

the culprit. There are details that suggest reality, but that are not revealed in historical records. The last words/confessions just prior to death or the “theatre of punishment” are filled with fictive facts (177).

The ballad, as a “genre” emerging at the end of the Middle Ages, has continued, especially in print as well as orally. Individual narratives persist, new ones are created, and, whether they circulate in print or aurally, their meanings are influenced by the particular social and cultural times in which they are heard and read. Atkinson rightly points to the importance of the past — not only in creating the histories of the ballad, but also within the texts themselves. His analysis is based on careful scrutiny of the available texts and histories: he points us in the direction of a fuller and richer history. While he does not offer a definitive definition or history of the ballad, Atkinson does offer a perceptual framework for looking at persistent literary materials, whether transmitted orally or by print, a way of thinking about a multiplicity of materials we might lump together and call ballads. 🌿

Harbert, Benjamin J. 2018. *American Music Documentary: Five Case Studies of Ciné-Ethnomusicology*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press. 312 pp.

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In the introduction to Paul Hockings’s *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (1975), Margaret Mead laments that “department after department and research project after research project fail to include filming and

insist on continuing the hopelessly inadequate note-taking of an earlier age” (4). And while we have made progress in some regards, I am not all too certain that my professional training was much different than that which Mead critiqued so long ago. It is interesting to note, as Jay Ruby did in *Picturing Cultures* (2000), how little filmmaking is discussed in the writing cultures debates of the 1980s and 1990s. Little has changed in Orin Starn’s reboot, *Writing Culture and the Life of Anthropology* (2015). Ethnomusicology has fared little better, as evidenced in Barz and Cooley’s *Shadows in the Field* (2008) and Stone’s *Theory for Ethnomusicology* (2008). Besides Steve Feld’s pathbreaking “Ethnomusicology and Visual Communication” (1976), only a few key articles set out an approach to ethnomusicological film, perhaps most notably Hugo Zemp’s “Filming Music and Looking at Music Films” (1988), Jeff Todd Titon’s “Representation and Authority in Ethnographic Film/Video Production” (1992), and John Baily’s “The Art of the Fieldwork Movie” (2009). While anthropology has long had a subfield of visual anthropology (as if films are only watched and not also heard and sensed) where ethnographic film theory and methods have developed, ethnomusicology has not followed suit. If there was a possibility for ethnomusicological film, that time has passed. The dissolution of the SEM audiovisual committee in recent years, the creation of the ICTM Study Group on Audiovisual Ethnomusicology — of which Harbert is a leading member — and the founding of the MusCan Film series here in Canada suggest a new phase that corresponds, incidentally or not, with the 2009 emergence of digital cinema.

So, in some ways, *American Music Documentary: Five Case Studies of Ciné-ethnomusicology* comes out of left field, but in another perhaps more important way its publication heralds the opening of a new period, one marked by a name change, replacing ethnomusicological film with ciné-ethnomusicology. This name change is not incidental, but it does not occupy much space in Harbert's discussion. One has to wait until the epilogue before the reader is treated to Harbert's thoughts on this new name. Central to his approach is the suggestion that "*films themselves* do a type of visual and aural theorizing that is distinct yet congruent with (print) ethnomusicology" (245; emphasis in original). While Harbert opens the book with a brief discussion of his own experiences as a filmmaker-ethnomusicologist, he decentres his experiences, allowing them to shine through in comments like "this practice is familiar to most independent filmmakers" (245). Perhaps he makes this choice in order to include ethnomusicological readers who have yet to pick up a camera. Harbert watches and discusses five films as both an ethnomusicologist and a filmmaker, beginning with the very popular Rolling Stones documentary *Gimme Shelter* (1970), before engaging with Jill Godmilow's *Antonia* (1974), Shirley Clarke's *Ornette* (1985), Pennebaker and Hegedus's *Depeche Mode: 101* (1989), and concluding with Jem Cohen and Fugazi's *Instrument* (1999).

Central to Harbert's approach to ciné-ethnomusicology is his question: "Why [has] ethnomusicology never taken on a cinematic way of *theorizing* about music?" (5). That is, why haven't ethnomusicologists used film to study music in its experiential mode? Finding no definite answer but

a few provocative starting points, Harbert suggests that ciné-ethnomusicology might begin outside of ethnomusicology completely by engaging with American independent filmmakers who have produced films about music, musicians, and music communities. Putting proof to concept, he treats five such films using a case study approach. In each chapter-length case, Harbert begins by introducing the filmmaker, situating them and the selected film in the context of film studies before identifying the relation to ethnomusicology. The tone then tends to change, to become more ethnographic, as Harbert meets with the filmmaker and begins a discussion of the film that will be the subject of the chapter. Individual moments, selected by Harbert, become case studies for how a cinematic study of music can make a contribution to ethnomusicological methods; in this way, he slowly forwards a case for ciné-ethnomusicology.

Perhaps most important to this approach and Harbert's manner of writing, it is not at all necessary to have ever picked up a camera to understand the text. Of course, while it is always beneficial to watch the film in question before reading the chapter, it is not necessary for grasping the gist of his discussion. Harbert's approach is clear by the end of the first two chapters. While I found the first chapter a little difficult to get into at first, perhaps because I was looking for a more specific analysis of the filmmaking techniques employed, I soon began to see the value of the approach. Slowly, perspectives are introduced and techniques unveiled. By the end of the second chapter I expect even the most suspicious will likely begin to see, as Harbert does, the value of doing ciné-ethnomusicology.

By way of critique, I was disappointed that Harbert retained an allegiance to American documentary filmmaking, which is primarily categorized as Observational Documentary in film studies circles. I do not feel that ciné-ethnomusicology needs to be tied to the history of ethnographic or documentary film, but it is understandable given the long-standing association between ethnomusicological film and ethnographic film in visual anthropology. While film studies and documentary film studies have long dealt with “reality” and have developed a very sophisticated body of literature, we have not yet done so in ethnomusicology. As we move forward in the development of ciné-ethnomusicology, we will confront these issues as well and, following Harbert’s suggestion for a critical cinema of music, perhaps we will be able to approach feature fiction films like *Black Orpheus* (1959), or one of the American rock and roll films released in 1956 like *Rock, Rock, Rock!; Don’t Knock the Rock*; or *Rock Around the Clock*, within ciné-ethnomusicology. Fiction films are not a foreign imposition to anthropological films (and perhaps therefore ciné-ethnomusicology). Jean Rouch famously explored what he called ethnofiction, a genre influenced by Italian neo-realism, and contributed to the emergence of the French New Wave (Rouch was a friend and contemporary of Jean-Luc Godard). This work was introduced to ethnomusicologists by Steven Feld in his edited and translated collection of Rouch’s *Ciné-ethnography* (2003). But perhaps it is a good choice to lay a foundation for ciné-ethnomusicology by taking a first step outside of ethnographic film without going too

far afield. It is one thing to suggest that ciné-ethnomusicological film does not have to be made by ethnomusicologists, and perhaps something too radical to further suggest that fiction films may also have something to contribute.

In publishing, there is always the risk that by the time the book comes out, the world as it is being described has already changed somewhat. This is true of Harbert’s concerns for the academic/professional development of ciné-ethnomusicology (250). The basis of his concerns regard peer review, promotion, lack of venues at conferences, and lack of film distribution. I would have preferred Harbert to take a position relative to digital cinema, recommending institutional investment in digital equipment and high-quality lenses combined with a non-monetary model using free online distribution and an art house cinema orientation. But these critiques must be mediated by an awareness that there is currently a big difference between what has been happening in Canada versus America, a point Canadian readers, especially graduate students, need to be alerted to. In Canada, Catherine Russell’s *Experimental Ethnography* (1999) has long suggested a meeting ground for experimental film and ethnography, a call she recently expanded in *Archiveology* (2018). Universities across Canada are slowly accepting video-based research projects as dissertations and SSHRC’s orientation toward open access publishing, research-creation, and public-facing knowledge mobilization seems to point to a more radical future for ciné-ethnomusicology in Canada. The founding of the ICTM Study Group on Audiovis-

ual Ethnomusicology in 2016 and the MUSCAN Film Series in 2018 provides national and international peer review for musicological films, two important milestones that occurred while *American Music Documentary* was in press. At my institution for instance, BMus students graduate with training in digital cinema production methods having produced music videos and documentary films. So, while Harbert's concerns are valid, I think these obstacles are less immovable than they were even five years ago.

Perhaps the most exciting conclusion of Harbert's is the suggestion of a "critical cinema of music" populated by filmmaking-scholars who have developed both the technical capacities of film production and subject specialization (246). These filmmaker-ethnomusicologists would be busy making cinematically-informed films on musicological subjects that prioritize musicological inquiry over documentary realism; while an intriguing vision, Harbert does not develop it further, nor outline the parameters for such films. A critical cinema of music suggests an interdisciplinary space in the humanities where film studies, film production, sound studies, sensory ethnography, film-philosophy, and ethnomusicology mutually inform each other's approaches and perspectives. I expect this text will mark the beginning of ciné-ethnomusicology as an international subfield with interdisciplinary aspirations. 🍷

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