveller's impressions often take over the writing; in Charters' book, incidents regarding hotels, guides and transportation are narrated as part of the usual stages of academic field research, including the first insights into the subject of study, preliminary research and the actual fieldwork. The result is a text that is both a personal and academic account of an ethnomusicologist's experiences, making the reader wonder if it is even possible to sustain such a distinction. Charters' text is always direct and simply formulated. That also can be said of the style through which the musical information is described, which avoids technical terms and translates musical jargon into ordinary written English without any loss of technical precision.

From an ethnomusicology point of view, the book covers a wide range of subjects: from the expected Blues and Jazz traditions to a number of other African-rooted musical styles found throughout the Americas such as the North American Spirituals and Gospel music, Trinidad's Calypso, Jamaican Reggae, the Cuban musical universe and the rhythms of Brazilian Carnival, to name just a few examples. Specialists on these musical traditions may find occasional misspellings and inaccuracies but nothing that compromises the value of the musical information, always presented within a broader cultural, social and historical framework.

One of the great merits of this book is offering the readers (especially the ones outside the scholarly/musical world) an account of ethnomusicological research beyond its usual academic products such as papers, articles and the like. So much of a researcher's experience is left out of such writings which are strictly limited to academic knowledge. A very good example can be found in the second chapter of the book, describing a trip to the Canary Islands in search of the possible African roots of the Canario dance and music tradition. Charters' initial hypothesis, triggered when he heard a radio broadcast of the Spanish composer Gaspar Sanz's 'Canarios' for guitar, was not proved by his later field research. Nevertheless, what might have been considered an academic fiasco is turned into an insightful and rich description of the islands' cultural history, including their participation in the African slave trade, as well as a glimpse into their current traditional music scene.

Reading Charter's book, even an experienced researcher may find precious tips on how to articulate sources and conduct fieldwork. The author's experience in finding and interviewing local musicians and making profitable use of literary and historical sources can be useful for the academic public as well as providing a pleasant reading experience for the non-specialist.

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***Rumba Rules: The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire.* By Bob W. White. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008. 300 pp. ISBN 978-0822341123 doi:10.1017/S0261143010000310**

Rumba Rules is the 'first ethnography of popular music in the Democratic Republic of Congo' (synopsis) and explores 'the politics of dance music in Mobutu's Zaire'.

This subtitle operates on two levels. First, White explores the implications of the authoritarian state's economic and social policies on the content and production of original popular music and the operation of its music industries. Secondly, as an anthropologist, he also identifies the politics implicit within the hierarchical systems which operate within these industries, presenting these systems as symptomatic of a cultural dominance of 'chief' figures. *Rumba Rules* adds to a growing literature on the culture and politics of post-colonial African nations, with works by Johannes Fabian and Filip de Boeck providing a base for further scholarship of the cultural systems of the country now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The end of Belgian colonialism in the area led to a bloody struggle for power, which resulted in the fledgling Republic of the Congo becoming Zaire – a pseudo-authentic African nation ruled by the dictator Joseph Mobutu. Mobutu was concerned with the concept of *authenticité* – an idealised view of pre-colonial nationality – and set about the removal of all evidence of Zaire's colonial past by enforcing stylised ideas of traditionalism, such as the abandonment of Western Christian names and a requirement that all citizens wear traditional Congolese dress. These nationalist concepts manifested themselves within the main crux of Mobutu's cultural policy, *l'animation politique et culturelle*, a system of state-sponsored performance which combined 'the aesthetics of folklore with the spectacle of popular dance music whose lyrics sang the unconditional praises of the one-party state and its leader' (p. 73). These televised displays of propaganda also encouraged, or enforced, participation by citizens at the beginning of the working day.

Animation politique exploited and enforced the Zairian public's obsession with popular dance music as a means to suppress opposition to the state. This obsession is reasoned in depth by White. With the core of his research having taken place during a 13-month residency in Zaire's capital Kinshasa in the mid-1990s, White achieves an exploration of most aspects of popular music culture in the city. His research even extended to becoming a member of a local band, thus giving him a unique insight into how life under an authoritarian band leader has been inspired by life under an authoritarian head of state. While a recording industry exists in Kinshasa, the experience of popular music is understood by most as live performance, and this is reflected in White's emphasis on discussion of live experience. Indeed, three of the eight chapters focus on this importance, in terms of the organisation of groups, the construction of performances and audience practices, which are all centred on the fulfilment of economic potential. For example, there exists a practice of 'spraying' performers with cash during performance; if an audience member is particularly impressed by a performer they will push money into their pockets as a sign of respect. Less respectful, but still a mark of gratitude, is the sticking of notes to the skin of performers, usually dancers or *atalaku* (an interesting breed of performer, identified by White as integral to the Congolese rumba experience, who acts as a 'hype' man, encouraging audiences with calculated shouts and performing corresponding dance moves), who, as generally women or jester figures respectively, do not command the same authoritarian respect as male band leaders, and are treated as such. White accepts that performers rely on spraying to supplement the small income they make from being band members.

Another method of enhancing income is found in the practice of *libanga*, or name throwing. This entails fans paying for the privilege of having their name shouted out by one of the singers or *atalaku* during a performance – with the profit usually retained by the band member approached with the cash. Name throwing

also extends to the incorporation of names of public figures and companies into the main lyric of songs; as such libanga also displays an accumulation of cultural capital – the calling of a name acts as a mark of respect and demonstration of a wide knowledge of important cultural and economic figures. These names are incorporated into a very narrow range of lyrical content which focuses on topics of love and abandonment.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to lyrical analyses of songs by various key figures to demonstrate typical directions within this narrow framework. White views these lyrical subjects as symptomatic of the everyday life of the music's consumers, which can be ascribed to the socio-economic results of Mobutu's policy and premiership, as much of the relationship breakdown described in these songs revolves around financial problems. This extends in many directions – inability to support a family, loss of pride – which ultimately leads to heartbreak through voluntary or involuntary separation.

The socio-economic status of the country also impacted on the dissemination of music; as the infrastructure supporting the recording industry collapsed, those in need of income pursued music piracy. White's third chapter details the routines of distribution and redistribution of recordings in Kinshasa, which ultimately revolves around mobile stalls which sell a mixture of authorised and pirated recordings. Only one record shop exists in Kinshasa selling 'first hand' recordings. It struggles for business since it is vastly undercut by the prices offered by street vendors. As an ethnographic study, *Rumba Rules* is unable to deliver a critical commentary on this phenomenon, which presents my only real criticism of this illuminating study.

There is much room for further development of White's work in terms of a critical comparison of Congolese music, artists and industries with those of other nations. Indeed the problems faced by musicians in Kinshasa regarding illegal redistribution of their work are comparable with the redistribution of Western artists' music via the internet. By examining the street vendor phenomenon in these terms one could develop a greater understanding of the economic problems faced by Kinshasans under the legacy of Mobutu's dictatorship. I was also expecting a greater examination of interaction between the state and popular culture in Zaire than White presented. While various relationships were identified, I feel that he was unable to develop studies of them fully by virtue of the book's status as an ethnographic study. Perhaps the reader would be better served if this status were made more explicit by the title or synopses. Nevertheless, the book does present many avenues for further research, which, if pursued, would help to enhance the fledging scholarship of the intriguing musical life in Kinshasa.

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***How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll: An Alternative History of American Popular Music.* By Elijah Wald. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 323 pp. ISBN 978-0195341546**

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Along with most of the people who have observed me reading this book, you may be wondering how the Beatles could have destroyed Rock & Roll. Alas, reading