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Editors’ Introduction

As the third volume of the *Journal of World Popular Music* draws to a close, we are delighted to present the second issue of 2016 with a rich and varied mix of reviews, a keynote paper and articles that engage with the interdisciplinary study of the world’s popular musics. Since the journal’s conception back in 2012, with the inaugural issue published in mid-2014, *JWPM* has emerged as a vibrant academic outlet for innovative, contemporary debates surrounding international popular musics that brings together diverse analytic issues and themes and offers coverage of wide-ranging, contemporary topics, illustrating their relevance to popular music studies. As editors, we want to address contemporary, interdisciplinary and international issues surrounding world popular music, and our authors share with us an interest in popular musics from across various continents and musical styles within the context of globalization. It is our vision that *JWPM* is a cutting-edge outlet for contemporary popular music studies with a distinctive global and/or interdisciplinary awareness, covering empirical and mixed-methods research into popular musics from all parts of the world in addition to theory from the music disciplines, social sciences and humanities.

On a more practical note, given the steady growth of the journal in terms of the submission of articles, special issues and subscriptions, we have great pleasure in announcing that we have appointed an Assistant Editor, Dr Raphaël Nowak, to support the operations of the *JWPM*. Raphaël is currently a teaching associate at the University of Bristol and will take on a post-doctoral position at Griffith University from December 2016. As Assistant Editor, Raphaël will support the editorial process and help increase the productivity of the journal. We are looking forward to another successful and thriving phase in pushing the *Journal of World Popular Music* to the fore of academic publishing in the field.

The first section of issue 3.2 of *JWPM* focuses on the theme of “Popular Music in and Beyond Asia”, extending our survey of Asia’s contributions to world popular music, which we began in issue 1.2 and carried through in issue 2.2. The section opens with Jonathan Stock’s keynote paper, “Sounding the Bromance: The Chopstick Brothers’ ‘Little Apple’ Music Video, Genre, Gender and the Search for Meaning in Chinese Popular Music”, which he presented at
the Annual Conference of the British Forum of Ethnomusicology at the University of Kent, UK, in April 2016. The conference theme, “Current Trends in Ethnomusicology”, ignited Jonathan Stock to deliver a hugely entertaining presentation titled “Sounding the Bromance”, which was delivered by screening six video clips of China’s most watched music video in 2014, the Chopstick Brothers’ ‘Little Apple’. As Stock describes the song so eloquently in his own words, ‘Little Apple’ contains “a confection of deliberately ungainly dance actions, a lavishly tongue-in-cheek production, an older-than-usual lead male vocal presence and a subsequent history of proliferation in a remarkably varied succession of national and international pastiches and parodies”. The keynote, in its fully written version presented here, analyses the song and accompanying music video, traces its manifold sources of inspiration, and draws attention to the way in which male-on-male love is celebrated through music and dance. In doing so, Jonathan Stock raises questions about the performance and experience of sexuality in contemporary Chinese popular music, and how Chinese and other audiences respond to these questions in turn. Stock also notes that ‘Little Apple’ directly cross-references K-pop, given that the song is a clear follow-on to Psy’s ‘Gangnam Style’ of summer 2012, which is the focus of the following article by Stephen Epstein, “From South Korea to the Southern Hemisphere: K-pop below the Equator”. The article provides an insight into the spread of Korean popular music to various nations in the southern hemisphere through the viral success of Psy’s ‘Gangnam Style’, flash mob performances, social networking services, YouTube dance cover bands and international media coverage. Epstein sheds light onto the broadening of K-pop fandom and the rise of its appeal, which, as he argues, relies not so much on cultural proximity but rather on its ability to evoke an interaction between the local and the international that simultaneously bridges two national contexts.

Still exploring the theme of “Popular Music in and Beyond Asia” and yet moving towards a different Asian geographical region, the subsequent contributions are four reviews of books on popular musics in Java and Japan. This opens with a review by Jun Zubillaga-Pow of Bart Barendregt’s edited collection *Sonic Modernities in the Malay World*, a book which largely concentrates on popular music in post-1950s Java. Zubillaga-Pow describes the book as an “ambitious attempt to chart a comprehensive genealogy of musics in the Malay world” and one which perhaps raises more questions about the meaning of sonic modernities in the Malay archipelago than are answered. The section then moves to Japan, with reviews of two books emerging from ethnographic research that consider music on the edge—noise and grindcore. Russell P. Skelch offers a review of David Novak’s *Japanoise*, a book which “follows transnational flows of Japanoise from its early influences in
US and European Noise, Industrial and Power Electronics scenes to its reintroduction to audiences in Japan in the 1990s where Noise was subsequently reimagined, repackaged and branded as a form of global Japanese electronic music”, but which does so in ways that emphasize the ways in which noise generates affective experiences. Daniel Wilson, in his review of Rosemary Overell’s Affective Intensities in Extreme Music Scenes, posits that Overell’s work “takes an altogether different approach” to that of Novak in its application of affect. Overell studies the affective belonging offered by grindcore in Japan and Australia. In this way, argues Wilson, Overell “provides a fresh insight into the experience of extreme music from within, and makes a strong case for affect acting as a unifying force that transcends national and gendered difference in the moment of performance”. This section ends with a review by Keisuke Yamada of the volume Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture. Edited by Patrick W. Galbraith and Jason G. Karlin, this collection seeks to “expand the field of idolology” by way of contributions from scholars who “take diverse approaches to the study and analysis of the pop idol phenomena in Japan”.

The second section brings together four reviews under the theme “The Individual in World Popular Music”. The first is a review by Kent Windress of Roy Cape: A Life on the Calypso and Soca Bandstand. This auto/biography is a collaboration between Roy Cape and Jocelyne Guilbault: “their combined voices resonate throughout the book” to produce what is at once a celebration and scholarly investigation “of a Caribbean musician who has carved out a long and successful career as a performer of calypso and soca music in the English-speaking Caribbean and its diaspora”. This is followed by Mike Hajimichael’s review of the second edition of John Collins’s Fela: Kalakuta Notes. Hajimichael describes this new edition as a “multi-layered and significant” account of the Afrobeat performer Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, providing “deep insights into his life, music and struggles against oppression and mediocrity”. Marc Duby then introduces the reader to the musical work and political activism of Thomas Mapfumo in his review of Banning Eyre’s Lion Songs. This is a book that “represents a vital contribution to current literature on popular music in Zimbabwe”, situating Mapfumo’s work as a musician and public figure “in the complex political economy of the country”. The final review in this section takes us from the African continent to Italy with Marcello Messina’s review of Rosario Dello Iacovo’s Curre Curre Guagliò: Storie dei 99 Posse. The book provides a “polyphonic biography” of the Neapolitan hip-hop/reggae 99 Posse and in charting key moments in the group’s career the book also addresses “themes that are of considerable importance in the context of recent Italian and international political history”. Indeed, all the books reviewed in this section offer the reader insight into the musical worlds of individual musicians
in the sphere of world popular music but their stories are always contextualized by way of the socio-political undercurrents which frame their practice.

“Cultural Trajectories of Popular Music” is the focus of the third and final section of this issue. The section opens with an article by Philip Hayward and Matt Hill on “Voodoo Threads: The Cultural Trajectory of Dr. John’s ‘I Walk On Gilded Splinters’”, which traces the ways in which this composition from 1967, which is steeped in New Orleans’ creole culture and, in particular, voodoo, has undergone a series of transitions since its original recording. Consequently, the authors illustrate the shifting nature of this composition for different audiences, drawing conclusions about the significance of the work’s cultural trajectory over fifty years of performance. The focus on American popular music culture is continued in a review by Rob Bowman of Christopher J. Smith’s The Creolization of American Culture, a book which “offers significant insights into the development and meaning of blackface minstrelsy”. The foundation for Smith’s book are the works and sundry papers of the painter William Sidney Mount (1807–1868). Bowman observes that “what Smith sees in Mount’s work” is a “Creole synthesis” between “Anglo-Celtic and Afro-Caribbean people occupying the same public space”, musicking together, with Smith “effectively making the case that music and dance created participatory communitas between both white and black working-class Americans in a number of contexts”.

Two reviews follow on from this, which depart geographically to South Africa and Jamaica, whilst sharing with the previous contribution an interest in the cultural trajectories of popular music. In the first of these, Jostine Loubser provides an appraisal of the second edition of Christopher Ballantine’s Marabi Nights: Jazz, ‘Race’ and Society in Early Apartheid South Africa. For Loubser, Ballantine is a masterful storyteller who presents “a dignified account of the music and the musicians” of South Africa’s musical past. Loubser draws attention to the value of the new chapters in this edition which “consider the effects of migrancy labour laws, not just on male musicians or the country’s musical development, but also on the social history of women”. The final review in this section is Jeff Wragg’s consideration of Paul Sullivan’s Remixology: Tracing the Dub Diaspora. This book charts the cultural trajectory “of dub music from its beginnings in Kingston, Jamaica to a global genre”, and Wragg identifies the book’s key strengths as being the way Sullivan charts the development of “the myriad of genres that have been influenced by dub music” and how he connects “the key players involved, in terms of collaboration, influence and intertwined personal histories”.

We trust you will find this to be a rich and deeply engaging issue, traversing as it does various geographic and thematic terrains. Please recommend the Journal of World Popular Music to your librarians, students, colleagues,
teachers, friends and others with an interest in world popular music or international popular musics. Your subscription will also have a good cause, as all royalties earned by the Journal Editor, as well as a matching sum contributed by the Publisher, will be donated to charity.