Sex brings up (and fails to address?) - why it's not 'queer enough', why it's boring, and (my favourite) why it is the true sequel to Gone With the Wind. John Champagne is a lot more serious (and a lot more graphic) than one assumes partly in reaction to the fact that Sex is "just not real enough" [116]) but also deals with the numerous contradictory critical responses aroused by Sex. Interestingly, unlike books, Champagne saw the Vanity Fair spread as parodies of 1950s Playboy layouts, exhibiting a 'camp sensibility' that suited well for Sex, but he was ultimately disappointed. 'Camp' re-appears (frequently) in Carol A. Queen's championing of Sex. Perhaps are we all being prudes in the thing we talk least about is Sex, but then again, maybe the point is that it isn't really sex, in which case how can we applaud Madonna for "making us talk about sex" [150].

Kirsten Marthe Lentz approaches the ever-enticing question of Madonna's 'authenticity' or otherwise - the "frustration with the inability to identify her - sexually or otherwise" [166]. Of course this is one of the secrets of her success - because we can't definitely identify her as gay or bi, she can appropriate gay imagery (and sell it) without any real taint... Lentz discusses the issue of Madonna's (use of images of) bisexuality in some depth, but concludes "I do not think that an unconditional celebration of Madonna's work is a good political choice" [167]. Pa. Califa, discussing the S/M element of Sex, also says 'I feel deeply ambivalent about somebody who has not paid her dues using my community as a series of bizarre backdrops for a photo shoot' [177], but nevertheless argues from an anti-porn position that the S/M community "will still find itself in the awkward position of defending Sex" [184].

Perhaps the most telling testament to Madonna's charisma and star power is that none of the writers in the two volumes (other than Simon Frith) devote more than a passing mention to the fact that Madonna has a voice, sings and (co) writes much of her material, and that her voice, delivery and music have developed and altered over her career. Far from being the 'primary text' (in Alan Moore's phrase) music is, in these books, largely the 'missing text'. Given that the very raison d'être of these books is that Madonna should be taken seriously as an object of analysis it seems odd that her music is relegated to the sidelines. American Cultural Studies might be learning to look, but it still seems deaf to the sounds of popular culture.


As a number of contributions to this volume observe, the popularity of country music has steadily increased over the past two decades. Although the writers make this assertion in connection only with the music's growing audience, the same is equally true in many other parts of the globe. In Britain, for instance, both Nanci Griffith and K.D. Lang followed in the footsteps of rock star Eric Clapton by playing London's prestigious classical music venue, the Royal Albert Hall, on their last UK tours. And both Griffith and Lang, together with other so-called 'new country' singer-songwriters such as Lyle Lovett, enjoy fairly regular airplay on radio stations and programming that are not exclusively devoted to country music.

Yet, as George Lewis himself argues in his introduction, country music has on the whole failed to attract substantial interest within popular music studies. This anthology of wide-ranging articles, essays and conference papers written by historians, sociologists, musicologists, folklorists, anthropologists, ethnographers, communication specialists and journalists is, then, both timely and to be welcomed. Although the very diversity of perspectives brings its own problems, All That Glitters not only makes a valuable contribution to a burgeoning academic discipline, but as the book's cover notes assert (absolutely correctly), "these diverse views of country music begin to suggest what a fascinating and multifaceted phenomenon this music is".

The book's principal focus is on what Lewis terms 'modern' country music in America - that is, country music as it developed from the 1950s onwards - and this is explored through seven sections which address performers who have been major influences on modern country. For instance, and inspired by the advent of a 'new country' sound via a new generation of performers. Each section is preceded by an introduction which usefully concludes with a playlist.

Given the range of disciplines from which the writers are drawn, the approaches, styles and methodologies employed in the articles vary enormously (from the anecdotal to the interpretative of statistical data) and - unsurprisingly, I feel - any reader will find some pieces more interesting than others. One of the more illuminating contributions for this reader, for instance, is Joli Jensen's essay on Patsy Cline which examines a whole range of factors which shaped the singer's career and public image, and the way Cline initially resisted performing the more popular material which contributed substantially to her success and has since helped redefine her as 'classic' country. Equally excellent is Lewis's own chapter on
country music in Maine which helps challenge the prevalent myth of country’s Southern origin by a detailed study of the music’s development in the north-eastern state and looks at how the regional style interacted with the emerging national sound of Nashville.

Among the many other stimulating essays, two other pieces are worth noting here. In his examination of the so-called ‘outlaw’ country music of Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings, Michael Dunne undertakes a fascinating exploration of the growing self-reflexivity in their songs, suggesting that this functioned to ‘co-opt’ their listeners into the world of the ‘outsider’ singer-songwriter and helped turn the ‘rebellion’ into a phenomenal success. In his essay on Alison Krauss, Mark Fenster highlights debates around the definition of blue grass music in a manner very similar to the way critics elsewhere have examined them in relation to Cajun music.

Singling out only these particular articles out for mention is not intended to deny the value of different approaches. If anything, the methodological diversity broadens the book’s appeal and potential readership - it is not overly academic and yet contains much productive, critical analysis. And as already mentioned, it is precisely the combination of diverse perspectives - rather than the section headings, as one might expect - that highlights the multi-faceted nature of country music. Although the sections are a helpful means of guiding the reader through the wealth of material collected in the anthology, they function far less to identify and draw out the issues that the music itself raises.

Instead, across all seven sections - as Lewis acknowledges in his main introduction - a number of questions are repeatedly raised or addressed from a number of different perspectives and in a number of different contexts. As a result, irrespective of one’s own preferred approach, the reader is given a strong sense of the complex network of issues that ‘structure’ the country music phenomenon (and, of course, other areas of cultural studies) and should inform its study.

For instance, many of the contributors discuss the question of country music’s (increasingly) popular appeal and endeavour to assess what constitutes that appeal. A broad general agreement emerges that the lyrics are of fundamental importance to listeners: the nature of the music is that the lyrics are usually highly unambiguous, addressing clearly delineated themes, and are meant to be heard. As Karen Sauzier asserts, ‘the lyrics of a country song attempt to tell a complete story in a “three minute soap opera”’ (244). In attempting to characterise the country music ‘story’ several writers reiterate recurring themes such as love, failed relationships and honky-tonking - but also argue that, on the one hand, it offers something familiar and ordinary to the listener and, on the other, it articulates the contradictions that have to be negotiated in everyday life. Thus, country music is seen as something which fundamentally interacts with the lives of its listeners.

Another issue that is addressed across all seven sections of the book is the problematic notion of authenticity. The very diversity of articles highlights the multitude of factors that have shaped the development of country music, ranging from the musical and cultural influences, through pop-country cross-overs and regional-national tensions, to the recording industry and commercial considerations; and demonstrates time and again that what is all too often thought of as ‘classic’ or ‘traditional’ - that is, in some way ‘authentic’ or ‘pure’ - country music is the result of a highly complex evolutionary process.

However, at the same time this is where the book’s main weakness emerges. Although a number of issues are repeatedly raised throughout All That Glitters, only certain of these are explored in any depth - such as the important and role of lyrics. Similarly, in addition to Dunne’s piece on the development of ‘outlaw’ country music, Willie Nelson is discussed in a number of other essays, so that, taking the book as a whole, the reader is offered a fairly extensive analysis of Nelson’s music, performance style and image and how they can be contextualised within the country music industry/scene as a whole.

But among the issues that are not followed up is, for instance, the musico-cultural aspect of country - made all the more evident through the book’s very emphasis upon lyrics. In their highly detailed studies of lyrics, several writers seem to imply that this emphasis is justified because, as Sauzier explicitly states, ‘unlike other forms of music where melody is equally important, the essence of country music is its story’ (my italics: 224). While lyrics may be a crucial dimension in the popularity and function of country music - and obviously require study - this tends to suggest that the sound, rhythm, instrumentation and arrangement plays no role whatsoever. If this were the case, it fails to explain why certain versions of particular songs become popular while others do not, or why Patsy Cline had to record what Jensen terms ‘smoother material’ to become successful, or why it is possible to have a country, pop and cajun version of the same song. Furthermore, if the ‘story’ is what is memorable about country music (and this is certainly not always the case from my own experience), then it begs the question of what it is about the way country music ‘works’ that allows the lyrics to be or appear so prominent, and is that as much a distinguishing feature as the lyrics themselves?

Several writers also note both the key influence of black music on early country and the music’s subsequent strong association with what has traditionally been thought of and represented as the reactionary and racist South. Yet, aside from Lewis’s essay on the Mexican musical influences on country and Stephen Thompson’s analysis of the depiction of inter-racial love affairs in the music, there is no sustained discussion around issues of race. Given that, according to Thompson, ‘country is overwhelmingly perceived, both by its fans and by its detractors, as white people’s music - music performed by white musicians for a white, predominantly rural, predominantly southern audience’ (260), and in view of efforts elsewhere in the book to debunk the myth of country’s Southern origin, it seems strange not to include some discussion of, for instance, the black influences on the music of black country performers such as Charley Pride, OB McClinton (both mentioned in passing by Thompson) and the harmonica player DeFord Bailey, or Solomon Burke’s unexpected success with a country song in the 1960s while he was signed to Atlantic Records.

These omissions mean that at times the book feels as if it has been structured to fit the material that was available - excellent though much of that material is - and this is particularly apparent in the final section, ‘If Wishes Were Changes: Country at the Crossroads’.

In his introduction to this section Lewis emphasises at some length the importance of Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris to country music’s development over the past two decades, yet none of the essays included in the section directly addresses either performer.

That said, a book of this kind can obviously only ever hope to explore a selected range of issues, and on the whole All That Glitters offers an excellent introduction to certain aspects of country music. And without doubt, it makes a valuable contribution to the study of popular music by pointing up the complexity of the country music phenomenon and identifying a whole range of issues that deserve further study.

Julia Knight


Bradley defines his objective as being an answer to the questions: “What about the rock ‘n’ roll ‘explosion’ in Britain?” and “Why did music-use go from being...incidental to...crucial, in many young people’s lives?” (3). He is not far into this enquiry before it becomes clear to him that a prior
question must also be addressed: that is, the problem of popular music discourse itself. Bradley's book is therefore also a contribution to the debate on how the music is to be conceptualised within a historical dynamic. Beginning with a critique of rock writing, he makes the point that much of its ideological baggage is imported inappropriately from other musics. His analysis provides examples of the fruitful insights which emerge from a close inspection of received discursive strategies (see, for example, 31). Recognising these minefields has led Bradley to tread with particular care himself, and for the most part his own style is stripped clean of mystification. The result sometimes appears ingenuous, but to assume that this is naivete would be to collaborate with one of the assumption under interrogation: that is, that the discursive practice that is taken unreflectively to be appropriate to the analysis of pop is modelled on the aesthetics embedded in traditional musicology. The question of the homology between popular cultural forms and their framing discourses is not an abstract one, since it deeply affects administration, education, funding processes, and the working conditions relating to music practice. The conceptualisation of popular music in terms borrowed from, say, classical, is, like the ancient stylistic Doctrines of Imagination, a serious obstacle to the perception and articulation of new forms of experience. It seems to me that Bradley's own edited style is the mark of a writer trying to map the territory rather than making it conform to existing (and alien) cartographies. His straightforwardness is a disciplined rejection of those designer-label critiques which proclaim their own origins, but obscure the contours of their subject.

At best, this produces a great lucidity. His exposition of the ideological underpinnings of European musical aesthetics is a model of how to make the difficult accessible. His account of the connection between those musical forms and the post-Renaissance narrative of the (male) individual confronting and controlling nature (35-6), is the one to which I now refer my own students; by way of introduction to the study of cultural politics in music. His comparative analysis of Presley and Crudup is a reminder of how far you can go without disappearing into a forest of jargon. On the downside, unless this is intended to be a secondary school textbook, I sometimes feel that he is circumnavigating the world in order to get to the other side of the street. When he refers to Berger (or even references, he takes two pages to tell me what Berger said clearly in four sentences. While beginning of ovo is a good way to clear the ground, I'm not sure that he need take quite so long to tell me that music is one of the sites of the articulation of subjectivity through other than conscious means. This occasional re-invention of the whole is often conducted by one imagining himself to be the solitary prophet in the wilderness. His dismissal of existing pop excess is rather sweeping, and, I suspect (despite the reading list), based on coverage from which approaches akin to his own are absent. Butler, Attali, Afrom White (the Lost in Music collection), are a number of essays, Finnegan - I list these off the top of my head as writers not cited in his bibliography, but who might have merited his sense of being the first to notice Certain Things.

His enquires into the social use of music lead him into a discussion of the importance of dance, and Bradley's emphasis on the importance of pleasure is refreshing in a field in which meaning is so often felt to be absent from fun. He draws the two together in his analysis of the way in which time is 'processed' in popular music. This generates a thesis regarding rock's emancipative response to urban/industrial notions of time. Contemplating this I found myself responding with an ambivalence which Bradley himself had anticipated. His concluding question, "Is this account not too neat to be true?" (52) echoed my own reservations. But anticipating an objection is not the same as rebutting it. His account of rock and roll, for example, I shall refer my own students to it as a way of thinking about musical meanings. But, as he seems to sense, it is rather schematised. In presenting rock as a site of emancipation in relation to the conditions of contemporary life, he seems to ignore the contradictory internal colourations of the music, as well as the simple truth that rock is part of those conditions, not crudely set up against them. Although he goes on to talk about the phallocentricity of much of the music, he doesn't incorporate this insight into the discussion of his thesis about its liberating potential. Here again we have a problem of over-determined categories - probably inevitable in a study so brief (174pp) that wants to touch base at so many points. His basic schema of rock and its associated categories is rather stark, and perhaps he would not be so surprised at the apparent suddenness of the advent of the young music/dance phenomenon if he had not begun with an a priori differentiation of it that obscured the extent of its continuity with earlier practices. Much (not all) of what he has to say on the subject could have been said, for example, of the English jazz movement from the late 1940s when, rather abruptly, (with the opening of the Leicester Square Jazz Club), the social function of the music began to incorporate the kind of dancing with Bradley links with the beginning of rock. I think he has actually squeezed some cognate popular musics out of shape in order to preserve a privileged space for rock in his cultural mythology. To underscore the difference between jazz and rock in Britain he writes "almost all well-known jazz employed popular tunes, or imitations of them, as the basis for improvisation" (p59). Oddly, he doesn't need this assertion for his argument that there are significant differences. Even more odd, then, that the assertion hardly stands up. What does he mean by 'popular tunes' here? Contemplating this I found myself responding with an ambivalence which Bradley himself had anticipated. 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I propose these examples as part of a pattern of categorical glibness, also evident in the treatment of gender. His 'guess' that heterosexual love is an abiding theme in popular music (101) is one of a number of unsubstantiated surmises that alibi a lack of nuance. The 'guess' would have profited from an examination of lyrics in relation to music, and a reading of, for example, Donald Horton's "The dialogue of courtship in popular songs" in The American Journal of Sociology, LXII #6 (May 1957). The undocumented assertion that the masculinity expressed in 1950s rock was pre-emminently 'brash, aggressive' (105) seems to me to ignore a very large subset of songs proclaiming a version of Courtly Love servility which is not - as Bradley is arguing - homologous with the kind of male sexuality as constructed in adventure narratives from Boggles to Bond.

Having expressed these reservations - is this not de rigueur for any review? - I would conclude by saying that I was more interested in reading this book than most others on popular music. It is rare to find this area dealt with in a way that shows such historical respect and deep focus, and that is informed by such a large cultural perspective. Essential reading.

Bruce Johnson

Carlo Branzaglia, Pierfrancesco Pacoada and Alba Solano (1992) Possetitaliane: centri sociali, underground musicale e cultura giovani del anni '90 in Italia (The Italian Possets: Social Centres, the Musical Underground and Youth Culture in Italy in the '90s), Florence, Editoriale Tosca.

When I last visited Italy in the summer of 1992 there were signs of renewed manifestations of political protest in a series of mass demonstrations against the repressive economic measures of the Amato government, which most musicographe, among the most raccoonized of the 'years of lead' in the 1970s. It was no coincidence that the most prominent soundtrack of these demonstrations was a...
newly discovered ‘indigenous’ rap music, much of which originates from outside the main centres of Milan and Rome, and frequently uses regional dialects. After a stumbling beginning in the mid 1980s, when sometimes embarrassingly crude forms of English were still the lingua franca of Italian rap, which was completely overshadowed by the much-hyped Italian house scene, a local hip hop culture has emerged in Italy in the 1990s. Rap can be seen as one of the catalysts of a political and cultural renaissance of oppositional Italian youth movements, which almost died out in the 1980s due to the rilassato (recession) of underground and dissident political activity that had climaxed in the student rebellions and cooperative cultural activities of 1977. At that time the ‘do it yourself’ ethos of punk rock was matched in Italy by autogestione, a political catchphrase for self-run political and cultural projects which frequently involved music as a by-product, and which tended to use the abrasive nihilism of punk as its soundtrack. No Italian punk groups, with the possible exception of Bologna’s CCCP and Pisa’s Cheeky Cheeks, Motherfuckers, made any sort of impact outside of Italy. The same is probably true of the hundreds of rap groups which have supplanted them in almost every corner of the boot, but particularly in the south, following the same ‘do it yourself’ ethos. Rap in Italy has taken over from punk as a more positive vehicle of debate about local conditions and formations, and a way of talking back and denouncing the widespread and rampant corruption which has been exposed at almost every social level in the past couple of years. As Alba Solaro states in the third essay in this valuable book:

The question always arises spontaneously as to whether it’s a case of solutions badly adopted from American culture, and aped in an Italian context; or whether we’re dealing with autonomous, spontaneous reproductions of general urban practices. Maybe it’s not that even on an ‘alternative’ level American culture still provides models for the youth of Eu-

rope (and the world), but it’s probably even truer that these forms have been completely re-absorbed and relived in an original style (124: my translation).

While claims could be made for precedents of Italian rap as an indigenous form in the recitativo of 17th century opera (which has always been a popular musical form in Italy), and reference made to Italy’s African and Arab ancestry, Posse italiane shows that the co-operative ‘social centres’ which sprung up over the country in the mid 1980s, often replacing the community centres of the Italian Communist Party or more extreme autonomous left-wing groups with a less denomi-

tional and more social’ ambience, were instrumental in providing alternative spaces, cultural networks and even independent record facilities for Italy’s burgeoning rap movement.

Papa Ricky, one of the foremost figures on the current scene, who comes from Lecece in the deep south, named his strongly raggas-

ted group Isola Posse after the Isola nel Kiantzeri ‘social centre’ in Bologna, where he is now based, and records on the independent label Centoro Vox. I saw him perform at an ‘alternative’ summer cultural festival run by the local Communist cultural network of Cisternino, a small town near Lecece, along with other local rap groups from Lecece, Bari and Brindisi, some of whom combined tra-

ditional southern Italian peasant chants and musical forms with rap and hip hop in an open-air celebration of southern alternative culture. At times there was a bewildering number of people on stage, swapping the mike at dizzying speed in what is referred to as the free-for-all ‘rotating microphone’ that is a policy on rap nights at many social centres. In 1992 Papa Ricky was set up by the music magazine Fare Musica in a staged public rumble against other major Italian rap superstars (and the only Italian rapper to get a mention in Lee Harpin’s recent i-D article on European rap*), Frankie Hi NRG MC, who had a huge hit with Fight da faida (Fight the Feuds), an eloquent but mechanical dis of the mafia. Based in Perugia, Frankie is fre-

quently dissed for lack of street cred since he came up through the Italian house and dance music scene rather than serving his time in the social centers. But as he points out in one of the interviews included in this book:

what counts in rap is content and message, not rivalry and jealousy. I don’t believe that someone who has something to say can necessarily only go to a social centre or squat. There’s no such thing as a privileged audience, at least as far as I’m concerned, and I think rap has a duty to get across to people who go to discos, people who until now never thought it was possible to dance to a text like Fight da Faida. The important thing about being part of the scene is sharing the essential coordinates that make hip hop into a philosophy of life (102: my translation).

Posse italiane doesn’t dwell too long on these debates about ‘Questions of Style’, as one of Papa Ricky’s cuts is called, being more con-

cerned with mapping the contours of what is a very heterogeneous and hybrid cultural scene. In the first half of the book, Carlo Branzaglia succeeds in building up a detailed and comprehensive historical and geographical survey of the evolution of the social centres through Italy since the mid 1980s. Pierfrancesco Parento profiles some of the major Italian rappers, from the Rome-based Communist Onda Rossa Posse, who were the first group to produce a rap record in Italy, to their offshoots Assalt Frontali, the southern ‘tarantumuff’ of the South Sound System, the Sicilian Nuovi Briganti, the Neapolitan 99 Posse, the Bolognese Fuckin’ Camels ‘n’ Eff-

pose, and the incredibly hard to find indie labels they rapped on. In the final quarter, Branzaglia looks at the cyberpunk, virtual reality, internet and ‘hackeraggio’ scene in Italy, which has also developed through the social centres, been heavily influenced by Burroughs, Gibson, situationism and graffiti art, but produced some interesting intermedi-

t artists like Tommaso Tozzi, Massimo Cittadini and others, and important fanzines like Decoder, which has served as a forum for cyberpunk, hip hop and the social centres. The picture which emerges is of a diverse but interlinked underground culture which adapts, borrows and appropriates from a heterogeneous range of mostly American cultural artifacts, but manages to generate new configurations, formations and combinations which directly address the needs and desires of local subcultures.


Tony Mitchell


Whatever the strengths of Garofalo’s anthol-

gy (and it has several), its sub-title is a somewhat inaccurate description of its contents. Its theme might more accurately be described as ‘Pop and Politics’ and, in this manner, can almost be read as a series of international replies to Billy Bragg, who, in his song The Great Leap Forward, sang ‘Mix-

ing pop and politics’she asks me what the use

is/offer him a rebus centre point my usual excuses’. Although some of the articles do focus on ‘mass movements’, many look at subtler relations between music, politics and society. This emphasises the extent to which there is still a troubling dichotomy between Adorno-esque dismissals of popular music and more optimistic agit-political views of the popular (most often rooted in early Soviet or Brechtian paradigms). In another sense it can also be read as showing the disarray of the Western Left in an (allegedly) Postmodern world where even the flexible forms of Gramscian hegemony (let alone the Althusserian rigidities of ISAs and RSAs) seem incapable of explaining the society of the spectacle and its various sonic equivalences (hence the desire to return to supposed ‘roots’ music).

Brecht once said of ‘tools’ such as Epic...
Theatre, that they should be used while they work and discarded once they don't. In theoretical terms, the problem for the critics here is that the old tools are patently inadequate while, at the same time, efficient new ones are unavailable or (as in the case of Grossberg) still being assimilated and test-driven. One solution is of course simply to 'surrender to the rhythm' and operate within the seductions of the 'post-political' era.

The case of the Sun City single/video, discussed by Garofalo, perhaps best illustrates this. As a project defined by its lyrical address, Sun City is overwhelming addressed to its constituency of producers and fans as a 'closed circuit' communication. Its interpretation as an engagement with a wider cause is just that - an interpretation. Contemporary popular music in this example, might be read as a sphere which envelops and recontextualises expressions of the (broader) 'political' within its own rhetoric and its own dramatised enunciations of its own sincerity. The actual music of Sun City passed over in Garofalo's analysis when it might have rewarded more sustained attention. Garofalo may be forgiven however, since the song, and its visualised form, the video, foreground themselves as a parade of star presences, indexed by their brief vocal contributions and onscreen images. But while the music may be obscured and overlaid by its star-studded cast, it is, as Alan Moore has been keen to emphasise, still the 'primary text' and thereby merits an attention which it does not receive here.

One of the book's strong points is that it offers a selection of regional studies which are both informative in their own right and valuable as examples from which to begin to produce hypotheses about the global relation of pop to political causes and the social function of popular music. With such an international scope, however, the reader has to take much on trust and has to remember how heavily the histories of complex social moments documented by the authors rely on particular interpretations. Some chapters flag this overtly.

Kristal Brent Zook's chapter on 'Reconstructions of National Thought in Black Music and Culture', for instance, takes a Black essentialist view on its subject. It consequently reads rap music in this context and 'disses' Dick Hebdige in grand style. Others leave their agendas hidden, glossed as objective.

Given the abbreviated nature of many of the chapters and the complexity of the moments and movements they address, it is not perhaps surprising that their histories are often simplified. Simon Frith and John Street's chapter on the British initiatives Rock Against Racism (RAR) and Red Wedge, for instance, offers a significantly different picture of RAR to that which this reviewer remembers, pointing out the contradictions and variety in national composition of the movement. To this writer at least, the principal problem with Frith and Street's account is that it avoids the 'awkward' and tends to view RAR through slightly rose, or, perhaps more appropriately, rainbow-coloured spectacles. In contrast to the authors' emphasis on the multi-racial aspect of RAR, in this writer's experience at least, the organisation was, however important and well-motivated, primarily a white liberal pressure group, with audiences at its major outdoor gigs reflecting this composition. While reggae bands such as Misty In Roots were embraced by RAR crowds as almost the 'house band' for the movement, and while the 'punky reggae party' celebrated by Bob Marley saw bands such as The Ruts, The Clash and The Members producing energetically reggae-ed up numbers - the politics of the reggae-rock crossover was essential one way. In my experience, in South and West London at least, you would never hear any punk-reggae at any roots reggae sound system. There were other lines in the rainbow alliance which were awkward to cross, as the (all-white) reggae band China Street found when they were boosed by a group of West Indians as they played to crowds filling into a RAR gig in Brixton in 1979. This in turn points to the manner in which the idealism of musical fusions, rainbowl alliances and the punk-reggae crossover was based on a white liberal politics of incorporation. This (conveniently) ignored the strategic significance of the racial/sub-cultural exclusivity of (then largely) Jamaican reggae for British/Afro-Caribbeans. While RAR may have operated on a model of solidarity through-association, the ritualistic clashes between police and crowds at Notting Hill Carnival in the late 1970s/early 1980s (explored and analysed in Sankofa's film Territories) provided a markedly different response.

Rockin' the Boat sets itself a tough project and is one of the strengths of the book that there is much to get to grips and take issue with. It is also a useful book for popular music educators who wish to broaden their scope beyond solely anglophone examples, its failure to more clearly identify the nature(s) of the relation of music to mass movements and how they might be understood ultimately undermines the evoking nature of (popular) music studies and the work to be done. In this at least, it makes for salutary reading.

Philip Hayward


In the acknowledgements to this collection of essays the British editors note the fun they had in compiling the text, comparing the process to picking a list of favourite records. As with any list of 'personal' favourites there will be disagreements between the compiler(s) and those 'judging' the selection. This is certainly the case with this collection of articles - the editors may have enjoyed compiling this book, but for those new to cultural studies the piece-meal style of presentation provides difficult reading.

The book is divided into sections focussing on foundations; difference and identity; and meaning and power, with work by Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Roland Barthes and Fredric Jameson being included. While the material used clearly addresses the three central themes of the book, it does so through the use of book introductions, journal extracts and pieces 'cut' from larger texts. The fragmentary aspect of the work collected creates a sense of incompleteness.

The editors note that this collection is a 'fair' - as opposed to 'definitive' - representation of cultural studies (iii). While cultural studies is a highly diverse field, the inclusion of only one paper specifically relating to popular music - an extract from Paul Gilroy's There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack (1987) titled 'Black and white on the dance floor' - is inadequate. Gilroy's paper discusses the relationship between black culture and dance music in the United Kingdom. He begins by looking at the dances and social functions of the early settlers to Britain and goes on to explore the development of reggae music and the relationships that developed between contemporary black and white youth in the United Kingdom. As with some others in this reader, this piece raises more questions than it answers; the most immediate relating to the overall context of Gilroy's book and the specific context from which this extract was taken.

While it is the nature of contemporary cultural studies for there to be no 'easy answers', this introductory reader provides a reading of the discipline that may not be helpful for those unfamiliar with the subject. This collection of articles and extracts does provide material that is both accessible and challenging, but the committed reader must be prepared to find the original source to discover the full potential of the introductions included, or to read in full those pieces cut by the editors to "bring out the argument more sharply" (p.iii). The enduring feeling is that while the introductory nature of this reader provides difficulties, the material is a useful starting point for those (pop) music scholars interested in the large and inviting field of cultural studies.

Colin McLay
REVIEW

Edinburgh University Press

Like so many popular music studies compilation albums, this is an erratic collection. A release from Edinburgh University Press in their 'Law and Society' series, it is aimed at two constituencies: scholars studying popular music and lawyers who find contemporary music such a profitable source of income.

In his witty and all-too-brief introduction, editor Simon Frith sets out the rationale for the book's existence, to persuade music sociologists that the subject of copyright is 'the key' to cultural analysis, and to remind lawyers that creative practices and public understanding are often at odds with - and in conflict with - the legal definitions of copyright.

Most of the authors in this collection will be well-known to those familiar with IASPM and popular music studies, so generally there are few surprises and most of the discussion is firmly centred around the 1980s/early 1990s issues such as home taping and digital sampling. Frith writes on 'Music and Morality', although he makes some interesting observations about the 'moral rhetoric' that conceals the degree of conflict between the interests of record companies, artists and audiences, he only really hints at the wider sociological importance of issues of intellectual ownership and authorship. His argument about the increasing hostility towards copyright law amongst consumers and musicians is an intriguing point and begs further elucidation.

A similar point, that copyright law is a deceptive device, occurs in a number of places throughout the book, particularly in Marcus Breen's analysis of the 1990 public inquiry into Australian music copyright. But Breen's admirable aim of seeking to expose the power structures that are concealed by the 'invisible hand of the market' is somewhat hampered by the density of his systems analysis of the regulatory regimes that are operating. Dave Laing provides a useful historical periodisation of copyright law dividing it into three phases: 1880s-1930s when copyright law was dominated by composers and singers; the 1930s onwards when musicians, record companies and film companies started to exert a decisive influence; and the late 1980s when the commercial interests of the cultural industries really start to dominate. This is a framework that might be useful if fleshed out with some extended research.

Paul Theberge's deceptively straightforward article on copyright reform in Canada contains some very perceptive observations on the confusion about what constitutes a 'musical work' and an 'author'. Theberge's article is also one of the rare moments in the book when the experiential perspective of a musician (on the social-historical influences and 'borrowings' that contribute to an original creative composition) is directly used to interrogate the concept of copyright. Steve Jones follows with a rigorous outline of contemporary copyright in the USA and some useful details about what is actually involved in the practices of sampling.

Most of the writing in the first two-thirds of the book covers a very recent period. This is useful for indicating how copyright legislators have had to respond to digital technologies. But there are issues here that have received considerable coverage in a range of popular publications - often with far more clarity than occasionally exhibited in these essays. These popular music sociologists sometimes seem a little lost when attempting to deal with some of the legal complexities. At times they provide little more than extended descriptions of examples and pedantic facts, acronyms, figures and technical or legal points, when they might have included some specific insights from social and cultural theory.

Clearly such a collection is limited and selective, but it would have been instructive to have had the insights of a music lawyer (or a legal historian) and also a working musician. Also, as musicologists begin to make a tangibly more significant contribution to popular music studies than sociologists (there are very few insights from social theory provided in this collection) it would have been nice to have had the contribution of a Philip Tagg, a Robert Walser or Susan McClary (three writers who have skilfully bridged the sociology-musicology divide).

Just as I was beginning to think that the book was rather narrow, historically and geographically, it concluded with articles from Toru Mitsuji and John Collins that add a much-needed breadth to the publication. Writing with characteristic clarity, Mitsuji gives a real sense of how Japanese society was influenced by a law that was 'forcibly grafted onto an Asian tree that had a different idea of copyright' (130). Mitsuji argues that Japanese people do not respond well to the idea of individual rights. Referring to the way that such a discourse is regarded as dishonourable and undignified, Mitsuji connects the imposition of copyright into Japan in the late nineteenth century with other 'loan words' and concepts such as 'society', 'individual', 'modem', 'liberty' and 'privacy' - terms that have no direct translation. At a time when Japanophobia and fears of 'saki imperialism' have often been voiced in response to the perceived power of Japanese hardware corporations, Mitsuji skilfully highlights the still subordinate position of the Japanese music industry within the international relations of popular entertainment.

In a similar way John Collins, in a passionate defence of 'living folk traditions', provides a critique of the Eurocentric assumptions of copyright law with its emphasis on intellectual ideas that can be identified as the 'property' of a restricted number of individual authors. Eurocentric notions of what a song is (lyric and melody) completely neglect the importance of rhythm as an integral element of composition. Collins provides details of how African 'compositions' are as complex as any electronic digitally sampled sound collage.

These two articles are salutary in reminding us that if theories of cultural imperialism seem increasingly inadequate for explaining contemporary cultural changes, then we should not lose sight of the unequal power relationships that are inscribed into the most fundamental legal definitions that form the foundations of international relationships within the music industry.

As a popular music sociologist, rather than a lawyer, I cannot judge the book's usefulness for the legal profession. Whilst I need more convincing that copyright is 'the key' to cultural analysis (a conclusion that might have brought some of the threads together is a distinct lack), the book is important for highlighting how 'creative artists and active audiences cannot be simply and straightforwardly 'appropriate' the sounds and technologies of the cultural industries. Instead, they are confronted by complex legal regulations that are connected to the interests of powerful international corporations. One of the main themes that emerges from this collection is that copyright law as it is currently being practiced is, despite the 'moral rhetoric', not working for the benefit of the artist nor the audience, but for the corporation. And, as Jane Gaines points out in her discussion of the copyrighting of authored identities, perhaps we should not lose sight of the fact that artists such as Bette Midler are, in many respects, an "industry masquerading as a person".

Keith Negus