

the music itself, without denying its embeddedness in the social processes of their environment.

The comparative approach of this volume is evident, and simultaneously each article stands alone as an individual contribution. Comparative aspects become visible in the authors' relationship to their musical material, as well as in the stories told in the articles. Predominantly working with the historical source material and interacting with performers of long-standing but often endangered traditions, several authors in the section on ensemble traditions trace the displacement of instruments, as well as the shrinking of ensembles for economic reasons. Cases show how groups were reduced or how accordions replaced ensembles because one person could do the job of playing multipart music. Piotr Dahlig describes the tensions within the ensemble: on the one hand, all the musical functions must be fulfilled, but on the other hand, the playing salaries should be divided among as few people as possible.

Playing Multipart Music: Solo and Ensemble Traditions in Europe will be of interest and use to scholars of musical traditions in Europe. The present volume thematically continues the series *European Voices* with a coherently structured collection of contributions from a clearly defined field of interest. The rich historical source material makes it equally valuable for readers of vernacular music history.

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Fairchild, Charles. *Musician in the Museum: Display and Power in Neoliberal Popular Culture*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2021. viii, 255 pp., list of illustrations, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-1-5013-6888-2 (hardback), 978-1-5013-6889-9 (paperback), 978-1-5013-6892-9 (online).

We like to think of popular cultural forms, including popular music, as something distinct from—and free from the interference of—commodified consumerism. In *Musician in the Museum: Display and Power in the Neoliberal Popular Culture*, Fairchild (2021) relieves us of this assumption. By presenting us with an uncomfortable truth that popular music artists and celebrities notoriously benefit from tax avoidance, Fairchild argues that—through their navigation of the neoliberal economic system which allows for such tax-havens to exist, for instance—they are “perfect neoliberals.” Immediately, this claim debunks the common assumption that popular musicians are “one of us”; that they represent the popular (read: working-class) people; the music of the people. This book

foregrounds its broader exploration of the symbiotic relationship between popular music museums and neoliberal capitalist markets by highlighting an unavoidable contradiction: popular musicians, in the pursuit of wealth and power that characterises the late-capitalist system, violate any populist credentials we ascribe to them by default of their positioning as popular musicians.

Musician in the Museum is a collection of chapters, divided into three parts, related to themes which entail a closer examination of the broader power dynamics and cultural matrices that popular music (its actors and representations) participates in. This exploration speaks to Fairchild's previous work on the role of cultural intermediaries in the popular music industry, showcasing a specific focus on museums (cultural intermediary *par excellence*). Fairchild makes explicit the intellectual oversight to which this investigation speaks. There exists a general reluctance in the existing literature on popular music culture and heritage to investigate the ways that museums (especially the "new" ones) are intimately supported by, and support, the late-capitalist, neoliberal machine. Existing scholarship not only ignores this intimate relationship, yet collectively discourages any suggestions that contradict the supposed self-evident democratic-ness of popular music and the institutions that represent it. What is not explored within the scope of the book are the reasons behind this—one might argue that many popular music scholars attending this subject-matter are likely fans of the genres or musicians they study, which might impede their judgement. For researchers and scholars working in the field of popular music heritage, this book serves as a reminder to reflect more critically on the inclusion (and implications) of popular music cultures and materials in the museum.

Curatorial praxis and display strategies emerge as one of the more interesting topics of analysis in *Musician in the Museum*. This is evidenced in Parts II and III. Before we move onto the second and third parts of this book (which the curation and display of "ideal" musical objects and subjects in the museum space), Fairchild complicates our understanding of popular music museums by interrogating the "politics of how these places got built in the first place" (49). The case studies examined in this book were "made possible through forms of power that reserve the most foundational rights to shape and reshape parts of the cities in which they are set for the most wealthy and privileged" (48). Under the guise of "music-themed" gentrification (58), whereby capitalist forces drive the development of arts and cultural-tourism precincts at the expense of existing (often marginalised, working-class and/or migrant) communities which are dismantled to make way for the popular music heritage projects, "the museums merely moved into the places left behind" (53). Fairchild encourages us to look again at the phenomena of the music city—and the urban development entailed in the private and corporate management of what used to be a public space (48)—and to consider "the public for whom these institutions have been built."

Focusing on the interiors of these spaces, Fairchild observes that museums (as cultural mediators) generate and disseminate official discourses, influencing collective understandings of popular music histories. In line with the socio-economic matrices of capitalism, these elite institutions rely on their symbolic and cultural authority to exert

power over our understanding of popular music, perpetuating dominant discourses and mythologies of popular music. To consider how musicians are constructed in the museum space, we return to some of the ideas explored in the opening chapter of this book, namely the pervasion of tax evasion in (musical) celebrity culture, whereby pop and rock stars alike participate in the contemporary neoliberal fetishisation of profit over people. By profiling musical celebrities, the curatorial praxis in these museum spaces glorifies these exemplary participants in neoliberal capitalism. Their example—evidenced by number of awards, accolades, and subsequent inclusion in a museum—proves the efficiency of the neoliberal capitalist system to transform musical and artistic genius into commercial success and historical legacy. However, through their “self-evident greatness” (43), the narratives constructed around these musical superstars reflects the so-called positive implications of neoliberal capitalism: the accumulation of wealth, power, and prestige.

The purpose of these museums is to guide visitors (or spectators) on a journey, to bear witness to how greatness was achieved by profiled popular musicians “whose greatness has already been borne out by popular acclaim” (185) and, subsequently, does not require further elaboration. In other words, “we are never asked to consider why they might be great or why these forms of greatness might be in front of us. We are not presented with many arguments, claims or evidence to convince us of its validity. We don’t need to be. It is a foregone conclusion” (205). Since these museums are not trying to convince audiences of a greatness already (assumedly) well-established, these spaces—through choices of inclusion and display of awe-worthy objects and photographs—attempt to harness the affective qualities of popular music, relying on feelings of intimacy and sense of personal connection with these musical subjects—caught in private moments on camera, or otherwise represented in these spaces through the outfits they wore and the instruments they played. This is one of the most interesting observations that emerges in the final chapters of the book.

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