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# Reviews

***Every Sound There Is: The Beatles' 'Revolver' and the Transformation of Rock and Roll.* Edited by Russell Reising. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2002. 278 pp.**
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The past five or six years have seen a substantial wave of books, journal articles and conferences devoted to the study of the Beatles. This collection of (mostly North-American) papers reflects and consolidates that interest. Like much of the current research into the group and its music, it rests upon an implicit assumption that the opportunity to revisit the events of thirty-plus years ago will reveal much that was overlooked at the time, and illuminate impacts and trajectories that can only now be properly appreciated.

Here, the conviction is that the Beatles' seventh album, *Revolver*, released in August 1966, is the group's masterpiece and the record that 'invented musical expressions and initiated trends and motifs that would chart the path not only of the Beatles and a cultural epoch, but of the subsequent history of rock and roll' (p. 11). It is a bold assertion to make, and one that immediately invites competing claims. *Rubber Soul*, *Abbey Road* and *The Beatles* continue to stand, for many, as the group's finest albums; historically, the significance attached to *Sgt Pepper* has always far outweighed the importance given to *Revolver*.

The chapters are organised into four themed sections. Part 1 considers the influences on and from *Revolver*, and contains many of the most provocative and thoughtful arguments within the book. Walter Everett's exhaustive analysis of the manner in which the instrumentation, structure and performance of the album's songs borrowed from the contemporary black musics of Stax, Motown and Atlantic is a detailed and valuable addition to the recognition of those other sources (rock 'n' roll, the Brill Building, Bob Dylan) from which the Beatles derived many of their musical ideas and working practices. Jacqueline Warwick's chapter argues that while the album is largely centred around masculinist experience, it nevertheless manages to speak to women. Her assessment of the ways in which female performers' reworkings of *Revolver*'s songs (Emmylou Harris's 'For No One' and 'Here, There And Everywhere', and Aretha Franklin's 'Eleanor Rigby') subtly rewrite the roles originally allocated to women in the Beatles' versions is especially interesting. Somewhat less plausible are the arguments presented in Shaugn O'Donnell's attempts to construct a historical rationale in order to demonstrate direct and reciprocal connections between *Revolver* and the total subsequent output of Pink Floyd.

Part 2 concentrates on the album's musicality. Stephen Valdez contends that while the album contains much that was innovative – song structures defined by the design of the lyrics rather than by traditional song-writing conventions, the exploratory use of unfamiliar chord progressions, a partial rejection of familiar vocal harmony patterns – it is nevertheless the balance between conservative and

progressive musical elements that distinguishes *Revolver*. The chapters by Naphtali Wagner and Ger Tillekens focus on very specific attributes shared by the songs – the tonal family resemblance, and the presence of quartal harmonies strengthened by the use of suspended chords and flat-sevenths – which help to create a sense of a unified album.

Of the book's four sections it is Part 3, which evaluates the significance of the main contributors to the album, that is the least convincing. The chapters on George Martin's production, Paul McCartney's bass line and Ringo Starr's drumming are informative, but tend to be descriptive rather than critical accounts, and demonstrate the inevitable difficulties encountered by writers who may feel constrained by an obligation to provide new insights. This is especially true in the chapter on George Martin, whose crucial importance to the recordings of the Beatles has been well documented, and about whom there is little more to be said. By contrast, Matthew Bannister's examination of the transformative opportunities the album offered to George Harrison is a fascinating record of the first step in the reinvention of 'the quiet one' as 'rock aristocrat'. However, his persistent identification of Harrison as a minor member of the group in 1966 is simply wrong, given his nine-year membership of the Beatles, their spectacular achievements over the previous three years, and the cohesive and unchallenged four-piece structure from which so much of their popularity flowed. And the chapter by Jim LeBlanc which assesses the disruption suffered by the US release of *Revolver*, which omitted three of John Lennon's tracks – 'I'm Only Sleeping', 'And Your Bird Can Sing', 'Doctor Robert' – is a blunt demonstration of the real significance that commercial, as well as creative, decisions possess in the production and consumption of popular music.

Part 4 seeks to provide a set of overall interpretations of *Revolver*. Sheila Whiteley effectively employs the differing conceptions of love in 'Eleanor Rigby', 'Here, There And Everywhere', 'Got To Get You Into My Life' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows' to reveal how such diversity was nonetheless rooted in the changing social, cultural and political conditions of the decade. The chapter by Ronald Schleifer describes how the regularities of modernism were replaced on *Revolver* by the slippages or 'accidentals' of postmodernism in musical, lyrical and material ways. Finally, Russell Reising defines *Revolver* as the first psychedelic album; its articulation of the creative tension between human consciousness and technology, its (r)evolutionary fusion of fourteen songs into one whole, and its attempt to recreate the 'sound' of hallucinogenic experience were, he suggests, the immediate catalysts that led to the emergence of psychedelic music.

In sum, the book is a useful supplement to the literature on the Beatles which already exists, and which seems set to expand for some considerable time. In addition, the fact that its contributors come from a variety of backgrounds – musicology, literature, sociology – is to be welcomed, since it demonstrates the disciplinary intersections essential to any proper study of popular music. However, it is disadvantaged by its failure to adequately overcome three perennial obstacles, which await all those who wish to investigate similar topics.

The first is a general inattention to the wider musical and cultural context in which the album was made. Recording sessions took place in April, May and June 1966, in the midst of a period distinguished by controversial and successful releases by the group's most significant peers. Albums by Bob Dylan (*Highway 61 Revisited*, *Blonde On Blonde*) and the Beach Boys (*Pet Sounds*), and singles by the Rolling Stones ('Satisfaction', 'Get Off Of My Cloud', '19th Nervous Breakdown') and the Byrds

('Mr Tambourine Man', 'All I Really Want To Do', 'Eight Miles High') had integrated electric/acoustic, vocal/orchestral, white/black and folk/rock traditions in ways which the Beatles could not have overlooked.

Each, in its own way, presented a combination of traditional and innovative musical forms that both reflected and stimulated the Beatles' own output. Paul McCartney has, for example, readily acknowledged the lyrical and musical debt owed by 'Here, There And Everywhere' to 'God Only Knows'.

Secondly, there is a reluctance to distinguish between the Beatles as a unit and the Beatles as a collection of individuals. Clearly, they co-exist and overlap, but there are some points at which the ambitions of the two are quite independent. For example, the discussion about the Beatles' influence on Pink Floyd refers to the *unit*; examples of their readiness to suggest and adopt specific instrumental effects refer to the *individuals*; their appreciation of American soul and their incorporation of its styles and sounds into their music refer to both. The text does not consistently specify which version of the Beatles is being discussed – the four members, the one group, or 'the Beatle project' – and, in failing to do so, often confuses rather than clarifies.

Finally, the book never fully resolves the vexed – and central – question of the album's identity. On the one hand, it is claimed that 'Beatles' albums are ultimately anthologies of songs and not coherent musical works' (p. 109) and that '*Revolver* sounds like a set of stylistically and sonically diverse compositions written and sung by different people rather than a group effort' (p. 192). On the other hand, it is asserted that 'an album's songs speak meaningfully to each other for the first time in rock and roll history' (p. 235) and that '*Revolver* gathered fourteen dialectically related statements on the human condition into a unified and coherent vision' (p. 252).

Perhaps that unresolved dichotomy is itself part of the album's mystery. Situated precariously on the cusp between the pop songs of the fab four and the musical statements of rock's greatest innovators, *Revolver*'s very elusiveness may explain its reputation, its durability, and the continuing attempts to unravel the nature of its contribution to the history of popular music.

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***Swing, That Modern Sound*. By Kenneth J. Bindas. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001. 209 pp.** DOI:10.1017/S0261143003223254

After a period of comparative neglect, the swing bands and fans of the 1930s have seen their academic profile rise in recent years. Standing chronologically at the beginning of this change is Gunther Schuller's monumental study, *The Swing Era: the Development of Jazz, 1930–1945* (Oxford University Press, 1989). Schuller's approach, which, like his *Early Jazz* (OUP, 1969), was based on musicological description and analysis of recordings, shows little interest in the dialogue between music-making and social and cultural phenomena, in a way that might have attracted attention much beyond musicology – and musicological jazz studies. More attuned to that dialogue – and hence, in theory at least, to popular music studies – were two volumes of historical description and analysis that appeared in the 1990s: David Stowe's *Swing Changes: Big-Band Jazz in New Deal America* (Harvard Univer-

sity Press, 1994) and Lewis A. Erenberg's *Swingin' the Dream: Big Band Jazz and the Rebirth of American Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 1998). Each of these excellent books has its own focus – Stowe's in particular on the relationship between swing and the emergence of New Deal politics, and Erenberg's in particular on the swing audience – but they have much in common. Both seek to re-assess the era and its influences through a deeper understanding of its popular culture. Both analyse the era's tensions and contradictions, and both reject notions that, emerging from the trauma of the Depression, Americans sought the safety offered by homogeneity and, in their different ways, both look to see how, in Erenberg's words, 'musicians, impresarios, critics, and audiences interacted to create meanings in the music' (1998, p. xvii).

The book under review is the latest in this line. Like Stowe and Erenberg, Bindas believes that swing can only be fully understood by examining its social construction, and like them he sees the music as offering, in his words, a 'window into the exploration of this era of transition' in modern American history (p. xix). But in many ways it is a quite different book. For one thing, Bindas's feels the slightest of the three, not so much because it is actually the shortest, as because of a relative absence of the sense the reader gets from Stowe and Erenberg of a range and depth to the writer's sphere of reference. There is depth to Bindas – as we shall see in a moment – but it is generally only in those areas that he has selected for investigation. This is perhaps another way of saying that one misses those unexpected connections and insights that make this kind of history come alive. This is perhaps one of the perils of 'thematic' history, in which the role of overarching historical narrative, which creates its own opportunities for connections, is reduced to a minimum.

At the core of the book are two chapters on the cultural impact of industrial and commercial phenomena, followed by two further chapters on the social and cultural make-up of the group of musicians whom Bindas refers to as 'the swing generation'. The first two deal in particular with the technological changes that occurred in the cultural industries, especially radio, and with the role of advertising. The second two present discussions of the roles of class and of ethnicity, race and gender, looking especially at the ways in which these factors influenced musicians' motivations and opportunities in this era.

Of these, the chapters on advertising and on class make the most original contributions. In the first, Bindas examines the advertising of instruments in publications such as *Downbeat* and *Metronome* and details the ways in which swing was made part of the 'brand-name packaging ideal' (p. 42) via the discourse (not a word he uses) employed. In the second, he assembles his own statistics on the working-class origins of a preponderance of 'swing generation' musicians and makes a case for the importance of this factor in enabling swing to play a part in a transformation which took place in the belief systems of the dominant society in the 1930s, when, for the first time, the 'worker experience (was) legitimized and made . . . part of the American experience' (p. 101).

Although each of these thematic chapters can be taken separately, Bindas wants us to see them as belonging to a wider theoretical framework. This has two aspects to it: one, the centrality (referred to above) of the social structures and concerns that underpin and inform the music, is shared with Stowe and Erenberg; the second, the importance of modernity as a 'core lens' (p. xv) through which swing may be examined, accords that particular concept a much more leading role

than it has in the other books. Swing, Bindas believes, was machine-age music and as such became a means by which modernity was extended into the world of music. It accepted and used modernity's technological ways and means, it organised itself according to modernity's ideals, and it experienced the complexities of achievement, alienation and ambivalence.

At issue is not the selection of these as underlying principles, but rather the consequences of the way they are used. Bindas is regularly led by his material towards a quasi-deterministic position, in which whatever process (technological, commercial, social) is currently under discussion is first of all explored in its own right and then seen to be not only mirrored in the world of swing, but often to exercise considerable control over it. Perhaps anticipating the accusation of determinism, his solution is to make modernity active both as the challenge facing music *and* its solution. For example, the answer to the threat of standardisation and homogenisation lay in musicians accepting 'the limitations placed upon them by the machine while . . . utilizing the machine to create something new' (p. 35) – an action, in other words, that would not be possible without the prior intervention of modernity.

One problem with this is that it downplays the long historical dialogue – often very productive – between popular music-making and centripetal tendencies, a dialogue not invented in the swing era, even if it became especially sharp at that point; and in downplaying that dialogue he downplays the scope that music-making itself has long had not only for reciprocity (Stowe, who shares many of Bindas's concerns, is careful to insist on the reciprocal influence that swing music had on the culture industry; 1994, p. 100), but for the self-renewing interplay between similarity and difference.

A second problem is that, although Bindas refers to the participatory role of the audience, the audience is present only as a generalised, somewhat shadowy phenomenon, a vague presence to be summoned occasionally as required. Here, the contrast with Erenberg is marked. As part of his research, Erenberg obtained over 300 letters from former swing fans, a body of material that enables him to discuss audience responses with insight and that lends him considerable credibility when he claims the superiority of an interactional approach over 'more impositional models of culture' (1998, p. xvii).

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***American Kletzmer – Its Roots and Offshoots*. Edited by Mark Slobin. University of California Press, 2002. ISBN 0–520–22718–2.** DOI:10.1017/S0261143003233250

A book of essays on music has a particular appeal: the freedom of form means that you can read the chapters in any order, or some not at all – leaving you free to construct an individual book according to your interests. The wide variety of style and viewpoint is also a great advantage – you can skim through a wordy essay in the knowledge that it is by definition short, and a succinct nugget can be located and reread with ease. For these reasons this new publication is perhaps one of the best on klezmer yet.

Klezmer music is essentially Jewish instrumental music from Central and Eastern Europe. The articles here focus on those aspects of the klezmer story – from the

earliest days at the end of the nineteenth century to the much-discussed present-day revival – that were formed in tandem with and shaped by North-American culture. Slobin, probably the foremost scholar on klezmer today, states the basic premise of the collection early on: that klezmer today should be viewed as an American folk music. This idea of klezmer as an essentially North-American genre, as opposed to an émigré music from Europe that has mutated into a distinct creole, might seem initially contentious. There can be little doubt, however, that both socially, politically and musically, klezmer has undergone radical and permanent change in North America over the last century. And the fact that there is little indigenous community left in Europe to act as a point of comparison in the music's development, and that what klezmer culture there is has been re-imported from across the water, more than justifies a book from a specifically North-American point of view.

The strength of the book lies in Slobin's judicious choice of writers. In between a reprint of Walter Zev Feldman's classic but somewhat terse essay on the *bulgar* dance genre and more recent items on the leading bands of recent years, are a number of delightful short essays that reveal more about the character and essence of the music than much of the more academic writing. Robert Rothstein's examination of *klezmer loshn*, the rich slang dialect specific to Yiddish musicians, contains fascinating historical insights into the linguistic and social relationship between musicians and criminal society in Jewish communities around the turn of the century. The biography of old-time klezmer drummer Ben Bazyler by the pre-eminent researcher and performer Michael Alpert is a tender, delicately written miniature full of poignant anecdotes and acute observations into the personal nature of eliciting and understanding an oral history. An important contribution is that of composer and restless experimenter Frank London, who forcefully argues against the lexical power games some scholars play with words like 'traditional' and 'authentic', invariably to the detriment of the music they claim to protect. A much underresearched political angle is provided by James Loeffler in his focus on the organisation of Jewish musicians' unions in New York before the First World War.

The title of this collection may put off some readers in its connotation of exclusivity, which is a shame. Stylistically varied and multi-faceted, this is a fascinating addition to recent literature on this most public face of Jewish music.

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***Popular Music Studies.* Edited by David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus. Arnold, 2002. ISBN 0 340 76247 0. 272 pp.** DOI:10.1017/S0261143003243257

Distinguishing the profusion of edited overview texts in popular music is becoming difficult, particularly when they appear to aim at comprehensiveness, as this one does. Sixteen chapters cover everything from covers themselves to listening practices, from conceptions of the mainstream to a variety of trans-national appropriations. It is not, however, uniformly an overview, nor a series of objective snapshots of parts of the field, but an uneasy mixture of the latter and of some highly individual positions.

Most of the former seem useful to an outsider to these various areas, but do not raise a lot of critical engagement. Thus, Rupa Huq provides a useful overview of dance music literature with little sense of argument, Jason Toynbee defends the

concept of the mainstream, arguing for three loose phases (Tin Pan Alley-Hollywood; rock; globalised where networks replace hegemony), while Will Straw's material culture investigation of the rise of the twelve-inch single between 1975 and 1977 considers competing histories, questions of accessibility (from a Canadian viewpoint) and the changing relationships between DJs and record companies.

From my own disciplinary perspective in musicology, two of the essays are disappointing in their conclusions. Ian Maxwell's essay interrogates his own experience in relation to hip-hop, both in relating ethnographic to musicological research, and also in dealing with the emic/etic problem in the latter. He calls for the necessary realisation that both are involved, echoing the much earlier call from Richard Middleton of the necessity to act as both fan and scholar. David Hesmondhalgh discusses the use of the concept of the everyday, initially in undoing assumptions about the scope of empirical work with audiences. He points out the untheorised nature of the concept, and critiques the work of both Tia De Nora and Michael Bull for failing to employ a balance between adequate empiricism, adequate theory, and issues of value. He is also pretty damning about the lack of attention given to non-youth consumption. So what's the problem? In musicology, it seems to me, not only has Middleton's call been heeded, but empiricism, theory and aesthetics interpenetrate as a matter of course. What is it about their own disciplines that requires Maxwell and Hesmondhalgh to call for the need for change in this direction?

Some of the more specific individual essays are also informative, in their elucidation of issues in the non-Euro-American-mainstream. Jocelyne Guilbaut's examination of the institutionalisation of calypso in Trinidad and Tobago, and of the manner in which its politics operate, provides a useful corrective to most examinations of popular music industry, where 'mainstream' is equated with 'norm'. Indeed, she argues for the necessity of geographical and historical specificity in any such examination: 'The focus should be on what sustains it, what gives it its energy, and what makes it important . . . for whom and why' (p. 202). Patria Román-Velázquez argues much the same thing, in problematising both the 'global' and the place-specific locations of salsa. She opens her essay by reviewing the various locations cited for where salsa 'is' – New York, Puerto Rica, Cuba – and the confusion between the ethnicities of its performers and its location (a confusion she is somewhat prey to herself). This is partly a confusion over whether it has identity as genre or as style. She discusses its international spread and dismisses the inevitable questions of ethnic essentialism which arise for players, analysing how this spread reduces its 'Latinness' to certain dance steps and sexual content. Shuhei Hosokawa's study of the appropriation of several waves of black music by the Japanese, argues that 'respect' and 'passion' are the means by which they both acknowledge and overcome their externality to the music's traditions. He takes two case-studies: the first looks at working-class musicians' late 1970s appropriation of 1950s black US musics, the second at hip-hop, where the concept of 'respect' seems to unite in an analogous way to the African-American 'nation'. He argues that these have worked because 'hybridity is genuinely Japanese' (p. 234). Habeel Zuberi outlines themes in Indian popular music – specifically film music and 'Indipop' over the past two decades. Again, the author demonstrates the necessity of taking specific factors into account – the relationship between original and remix, between genre categories, and between producer, artist and song, bear little relation to the equivalents in the UK. Chris Ballantine constructs three narratives to try to account for the disappear-

ance of female performers in South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s – through anecdote, the pass laws which limited black male social mobility, and the subject of migrancy in the repertoire of the Manhattan Brothers, dominant performers at the time. His aim is to demonstrate that popular song 'can present us with real subjective evidence that may not be available in other discourses' and concludes: 'Men in South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s reified women, undermined and vilified them, strove aggressively to assert unbridled power over them; and *at the same time* [his emphasis] men grieved for their women, agonised over their loss, despaired about what could be done' (p. 30). It is disappointing that it seems necessary, still, to make this point about the value of close attention to music (and Ballantine demonstrates it effectively, even if one does not know the material or the social history). Unfortunately, the references are incomplete, omitting citation of Ballantine's previous work. More particularly, for all their value as essays, each of these treats a special case, and there is little that is obviously methodologically transferable.

The most challenging essays, however, are those which raise larger issues. Anahid Kassabian proffers an alternative way of thinking about Hesmondhalgh's issue, by way of the music that in so many locations is all-pervasive. After reviewing the (minimal) literature on Muzak (and related terms), arguing not only that the limited academic attention given to it is unsustainable, but that giving it such attention requires a deal of rethinking of various assumptions underpinning such enquiry, she proposes the term 'ubiquitous listening' to address both the mode of attention, and also the loss of senses both of authorship and specific location inherent in this new practice. Surprisingly, she then follows this through to its 'logical' conclusion, the necessity of conceptualising 'ubiquitous subjectivity', ours by virtue of our existence in a silence-free world, which she foretells by way of predictions of social development in which our discreteness is at an end. 'If that sounds ominous, it is not meant to' (p. 140) she reassures us, that seeing this as dystopian is mistaken because, after all, 'we are uncomfortable being unhooked from . . . background sound . . . we need to listen to our connections . . . silence – is unpleasurable in the extreme' (pp. 140–1). And this is not dystopian? So who are 'we'? We all extrapolate from our own experience, of course, in order to convince ourselves of our own normality. But if we never listen to music on the radio, we do not run a Walkman, we live in towns where the only shops always playing music are record shops (this is my experience) . . . I do not see the point in a new theory, however elegant, however polemical, if the situation it theorises does not exist.

Keith Negus and Michael Pickering take on one of the more intractable, and therefore perhaps rarely addressed, of issues, that of creativity. Open-minded and (unusually) broad-minded enough to take on, non-dismissively, the notion of genius in addition to that of everyday creativity, they endeavour also to recognise the necessity of shared practices on which the creative mind works and some, tentatively proposed but not theorised, spiritual dimension. I am not convinced they have achieved a new understanding – the conclusion that creative work is successful where it provides a point of entry to shared experience – seems somewhat lame. On the way, however, we are treated to wise words on the relation between an experience and the musical expression which transforms it and to discussion of the inadequacy of verbal discourse to address this issue, and the problems of transcendence. However, since, as they point out, neither Raymond Williams nor Norbert Elias was able to analyse creativity, a short essay such as this can hardly be expected

to. The desire to insist on creativity as, at once both ordinary and exceptional, seems right, yet their discussion of the creative work of individuals (Amadeus Mozart, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan) does not quite explain how we are to do so.

Motti Regev returns to an old issue, identifying a 'rock aesthetic' which he defines as '. . . a set of constantly changing practices and stylistic imperatives for making popular music based on the use of electric and electronic sound textures, amplification, sophisticated studio craftsmanship, and ''untrained'' and spontaneous techniques of vocal delivery' (p. 253), to cover 'pop/rock' in opposition to (he cites) Dean Martin and Ethel Merman. But it does not work – it is not sufficiently inclusive, for Joni Mitchell (another singer he cites), Genesis or Paul Weller, for instance. And, do any pop/rock fans really believe in the spontaneity thing any more? He identifies two historical processes, 'commercialism' and what he calls 'avantgardism' (a modernist concept), which incorporates hybridisation (a postmodern concept). The expansion these give rise to makes it 'useless' to distinguish pop from rock from popular music (and yet people do . . .), which sounds to me like typical encouragement to lack of auditory discrimination. He argues against the neo-Gramscianism of Grossberg, Frith and others, seeing little mileage in the model of music as of resistance, developing rather a line from Bourdieu to see pop/rock as a specifically late modern form. But both these positions lose something – commercialism does not equate to avant-gardism (to use his term) even if their effects (the enlarging of the genre) are similar. This leads him to argue for greater attention to critics, reviewers, DJs, etc., as producers of meaning. It is a value of the essay, I guess, that it provokes so many responses, few of which I have rehearsed here.

Two other general essays have potentially wide applicability. Cover versions represent an obvious resource for the discussion of difference – that they are rarely addressed may say much for our residual concerns for authenticity. Dai Griffiths lays out a range of questions on which such a resource can be brought to bear: race, nationality, and gender in particular. That he has so large an area to cover accounts for his not delving too deep – that and the brief dip into Welsh music the rest of us may be likely never to hear. His identification of Aretha Franklin as a critical musicologist is acute, as is his discussion of the relative proximity of Elvis Presley and Pat Boone to their originals. His foray into sampling is unsatisfactory in that it seems to lie outside his taxonomic reduction of the topic to rendition and transformation – some reference to the literature on intertextuality would perhaps move the discussion further.

David Brackett begins by articulating the difficulty of conversations between cultural studies and musicology (again). He defines 'genre' fairly unproblematically, emphasising historical specificity, overlap and the difficulty of clear assignment – as a case study, he discusses the relation of 'black popular music' to a mainstream in the USA in 1982–3. He sees 'crossover' in market, not style, terms. I have difficulty in deciding who is addressed – his 'analysis' is just description, with very little explanation, and the essay is perhaps too compressed in its 'style' analysis of the mainstream.

I leave till last the most problematic essay, which I will only briefly touch on. Luiz Tatit, unfortunately, appears to be reinventing the wheel. Within a history of Brazilian song which posits two genres, he develops a novel transcription method for melody alone, whose point I fail to understand – too often, attention to musical detail assumes that certain domains are dispensable (here, most crucially, harmony

and timbre). With an essay which appears to represent the current position of 'analysing popular song' (the essay's title), I have many problems, not only the hermetic nature of his theoretical position. I'll mention just two here. Firstly, he seems to confuse 'theme' with 'motif'. This may be a translation problem, but the musical functions are distinct. Secondly, he discusses scales as features ensuring '''verticalisation'' of the melodic line' when scales function in exactly an opposite manner (and his transcription is inaccurate, too). Thus, while typology for Brazilian song may be accurate, the confusions in his discussion of detail provide no grounds for assessing it.

This, then, is a slightly uneven, highly heterogeneous, collection of essays, both in quality and in scope, but they are generally well contextualised by the editors' four lengthy introductions. A few essays deserve wider attention, and the book ought to appear on many undergraduate reading lists.

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***Rap Music and Street Consciousness*. By Cheryl L. Keyes. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002. 302 pp.** DOI:10.1017/S0261143003253253

Cheryl L. Keyes' *Rap Music and Street Consciousness* is a comprehensive examination of the urban youth arts movement which emerged in the South Bronx in the late 1970s comprising MCing, disc jockeying, break dancing and graffiti art. This analysis of hip-hop culture and rap music is studied from perspectives of ethnomusicology, folklore and cultural studies, and provides a strong theoretical background to Keyes' qualitative research.

Although the terms 'rap' and 'hip-hop' are used interchangeably, rap artist KRS-One made the crucial distinction between rap as 'something one does or performs' and hip-hop as 'something one lives or experiences', and it is from this perspective that Keyes seeks to explode the myth of rap as a passing trend but rather as a cohesive arts movement which provided a vehicle for self-expression for a disenfranchised youth.

Unlike many commentators on hip-hop who commence with Sugar Hill Records' release of *Rapper's Delight* by the Sugarhill Gang, Keyes begins much further back with an examination of rap's origins in the African bardic tradition. The bard was a storyteller-singer who, according to Keyes, chronicles history and transmits cultural traditions through performance (p. 19).

African-American traditions such as sermons, 'the dozens' – a game of exchanging insults, field hollers and toasts are all regarded as antecedents of rap. Toasts – long narrative poems composed in rhymed couplets – often make use of exaggerated language, metaphor, expletives and boasting – stylistic devices often present in rap.

Jive talk emerged amongst Negroes in Chicago in 1921 and comprised vocabulary derived from a specifically urban context with words such as 'cat', 'chick' and 'crib' gaining popularity. Keyes identifies the importance of early African-American DJs jiving to music over radio airwaves in the development of rap culture. Other techniques used included 'talking through' (lowering the volume of music and con-

tinuing to talk as it plays) and 'riding gain' (boosting or lowering volume in order to accent various parts of a record) were emulated by early hip-hop DJs.

Black Nationalist activist Hubert 'Rap' Brown, the Black Arts Movement, The Last Poets and Gil Scott Heron (who is most renowned for 'The Revolution Will Not be Televised') have all been given their rightful place in the history of rap's development.

Interestingly, Keyes acknowledges the influence of the Jamaican dancehall tradition of toasting and DJing which is often overlooked by commentators of rap and drew parallels between the early followers of hip-hop and rude boy culture ('rudies') which was identified by a distinct style of dress and attitude. It was the rude boy gangs' penchant for carrying knives, guns, misogynistic attitudes and sexually explicit language which rendered them a precursor to gangsta rap.

Geo-political factors specific to New York, such as depleted federal funding for arts, radical changes in housing policy and social service cuts provided the impetus for rap music. The concentration of a Black and Latino underclass in a specifically urban environment, institutionalised poverty, crime, drug addiction, unemployment and the development of neighbourhood gangs provided the context for rap's emergence. Keyes acknowledged the importance of 'the streets' where local neighbourhood block parties emerged as 'an institution as important as the church, school and family in African American culture' (p. 29).

Afrika Bambaataa, who is oft cited as the godfather of hip-hop, is credited with being the first to use the term 'hip-hop'. Bambaataa and his Zulu Nation envisaged the rechannelling of violent competition between neighbourhood gangs into artistic contests. Strongly influenced by the Nation of Islam, Bambaataa hoped to mitigate youth gang violence by encouraging creative efforts.

Although hip-hop comprises four elements (graffiti, MCing, disc jockeying and break dancing), early hip hop did not have much verbal rapping in it – the genre was dominated by DJs competing against each other, showcasing their turntable acrobatics: Grandmaster Flash pioneered the techniques 'backspinning' and 'phasing' whilst Grand Wizard Theodore is credited with creating 'scratching'.

Keyes quite rightly identifies hip-hop and rap as 'giving voice to a disenfranchised segment of urban America' (p. 153) and claims 'rap music is an amalgam of street language coding, style and raw beats' (p. 150). Rap Music and Street Consciousness gives an accurate and interesting insight into the historical development of hip-hop from the 'old school' of Grandmaster Flash, DJ Kool Herc and Bambaataa through the political rap of Public Enemy to the commercial rap of the Beastie Boys and Run DMC to the advent of gangsta rap pioneered by NWA (Niggaz With Attitude) and Ice T and developed by Suge Knight's Death Row records, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Notorious B.I.G, Puff Daddy and 2Pac. However, it is Keyes' analysis of the criticism cited against rap music which is most illuminating.

Rap music has been vilified and discredited on the grounds of sexism, misogyny, glamourising violence, materialism and associations with criminality. Keyes, on the other hand, regards rap in a more positive sense as a display of cultural values, a vehicle for self-expression, an educational tool, a vehicle for social control (within the hip-hop community) and a political forum.

Gangsta rap in particular has been reviled for its often inherent violent imagery and sexually explicit lyrics (2 Live Crew's 1989 album *As Nasty As They Wanna Be* was declared legally obscene, although the court ruling was overturned on appeal). The ensuing censorship debate in the States was heralded by Tipper

Gore and the Parents Music Resource Center, claiming that gangsta rap was 'polluting the minds of American youth'. Keyes retorts by suggesting 'controversial forms that threaten mainstream sensibilities will always face intense scrutiny from powerful political forces' (p. 5).

Rap music was also labelled a catalyst for violent behaviour after a series of high- profile incidents of violence at rap concerts. Keyes notes that Boogie Down Production's (BDP) *Stop the Violence Movement*, which sought to address crime at concerts and raise public awareness about black on black crime, received less press attention.

Defenders of gangsta rap, or 'reality rap', have contended that it does not glamorise violence and so-called gang-banging, but vividly portrays the brutality of street life. NWA's much castigated song *F*ck tha Police*, which dealt with the thorny issue of police brutality, has been regarded by some as a verbal prelude to the 1992 LA riots which followed the acquittal of the police officers involved in the Rodney King beating. Furthermore, gangsta rap artists claim to caution their audiences of the high risks associated with a criminal lifestyle such as Notorious B.I.G.'s *Niggas Bleed*, BDP's *9mm Goes Bang* and the video associated with Ice-T's *High Rollers* which depicts a story about street hustling that ends in tragedy.

The hip-hop community's effort to address problems such as drug addiction is similarly overlooked. Anti-drug messages have been integral to rap from Grandmaster Flash and Melle Mel's anti-cocaine anthem *White Lines*: 'either up your nose or through your vein, with nothin to gain except killin your brain', MC Lyte's *I Cram To Understand U (Sam)* which documents a lover's descent into crack addiction, and Public Enemy's *Night of the Living Baseheads*.

The 1996 compilation album *America is Slowly Dying*, featuring Wu-Tang Clan, Goodie Mob and Coolie, provided an important statement from the hip-hop community about the proliferation of AIDS and a crusade for safe-sex practices following the aids-related death of Eazy-E, the founder of NWA, the previous year.

Gangsta rap has also been heavily criticised for its material emphasis and for exploitation and commodification of rap artists by large multi-nationals (e.g. advertising Pepsi, Sprite and Nike). Whilst it is impossible to refute the material fetishism of gangsta rap, hip-hop has always been marked by its own distinct sense of style, including the wearing of sneakers, leather, monogrammed jewellery, gold necklaces and designer clothing. Keyes points to the more positive material potential of hip-hop as an avenue out of the ghetto.

The most overriding and enduring criticism levied against rap is, of course, sexism; hip-hop has been regarded as a heterosexual, masculine domain. Women's representation in gangsta rap is particularly problematic – women in gangsta rap videos are often objectified and muted. Keyes' analysis of women in rap attempts to redress the balance. Female rappers, and there are many of them, address issues pertinent to women such as domestic violence, dominant notions of femininity and black female sexuality. According to Keyes, female rappers 'use their performances to refute, deconstruct and reconstruct alternative visions of their identity' (p. 209).

Keyes considers women's contribution to rap music to be significant. She categorises female rappers as Queen Mothers (African-centred icons such as Queen Latifah) who address political and economic issues facing black women. For example, Latifah provided a gritty portrayal of impoverished women vulnerable to white patriarchal power in *The Evil That Men Do* and a critique to sexism in rap in *Ladies First*: 'Some think that we women can't flow, stereotypes they got to go'.

Other categories include Fly Girl (Salt-N-Pepa, Missy Elliott), Sista with Attitude (Roxanne Shante, MC Lyte) and The Lesbian (Queen Pen) who have contributed significantly, for example, by appropriating negative terms like 'bitch'. It is the appropriation of terms like 'bitch', 'ho' and 'nigga' which is often misunderstood, and Keyes claims 'people who react negatively to this music (rap) are often unable to decode its lyrics, style and message' (p. 123).

Keyes refers to signifying in rap lyrics which has constituted the development of a distinct rap lexicon. Words have alternative meanings beyond their conventional interpretations such as cut (turntable technique), bite (stealing someone else's rhyme's), dope (great), dog (male friend) and new words such as edutainment (KRS-One) or raptivist (Chuck D of Public Enemy).

Thus, Keyes regards rap music as a part of a continuum of black expressive forms. She refutes the many charges made against hip-hop in a well-researched and reasoned manner. Her identification of the positive impact of rap is a breath of fresh air in a genre continually dogged by criticism.

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***Fela: The Life and Times of an African Musical Icon.* By Michael E. Veal. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000. xi + 313 pp.** DOI:10.1017/S026114300326325X

Michael Veal has written a fascinating and thorough contextual biography of the late Olufela Olusegun Oludotun Ransome-Kuti, better known as the great African musician, Fela Kuti, King of Afrobeat (d. 1997). Kuti is regarded as one of Africa's most influential and internationally recognised twentieth-century Afro-pop musicians. Born in 1938, he single-handedly developed 'afrobeat', a highly original, politically charged popular music style. Singing in a bricolage of pidgin-English and his native Egba (Yoruba) dialect, Kuti developed afrobeat from a confluence of influences including 1960s African-American funk music, modal jazz, Afro-Carribbean, Nigerian dance-band highlife and indigenous musical genre and styles. His mature orchestrations employed a large personnel, including horn and rhythm sections, keyboards, several guitars, electric bass, drum kit and a panoply of indigenous Yoruba percussion, as well as a strong frontline of female singers and dancers. Kuti's recorded repertoire includes such widely recognised titles as 'Fela's London Scene' (1970), 'Yellow Fever' (1976), 'Confusion' (1975), 'Egbe Mi O' (1971), 'Shakara' (1972), 'Sorrow, Tears and Blood' (1977), 'International Thief Thief [I.T.T]' (1979), 'Live in Amsterdam' (1984), 'Army Arrangement' (1985) and 'Underground System' (1992). Massively popular within Nigeria, West Africa and beyond, afrobeat provided Kuti with a public platform for his outspoken views on a host of significant and at times, given the Nigerian context, contentious issues. Most notable was his relentless vilification of successive regimes of Nigerian political and military leadership and his scorching criticism of capitalist African and global economic power politics.

The reader is first introduced to Kuti's family, its pedigree including many strong and influential people, some of them representing a peer generation of twentieth-century Africans with lives embedded in African culture while simultaneously educated in Western civilisation and Christian morality. It is likely that Kuti may

have inherited a fierce political streak from his mother, Abigail Frances Olufunmilayo, an internationally respected champion of womens' rights and confidante of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president following independence. His father, the Reverend Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti, was an Anglican priest, a union activist and an acknowledged pioneer of higher education in Nigeria.

In his first chapter, Michael Veal paints a brief sketch of Kuti's day-to-day musical life within the context of the historical, social and cultural milieu of post-independence Nigeria and against the starkly contrasted landscapes of the city of Lagos, a crucial mix of thriving first-world and an impoverished, haphazard Third-World urbanisation. The turbulent backdrop to his development is one of pre-colonial Yoruba multi-ethnicity and competitively opposed intrusions of colonising Western sovereignties at a time of the emergence of tense African cosmopolitan political economies and metropolises.

Veal's second chapter highlights some of the influential historical, social, environmental and genealogical legacies which impacted fatefully and decisively on Kuti's childhood and early adolescent experiences. From his birth to his departure for college studies in London, his character was strongly shaped by the strictures and moral mores of a severe Christian school and parentage. A waywardly rebellious attitude emerged at an early age: his lifelong disdain for authority and excesses of dominating power were certainly in part attributable to an oppressive dose of parental moral vigilance and severe corporal punishment as an answer to the slightest of any boyhood misdemeanors.

In chapter three, Veal focuses on Kuti's acquisition of formal musical training and immersion into a popular professional musicianship while playing in groups which serviced post-war, post-colonial London's growing African and West Indian (Afro-Caribbean) populace. In determining the musical path he sought to carve from moulding influences emanating within and without popular musical performance practice, as well as theoretical subjects and practical trumpet lessons prescribed by the music college curriculum. In his quest to extend and reorient well-established dance-band highlife traditions, Kuti took musical cues from diverse sources, including neo-traditional Africanisations of highlife music and African-American jazz. Significant example came from Nigerian drummer-guitarist Ambrose Campbell and Ghanaian percussionist Kofi Ghanaba (Guy Warren).

This was important as the revitalisation of both popular and traditional African music held a special resonance for post-independence African political and cultural leadership, with notable lead taken by Ghana's Kwameh Nkrumah, Senegal's Leopold Senghor, Guinea's Sekou Toure, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, and Congo's Patrice Lumumba. Kuti closely identified himself with musical forces which through musical composition and performance and by utilising different stylistic and ideological approaches sought to graft a pan-ethnic, pan-African cultural pride and consciousness onto existing popular styles such as highlife. However, initial attempts to set up a thriving ensemble playing 'pure' African-American style jazz to Nigerian audiences already heavily groomed on local and international commercial musical styles and dances encountered difficulties. Over and above his search for a sound in which elements of jazz and highlife, as well as influences of Cuban salsa and rhythm-and-blues sat well together, Kuti was also evolving a personal ideology which sought to incorporate his growing engagement with the political economy of African culture in general. A large part of this process involved a

discursive engagement with the expressive cultural consciousness of both African and diasporic identities in popular musical performance.

In chapter four, Veal deals with Kuti's musical development in the aftermath of the Biafran War and his response to the popular cultural climate of 1970s Nigeria following his return from a period in North America. Some of the more defining traits of his mature afrobeat style emerged during this period, notably his creation of interlocking rhythmic instrumental patterns, percussive horn riffs and a persuasively emotional declamatory vocal style, in a music imbued with unmistakable popular dance elements. Other musical developments at this time included a gradual politicisation of his song texts, in part due to recent mentorship in the United States of African-American 'black power' activists, ideologies and 'black is beautiful' discourses. As a result, alongside a consolidating style imbibed from a diverse diasporic influential palette, was Kuti's growing assumption of a Nigerian, domestic and grassroots take on diverse issues of social and political import.

The rest of the fourth chapter discusses Kuti's musical and ideological development including his assumption of what became characteristically contradictory positions with regard to issues in both his public and private life. These included his neo-traditional stylistic approach which meant a circumvention of indigenous Yoruba musical practice, rituals and core artifacts. Emanating from both a 'home-grown' African and urban Lagosian worldview, this attracted global attention encouraged by his embrace of first-world modern technological and performance production styles and methods.

Originating a socially outspoken popular music style in the midst of the equally emergent, disturbing diplomatic excesses of the post-oil-boom Nigerian state, presented its own political challenges and practical economic choices. Kuti's establishment of the performance space known as the 'Afrika Shrine' served both as an independent political space for maintaining a vehement opposition to Nigeria's political and economic leadership, as well as nurturing a subversive material and moral economy with relative autonomy. In the course of this chapter, Veal uses musical and anecdotal examples to extrapolate the inherently Kuti paradoxes, including gendered responses towards women and sexuality, his derisive humour, social deviance, and traces of colonial mentality as well as other contested legacies of a post-colonial African and post-independence Nigerian life experience.

In chapter five, Veal accounts for the tense relationships which developed between Kuti and the Nigerian state, particularly the army, as a result of his biting criticism of the status quo. This was essentially effected through challenging songs and perfomances aimed at focusing on and highlighting the abuses of the country's political leadership. As a result, Kuti became a major living symbol of dissent to moral convention for a rebellious, youthful African urban subculture. Through setting up his own 'Kalakuta Republic' headquarters and long-running advertisements in the press, he established both physical and discursive domains in determined opposition to state corruption and its violently censorial pattern of dealing with legitimate expressions of social grievances from the Nigerian people.

Indeed, the height of Kuti's creative career was fatefully overshadowed and its economic potential painfully truncated, by a ruthless army attack on his Kalakuta residence in 1977. During this aggressive episode, his mother was thrown out of a top storey window and eighty members of his retinue were brutalised and arrested by the Nigerian army. Many of Kuti's most memorable songs (collected on LPs) act as documents testifying to this period: 'Everything Scatter', 'Expensive Shit',

'Yellow Fever', 'Kalakuta Show', all document his tense and often violent experiences in the hands of the Nigerian army and in the state prison system. All this is seen against the background of his immense popularity and ideological influence in both Nigeria and abroad.

In chapter six, Veal deals with the musical and political trials and tribulations of Kuti's career against the background of an increasingly intolerant succession of regimes and the increasing gap between Nigeria's rich and poor classes. The author details the complication of Kuti's relationships with both his supporters and detractors in an era which saw a simultaneous increase in global appreciation of his music and a soaring public political profile which spurred Kuti onto even more daring and precipitous challenges against the brutal Nigerian authorities. The chapter covers the years between 1978 and 1992, a period which not only represents the profound depth of Kuti's musical and political commitment but during which significant events, coupled with his own volatility, contributed to a narrative which documents both the triumphant and the tragic aspects of his turbulent existence.

Veal closely details Kuti's ideological zig-zag, his re-invention of himself, his constant collisions with and revisions of his own earlier convictions through a diversity of themes. In themselves, they reflect a material and discursive engagement with issues within and without his musical involvement with both his native Nigeria and Africa in general, as well as his personal involvement with shamanism. During this period, Kuti married twenty-seven women in one day (later 'divorcing' them), made and lost considerable amounts of money and influence, assembled and fired his most formidable musical ensembles (Afrika 70 and Egypt 80), posed a serious presidential challenge, lost his mother's moral support upon her death, received a ten-year jail sentence, and rejected the 'afrobeat' label for what he chose to refer to as 'classical African music' (p. 173).

Chapter seven further highlights the overarching political themes which infused all of Kuti's mature musical career with its trademark vitality. It charts how even as he shelved a strategically sustained political campaign and ambition towards a Nigerian presidency, his compositions took an increasingly radical view offering blatant criticism of the country's leadership, its ideological and religious legacies, corruption and more than its fair share of dire economic crises. Despite failing personal health, Kuti's achievements in the decade preceeding his AIDS-related death in 1997, can be evaluated though his highly incisive and energetic musical output testimony to his unrelenting commitment to exposing the plight of the underclasses in the face of a grossly abusive and corrupt Nigerian elite and military leadership. Tragically, a significant number of these pieces of music and stunning musical performances which were in themselves documents of damning social commentary aimed at the ruling regime and their machinations, went unrecorded. These unrecorded compositions include such titles as 'Beasts of No Nation', 'Overtake Don Overtake Overtake', 'Confusion Break Bone', 'Music Against Second Slavery', 'Chop and Clean Mouth Like Nothing Happened', 'Underground System' and 'Condom, Scallywag and Scatter'.

In his concluding eighth chapter, Veal posits various interesting scenarios and in doing so theorises a holistic function for popular cultural art forms on both sides of the Atlantic, all serving to conflate the often disjunctive and non-coeval African, and diasporic 'revolutionary' streams of consciousness. This is a valid speculative position in the light of Kuti's immersion in a broad range of aesthetic, pan-African ideological and black-affirmative political issues, never mind the sheer phenom-

enality of his presence and the power of his ideological and popular cultural syntheses. In a series of pertinent arguments, the author analyses the relationships that exist between Kuti's evolving consciousness and the post-colonial political and social theories of Frantz Fanon and Frederic Jameson. He looks at the ways in which Kuti's works reflect Nkrumah's Pan-African idealism, and examines how they engage with Gayatri Spivak's subaltern studies, and with African post-colonial writing and film by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka and Ousmane Sembene. In this section, Veal also discusses Kuti's romanticisation of tradition and the essentialist approach he assumed in his prescription of counter-hegemonic social and political alternatives based on indigenous African cultural legacies.

Finally, in tracing the extent of the penetration of Kuti's afrobeat style into Western popular musical performance and recording repertoires and its intepretation, extension and processing in the hands of both African, African-American and other popular music innovators, Michael Veal highlights the mediating role of Fela's body of work in the successful, ongoing fusion of traditional African and Western musical elements. Undoubtedly, Kuti was one of the most significant African and world artists of the second half of the twentieth century. His afro-beat legacy and activism thankfully lives on through the work of his son Femi Kuti, a twenty-first-century cultural icon.

In his compelling book, Veal has produced a distinctive and thoroughly engaging analysis of afrobeat and its historical, ideological and material underpinnings. He is to be congratulated for providing a welcome and frank appraisal of Fela Kuti's significant contributions to twentieth-century post-colonial African popular musical performance and expressivity. The book provides a first-class, sensitive biographical narrative and an insightful study in the development of popular music in West Africa, while capturing the complex urban African syncretism inherent in the relentless negotiation of discontinuities pervading in the global cultural economy. It will engage and fascinate a wide readership of popular music scholars, appealing far beyond those already interested in the singular example of Fela Kuti and of African music.

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