


achieved this goal tenfold. In *Sounding Dissent*, Millar shows us how music – and song, in particular – provides a radical means of communication, collaboration, participation, expression and even survival.

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***Shades of Springsteen: Politics, Love, Sports, and Masculinity.* By John Massaro. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021. 255 pp. ISBN 978-1-9788-1616-9  
 doi:10.1017/S0261143023000119**


Some of the worst feedback I have ever had as an academic came from a student who left an anonymous comment having completed my Sociology of Work module. In answer to the boilerplate question 'What did you least like about the course?', they wrote: 'The playing of Bruce Springsteen'. And in response to the prompt 'How could this course be improved?', they simply suggested: 'Stop playing Bruce Springsteen'. I was a little crestfallen. The object of the student's complaint was my use of Springsteen's track 'Youngstown' during a lecture on deindustrialisation. As I'd explained to my class when I teed it up on my PowerPoint presentation that day, the near 4 minute track beautifully describes the arc of industrialisation, through boom and bust to the loss of industry in the 1970s and 1980s. Although obviously about Youngstown Ohio, the track nonetheless stands for a far wider shared story of the process of industrial ruination and economic decline. Indeed, Youngstown itself transitioned from the booming Steeltown USA in the 1950s to becoming a longstanding poster child for the ravages of deindustrialisation and its half-life. Needless to say, I ignored the student's critical feedback.

This anecdote was front and centre in my mind reading John Massaro's *Shades of Springsteen: Politics, Love, Sports, and Masculinity*. The book is a wonderful portmanteau collection of the author's writing, thinking and teaching about The Boss. This is a deeply personal book for Massaro. He relates how he became a Springsteen fan having been gifted the album *Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band Live 1975–1985* while suffering from depression and experiencing a bout of unemployment. Later in his career, Massaro began to teach a course to students on Springsteen and the politics and meaning of his lyrics.

*Shades of Springsteen* is, then, part account of Springsteen's career and personal life, part reflection on the meaning Springsteen has exerted over popular culture, and part autobiography of Massaro, now a retired academic in his late seventies. Massaro is not alone as an academic in using Springsteen to explore North American society and his own personal life. Why is this? Well, Springsteen acts a bridge in several senses. Firstly, he spans a variety of genres of music – folk, soul, country and most obviously rock 'n' roll. He also links the 1960s and 1970s through to the current day. Indeed, his drawing on folk icons Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger traces influences back to the 1930s, if not before. In part then, Springsteen is so important because his longevity has allowed him to think with a critical intelligence about the changing world around him – his masculinity, his class position, his politics. As an artist he thinks and sings about the lives of others caught up in the industrial change of the last half-century or so. His poetic sensibility captures the hopes and dreams, the desire of unrequited loves, the losses and reality of working life of those seeking their version of the American Dream. Springsteen, after all, began his career at the end of the long post-war boom which had seen most working class lives transformed by full employment and rising living standards; his first album, *Greetings From Asbury Park, N.J.* of 1973, was coterminous with the year widely accepted as the end of an era. Springsteen's work reflects the gradual coming to terms with the fact that those 'Glory Days' for many were a collective experience of the past, one that new generations only related to through absence and loss. If there is a romanticism in Springsteen's art, it is a nostalgia for industrial work which allowed its participants some measure of dignity and self-respect, a nostalgia not blind to the ill effects of labour on the bodies of individuals and their communities.

One of the striking things in Massaro's narrative is how he uses Springsteen's work to explore his own early life – especially growing up in that long boom era. His account of High School loves emphasises, for this reviewer, just how distinct and long lasting this period of education is for the American psyche. This type of reflection is both endearing and yet distracting as to the scholarly purpose of the book. Conversely, *Shades of Springsteen* would act as a useful and engaging text for a module or as part of a course on The Boss. The volume is arranged in five sections or chapters – Biography, Politics, Love and Relationships, Masculinity and Sports, and finally a conclusion entitled 'Loose Ends'. Each of these sections is further divided into much shorter essays – 34 in all – exploring themes through individual albums, songs and lyrics. These sections and chapters allow teachers to discuss a range of contemporary topics while placing these in their historical contexts, reflecting on societal change and continuity across Springsteen's life and career. The most interesting for me were those early ones on class and work, reflecting my own teaching and research interests. The obvious tension in the book, apart from the already mentioned autobiographical interventions, is the difficult balance between breadth and depth. This makes me wonder about an audience for it. I would have liked more on the reception on the part of students learning through the work of Springsteen. How relevant to the lives of those born in the 1990s and after is the life of one born in the immediate post-war period? There are many books on Springsteen, including his own autobiographical reflections. There are countless journal articles where the musician's work and impact are explored. At its most successful, *Shades of Springsteen* is one man's reflection on his life through the work of a

long-lived artist. In turn this tells us much about the USA and its process of self-examination through the six decades after the 'Glorious Thirty'.

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***Improvising the Score: Rethinking Modern Film Music through Jazz.* By Gretchen L. Carlson. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 2022. 224 pp. ISBN: 978-1-496-84084-4**

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The title hints at a paradox: scores consist of written notation, whereas improvisation is defined by its absence. This tension, in Carlson's own words, 'between the improvisational ideals of the jazz world and the conventionally highly structured and regulated expectations of the film music world' (p. 8) is central to the book. Ultimately, it remains unresolved, however.

According to the author, the 'book's intervention into jazz (and film) scholarship is threefold. First, it investigates jazz musicians' film work from a sociological perspective' (p. 10). By this, she is referring to accounts of musicians' behind-the-scenes labour and an analysis of the production process, as revealed primarily through interviews with key protagonists and observation of live film-scoring and recording sessions. The second line of enquiry involves an examination of jazz/film intersections as 'opportunities for jazz musicians' creativity in a radically different medium' (p. 10). This, then, focuses on the musicians' 'creative labour' and the tensions between creativity and artistic integrity on the one hand, and the requirements of providing music 'to order' in a subservient position on the other. Finally, the book 'posits larger implications for jazz within the fields of film and media studies, [arguing that] these unique jazz/film intersections challenge audiences to rethink film music's agency and meanings by providing models of integrative film projects built on mutual collaboration between composers and filmmakers, challenging conventional film soundtrack production methods in unique and innovative ways' (p. 11). While the first of these approaches yields rich dividends and the second is partly successful, the third proves more problematic.

The first chapter (after the introduction), 'When Strangers Meet: Structures, Tensions, and Negotiations in Jazz/Film Collaborations' (pp. 26-47) is particularly valuable, outlining the production processes and the roles and responsibilities of the personnel involved as well as the hierarchical relations between them. Although this may not include many new insights, it grounds the ensuing discussions about creative agency and notions of collaboration.

The bulk of the book consists of case studies, of Antonio Sánchez and Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Birdman*, Mark Isham and Alan Rudolph's *Afterglow* (Chapter 2), and the collaborations between Terence Blanchard and Spike Lee (Chapter 3) and Dick Hyman and Woody Allen (Chapter 4), respectively. Indeed, the advertising blurb focuses on Miles Davis's music for Louis Malle's *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud*. In