***The Musical Artistry of Rap.* By Martin E. Connor. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2018. 219 pp. ISBN 978-0-7864-9898-7**
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Over the past 20 years or so, a significant amount of academic writing has been published that focuses on hip-hop studies and analysis. Earlier works such as Tricia Rose's *Black Noise* and Adam Krims' *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* have paved the way for hip-hop music and culture as an area of academic study or interest. Martin Connor's book *The Musical Artistry of Rap* joins the canon of significant works in this field, featuring thorough analyses of the complex rhythmic and melodic structures of a wide variety of rappers from different subgenres and eras of rap. Through a plethora of detailed rhythmic transcriptions, Connor provides insight into the musicianship and artistry of rap music.

Throughout the book's seven chapters, Connor explores different approaches to viewing specific parts of the musical characteristics that make up a rapper's flow and style. Some of these approaches are fairly straightforward, such as the first chapter, which focuses exclusively on rhythm, while other chapters take a more nuanced approach to viewing the structure of a rapper's verses. This includes chapters such as chapter five, which focuses on texture and orchestration. By separating these approaches into different methods of analysis, Connor provides a wide lens to view how one can interpret the musical characteristics of rap. The book also features a foreword from Indiana University Professor Kyle Adams, whose work in rap analysis is an obvious influence on Connor, as well as an afterword from one of the founders of *Rap Genius*, Ilan Zechory.

The main feature of this book which would be of interest to most scholars is Connor's use of rhythmic transcriptions. When discussing specific characteristics of a rapper's style from a song, he features a significant amount of complex transcriptions that accurately document the minute rhythmic details found in many rappers' performances. Although this style of transcription may seem a bit daunting or overly complex to some readers, Connor defends this by stating his desire to visually represent each rapper's performance in each excerpt as accurately as possible. What makes these transcriptions difficult to interpret at first is the fact that the lyrics of each excerpt are not present. Although I imagine this book would be difficult to publish with the lyrics, as getting permission for Connor's hundreds of excerpts would be a massive undertaking, I believe this could improve the legibility of these transcriptions significantly.

The longest chapter is the very first, 'Rhythm', as it not only analyses and showcases rhythmic transcriptions of excerpts from a variety of rap songs, but also goes in-depth to explain the value and purpose of these transcriptions. Connor frequently defends his style of transcription throughout the first half of this chapter, stating that these are useful for archival purposes, as opposed to compositional or performative tools.

One characteristic of this book, and one of the main themes throughout all of the chapters, is the use of Classical Western music theory terms and applying said terms to describe specific patterns of rappers. From passages discussing 'Busta Rhymes' Through-Composing' in chapter one to a discussion of 'Kendrick Lamar's Tessitura and Passagio' in chapter six, making these connections between European and African Diasporic musical characteristics is an apparent theme

throughout Connor's analyses. Although this has been contentious among some circles within fields of music theory and analysis related to hip-hop music, he provides a copious amount of passages that discuss in length the importance of pointing out these similarities. This is best represented in the passage titled 'Thematic Quotations in Classical Music' in chapter four, where Connor compares the musical borrowing and sampling found in hip-hop with examples of musical borrowing and quotation in a variety of examples of classical music. This is significant in that Connor accurately portrays the fact that musical borrowing exists and is prevalent throughout all music, both in classical and in a wide variety of popular music genres. The purpose of this connection, as well as the plethora of other connections between Western Art music and rap music made by Connor, is to combat the criticisms faced by rap as non-musical. This serves as an important counterpoint to the criticisms faced by rap both in and out of academia, and shows the similarities as well as complexities that are shared with both rap and Western art music.

Arguably, the most debatable aspect of this book is the final chapter. Titled 'Masters of the Form', Connor provides a list of significant or influential figures in the evolution and history of rap, excerpts of the music of many of which can be found in the previous chapters. This list features a variety of names that include more mainstream artists such as Eminem and Kanye West to lesser-known but still significant artists such as Jean Grae. Although he makes a good case for each artist he mentions in this chapter, a larger list, especially one that features musicians from a wider array of time periods in hip-hop, could strengthen this chapter significantly.

It is exciting to see more and more scholarly research being done on the musicianship of rap music, and *The Musical Artistry of Rap* is a fantastic reflection of this. In short, Connor's work in this book is a significant step in the right direction for rap analysis. Over the next few years, as more scholars look for methods of analysis when interpreting various musical aspects of rap, this book may be looked at as a significant source, with many of these methods being expanded upon in the years to come.

Zachary Diaz

University of Bristol
zachary.diaz1993@gmail.com

Schooling New Media: Music, Language, and Technology in Children's Culture.
By Tyler Bickford. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. 202 pp. 9780190654146

Tyler Bickford's study of kids' usage of portable music devices in a small, rural Vermont school makes important contributions to research on the materiality of digital culture, and the role of popular music in the social life of children. It captures a technological moment which has now largely passed – standalone MP3 players have given way to smartphones; streaming is now dominant over direct file ownership – but identifies several important aspects of kids' usage patterns that, I suspect, remain highly pertinent. Crucially, it gives a prominent space to the perspective of the young people themselves, leaving the school's adult staff 'intentionally voiceless' (p. 22) in order to present a rich account of the ways that these devices support friendship and playfulness in an educational setting.