

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Music, Politics, and Violence.* Edited by Susan Fast and Kip Pegley. 2012. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press. 308 pages.

DANA GORZELANY-MOSTAK  
Westminster Choir College of Rider  
University

This book is a groundbreaking contribution to an emerging body of literature within the humanities that interrogates intersections between music and violence. Building on the recent work of scholars such as Suzanne G. Cusick (2008, 2013), Jonathan R. Pieslak (2009), Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan (2009) and Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry (2007), the essays in Kip Pegley and Susan Fast's collection investigate a diverse body of individual, local and state-sponsored cultural practices (music, poetry, dance, ritual). Each essay documents the processes through which these practices become imbricated with the articulation of national/ethnic identity, reconciliation or memorialization in various live, recorded and mass-mediated contexts. Traversing geographic and disciplinary boundaries, the authors assemble a nuanced picture of artistic expression in communities ravaged by war, genocide, displacement and systematic oppression. And as the editors state from the outset, conflicts emerge not only between the state and the citizen, but also within disenfranchised populations as they grapple with legacies of subjugation and colonization.

Recent and older canonical texts in the areas of cultural memory, 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup>-

century philosophy and identity formation undergird the nine essays in this volume, although the contributors tend to sideline esoteric theoretical jargon in favour of a clear, accessible foray into their subjects. Representing the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, communications and folklore, they deploy methodologies that span the gamut—ethnographic approaches, archival research, musical analysis and critical discourse analysis all come into play. The discussion weaves through genres such as the cantata, testimonial song and folk pop; performance traditions, including those of Palestinian hip-hop artists, Sufi mystics and Fijian dancers; and music strategies, such as those deployed by British radio and US news broadcasting outlets during wartime.

Pegley and Fast open the collection with a masterfully articulated introduction that lays the foundation for this field of inquiry, and provides a clear conceptual framework for the case studies that follow. I would highly recommend this opening essay as a stand-alone piece for any scholar who desires an entree into this subject. The co-editors draw on a wealth of literature that highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the study of music and violence; most relevant to their discussion are the writings of Slavoj Žižek (on objective and subjective violence), Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak (on the constitution of the nation-state) and Sharon Rosenberg (on public memory). Applying these theories to “charity rock” concerts, a 2006 Spanish-language recording of “The Star Spangled Banner,” Jimi Hendrix’s con-

roversial performance of the anthem at Woodstock in 1969, and a post-9/11 memorial concert, Pegley and Fast provide the reader with an understanding of how these contrasting approaches might effectively elucidate the interrelationships between music and violence in certain contexts. Having done this, the co-editors are also quick to point out the specific limitations these theories have for investigations of music as opposed to other arts such as film, photography or poetry.

The first part of this book offers four essays that examine the ways in which music and discourses about music might be implicated in the perpetuation of subjective violence (acts committed by an “identifiable agent”) or objective violence (of which there are two types: *symbolic*, which is embedded in daily language, and *systemic*, the “catastrophic consequences” of well-oiled economic and political systems). Tracing the interwoven narratives of musical life and nationalist sentiments between 1914 and 1918, Nicholas Atfield locates symbolic violence as communicated through the pages of the German music journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. At the dawn of WWI, the journal shed its progressive stance (and the ideals of Schumann) in favour of advancing a nationalist-conservative political agenda that asserted German cultural identity (and superiority) in response to encroaching musical and territorial “outsiders.” As the war progressed, the journal stepped back from this position, and, in various articles, resigned to the reality of the country’s profound loss, later calling on music to honour those who valiantly fought for German ideals. Turning to music performance, Catherine Baker

considers the career of folk-pop singer Neda Ukraden, and the construction of her biography in the wake of the ethno-political conflicts that plagued the Eastern European region after the fall of Yugoslavia. During the 1990s, ambiguous or ethnically complex individuals were perceived as a threat to the Croatian Democratic Union, which required citizens to identify as members of a single ethnic group. Despite her performances of the works of Croatian composers, the artist’s Serb connections did not sit well with a regime committed to the suppression of heterogeneity, and eventually Croatian artists shunned Ukraden and attempted to erase her contributions to Croatian pop by re-recording her songs.

Christina Baade’s essay takes the wartime favorite “Lili Marlene” as its subject and explores the ways in which the eponymous femme negotiated sexuality and sentimentality as the song traversed German and British airwaves during and after the Desert War. Drawing on studies that investigate WWII musical culture, period broadcasting conventions and the ambiguous social positions of women, she thoughtfully analyzes the musical constitution and packaging of “radio girl-friends” Lale Andersen, Anne Shelton and Marlene Dietrich. The result is an entertaining read that sheds light on the functions of female voices during wartime. Turning to the small screen, James Deaville traces the history of television news music from the late 1940s to the Persian Gulf War. Taking cues from cinema and video games, networks (especially CNN) gradually incorporated various “infotainment” features. This format included a more expansive role for music, which lends both structural

coherence and brand recognition to national newscasts. Music, Deaville argues, worked in tandem with graphics, images and diegetic sound to establish linkages between George Bush, patriotism and liberty, and to mobilize support for the war in the early 1990s. This essay nicely complements Deaville's outstanding earlier work on Canadian and American newscasts post-9/11 (2006, 2007).

Whereas the first part of the book focuses on music's ability to actively disunite or maintain historical divisions between ethnic groups, ideologies and armies, the second part addresses music's role in reconciling them. David A. McDonald investigates the performances of Palestinian artists during the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Taking interactions between the performative and political spheres into consideration, he explores how music served as a site for the ongoing negotiations over what it meant to be Palestinian in the aftermath of Operation Defensive Shield. Victor A. Vicente continues the discussion of reconciliation in Islamic contexts as he turns to the upswing of Sufism post-9/11, and its adherents' quest to mend East-West relations through intercultural dialogue. Sufis work to foster harmony and peaceful coexistence through their rituals, music and poetry; however, the actions intended to broker reconciliation created divisions within these communities as politicization and commodification diluted the spiritual aspects of Sufism that were most valued by traditionalists. Music and dance traditions played a similar reconciliatory role in Fiji's nation-building strategy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Kevin C. Miller studies the state-sponsored programs that paired classical Indian dance with

indigenous Fijian dance and music in an attempt to represent Fiji as a "harmonious multi-ethnic nation," as well as the grassroots-oriented, cross-cultural performances of indigenous Fijian crossover artists, who, in some instances, contested the dominant narrative of Fijian nationhood (172).

Moving from reconciliation to remembrance, the third and final part addresses musical memorializations of violent pasts with two especially strong chapters. Jonathan Ritter investigates the Ayacuchan social songs that bear witness to atrocities and human rights violations against the backdrop of the commemorative work undertaken by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At least two dozen of these fact-finding bodies have emerged across the globe in the past 30 years, and I believe Ritter's model, which positions music as an "alternative form of testimony and remembrance," would be a highly effective one for other scholars who wish to explore interrelationships between legal/investigative work and cultural work (204). Amy Lynn Wlodarski takes the Holocaust memorial cantata *Jüdische Chronik*, a post-WWII collaboration between composers from East and West Germany, as her subject. Tracing the cantata's genesis and reception history from 1960 to 1988, she shows how the work served various ideological positions over the course of its history. Her close analysis of the collaborators' correspondence, newspaper articles, program notes and state papers located in the Bundesarchiv and the Stiftung Archiv der Akademie der Künste provides valuable insights into the work's accrual of cultural capital as it traversed

the field of power during the Cold War. While in its earliest iteration it was intended as a memorial, the work was later appropriated by the GDR to further its own political aims, and this agenda limited the cantata's ability to serve as a true site of reconciliation.

J. Martin Daughtry concludes the volume with a provocatively theorized afterword that interrogates the concept of voice as it is understood in relation to violent acts and to the ideologies that bring them into being. Against the backdrop of violent contexts, he claims, voice becomes an index "for an individualist, rational, democratic worldview," and a metaphor for identity, autonomy, soul, personality and agency (251). This "myth," he argues, is rooted in Enlightenment liberalism. In other words, this intellectual orientation positions "voice" as the *antipode* to violence. Daughtry goes on to contest this binary with the claim that language and voice are imbricated with violence. If the public acknowledges voice as a site of empowerment, it must also address the potential damages that it can engender—the voice can incite violence or function as an instrument of violence. To conclude, he calls for "a definition of violence that does not put it in opposition to voice, or to music." Only then can the "life-affirming potential of the voice and music" be evaluated (257–58).

This is an impressive book in many regards—equally suitable for music scholars and students, as well as those with limited musical training. And here is where I have my one criticism: while the book offers five essays that address 21<sup>st</sup>-century music, there are only brief references to the Internet or 2.0 technologies,

and indeed the emergence of a network society has not only played a significant role in music participation, production, and performance more broadly, but also in the articulation of identities, the execution of social movements and the perpetuation of objective violence. An additional offering that explores this terrain would greatly enrich the collection.

The diversity of the subject matter and the editors' thoughtful structuring of the material in accordance with function rather than chronology or geography encourages the reader to think across genres, political lines, social contexts and identity categories. Each author fully embraces the tangled and contested nature of concepts such as nationhood, representation, multiculturalism and patriotism, and makes no effort to reconcile them, but rather meticulously lays out their very complexity for the reader to ponder. This book elicits as many questions as it provides answers, and I believe this is its greatest asset. To cite Daughtry once more, "Our voices are actions that set the stage for further action" (255). Indeed Pegley and Fast are those voices, and this book is the clarion call. 🌻

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TRAVIS D. STIMELING

West Virginia University

Reading the vast majority of scholarly and popular literature on country music, it would be easy to get the impression that the music is firmly rooted in the culture and geography of the US South. In a recent essay in the *Journal of American Folklore*, country music historian Bill C. Malone responded to recent challenges to what has been described as his “southern thesis,” arguing that, while “people made music all over rural North America, . . . southerners are the ones who in the 1920s made the seminal and crucial recordings and radio broadcasts that lent the music its public, and lasting, identity. The presumed southernness of country music arose from factors that were both accidental and purposeful, and from postures that were grounded in both romance and realism” (Malone 2014: 227). As a consequence of this decidedly southern bias in the literature, country music cultures that have developed outside of—and sometimes independently from—the region have been marginalized in media representations and in scholarship on the genre. For instance, although such scholars as Neil V. Rosenberg (1974), Peter Narváez (1978), Robert Klymasz (1972), Gillian Turnbull (2009) and Byron Dueck (2013a, 2013b) have written provocatively and sensitively about country music in Canada, much of the scholarly and popular discourse around Canadian country music contin-