

TONY LANGLOIS (ED.), *NON-WESTERN POPULAR MUSIC*, The Library of Essays on Popular Music 5 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). ISBN 978-0-7546-2984-9, xxvii+600pp, £195.

In this collection of previously published essays on non-Western popular music, Tony Langlois has assembled an extremely thoughtful and useful volume. This is not surprising given the fact that he has produced a number of significant studies of popular music, Western and non-Western alike, throughout his career. In his research, he has drawn upon a variety of disciplinary and methodological frameworks; this has placed him in a strong position to consider and present this broader examination from multiple, ultimately complementary, perspectives. The breadth and depth of his knowledge is largely what makes *Non-Western Popular Music* such a success.

As Langlois makes clear in his introduction, this is not a text about ‘world music’, but rather about the ‘local practices that constitute popular music in non-Western locations and contexts’ (xi). This distinction may not seem immediately transparent to popular music scholars working outside of ethnomusicology, but of course this is one reason why it is so important to make it. ‘World music’ is a powerful marketing category used in the production and dissemination of ‘exotic’ sounds and imaginaries to Western audiences and as such is often conflated with the idea of non-Western music more broadly; moreover, it is a phenomenon that has been a central subject of enquiry and critique on the part of ethnomusicologists.¹ The essays gathered in this collection focus instead on the multiple and varied manifestations of popular music industries and their attending publics outside the spheres of Western mass media. While these local popular musics by no means exist in isolation from Western pop, their circulation, aesthetics and practices provide evidence for clearly distinct processes at work. As a result this volume makes a convincing argument in support of the role that fieldwork, or research from the ground up, can play in the study of popular music.

The introduction also provides a succinct and critical consideration of the key terms at stake. Langlois’s discussion of ‘popular music’ as a category highlights the fact that, historically, the term has described modes of production and distribution rather than specific musical qualities. This basic feature doesn’t require much exegesis. However, he draws attention to the special capacity that popular music bears in relationship to cultural signification, suggesting that we understand popular music as a ‘*representation of an ideal performance*’ (xv; italics original), divorced from live

¹ See, for example, Philip V. Bohlman, *World Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Steven Feld, ‘Pygmy POP: A Genealogy of Schizophonic Mimesis’, *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 28 (1996), 1–35; and Timothy D. Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (London: Routledge, 1997).

contexts and therefore highly unstable in terms of its meaning. Popular music, he argues, is something that responds quickly to, and seems to generate, social and technological change. Arguing that 'every personal collection of music recordings is in effect an archive' (xvi), he makes evident the usefulness and, indeed, necessity of examining popular music in local and even individual terms. Langlois's discussion of the idea of 'non-Western' musical worlds is equally nuanced. It would be easy to attack the idea of the non-West as an outdated and biased one. Indeed, he makes explicit the complexities of the term, particularly in two contexts that characterize our age: increased migration and access to Western media. Yet the term still has meaning as a powerful cultural category in both scholarly and everyday discourse despite the fact that its defining characteristics are malleable, and to ignore this would be to ignore the power dynamics that create such categories in the first place. Langlois, summarizing the purpose of this volume, echoes Christopher Small,² insisting that 'all musical consumption is local, and listening practices and ways of hearing music can vary widely' (xviii). The essays gathered in the chapters that follow demonstrate the truth of this statement.

Langlois draws upon work from scholars in anthropology, area studies, cultural studies, sociology and musicology, but the bulk of contributors are most strongly affiliated with ethnomusicology. While ethnomusicology has historically been preoccupied with the 'most typical' musical practices of various cultures (xvii), this collection provides evidence that in fact ethnomusicologists have been working on popular forms for quite some time (the oldest article, by John Baily, was first published in 1981). It makes a certain amount of sense that ethnomusicologists, often exposed to popular music 'by accident' while conducting fieldwork, are so strongly represented here. Although the original articles come from a variety of academic journals, most originate from two: *Popular Music* and *Ethnomusicology*. Some of the articles are condensed versions of theories and case studies detailed in longer monographs (Martin Stokes, Jocelyne Guilbeault, Peter Manuel and Gage Averill), but Langlois also takes care to include work that is less well known. In terms of geographic coverage, Eastern Asia, Africa and Central/South Asia receive the most attention. Popular musics in the Middle East, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe are also addressed, while those of South America, which is covered in other volumes in the series, are discussed in one article. By no means does Langlois claim to provide comprehensive coverage of the globe, though it must be said that the diversity of genres and localities covered here is

² Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

impressive. Instead, he uses this collection to emphasize the diversity of disciplinary approaches used by scholars, and to address key themes and issues at stake in the wider discussion.

The book is organized into four parts, which address, in turn, power and identity, global perspectives, music industries and historical approaches. There is significant resonance across these larger thematic groupings, and throughout the text other preoccupations, such as technology, listeners, nations, institutions and gender, also surface. The first section, 'Pop, Power, and Identity', presents a series of articles that examine the ways in which popular music has subverted or challenged nationalist and/or religious ideologies (Stokes, Lily Kong, Ted Swedenburg), how it has asserted or sustained marginalized identities (Donna Buchanan, Stephen Blum and Amir Hassanpour, Galit Saada-Ophir) and how popular music responds to radical transformations in the nation state (Stephen Mamula, Buchanan, Christopher Ballantine). While these ideas are not new to popular music studies or to ethnomusicology, the articles in this section present detailed examples of musical interventions that often challenge hegemonic power structures. For example, Martin Stokes's discussion of Turkish *arabesk*, a sentimental popular genre that borrows heavily from Egyptian popular sounds, considers the reasons for the genre's success despite its exclusion from official networks. Ted Swedenburg explores the very different meanings produced by the music of Dana International in Egypt and Israel respectively. Christopher Ballantine examines the use of popular music to voice the complicated response of white South Africans to the post-apartheid era. The impact of the state silencing of popular music is examined in Stephen Mamula's illuminating article on Cambodian popular music before and after the Khmer Rouge.

The second part, entitled 'Global Perspectives', reveals the multiple perspectives by which popular-music scholars understand processes of globalization, indicating first and foremost the complexities and fissures present in the term itself. Thomas Turino's article tackles this idea head on. Consolidating theoretical constructs explored in his 2000 monograph,³ he makes a strong argument for considering global flows not from the top down, but on the level of 'individual and group subjectivities', or *personhoods* (186). Jocelyne Guilbault, the only author to address a genre that might properly be called 'world music,' chooses to situate her study of zouk at the site of production in an examination that highlights cultural transaction and creative negotiation. Wai-Chung Ho considers Hong Kong's local music industries in the era of globalization, a

³ Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000).

term she doesn't abandon but instead nuances. Brian Larkin likewise looks at the impact of overlapping transnational networks on local popular music practice in urban Nigeria. Finally, Geoffrey Baker examines the 'multivocality' (246) of a global form when he explores the relocation and revaluation of hip hop when it gained official status as part of Cuba's national culture. Despite some differences in their theoretical positions and borrowings, the authors of these chapters emphasize the necessity of understanding global processes from local perspectives.

Several complementary yet distinct themes emerge in the third part, 'Music Industries'. Technology is addressed to some extent in many of the articles, most directly in Peter Manuel's discussion of the impact of cassettes on popular music production in North India, and Bart Barendregt and Wim van Zanten's consideration of the impact of VCD (an inexpensive video CD format) and internet technology in Indonesia. John Baily and Judith Herd suggest new frameworks for defining and/or analysing the category 'popular music', in Afghanistan and Japan, respectively. Both authors convincingly articulate the idea that we may need more flexible theoretical frameworks in order to deal with the various manifestations of popular-music industries throughout the world. Another strong thread is the concept of listening publics and the networks by which they access and respond to popular music, be they fanclubs run by Japanese production companies (Christine Yano) or local radio in Mali (Dorothea E. Schulz). Almost all of the contributors give clear evidence that the relationship between music industries and their consumers (be they local performers or listeners) is far from unidirectional or passive.

The essays included in the fourth and final section, 'Historical Approaches', deal with a wide range of topics in a diversity of regions, and thematic and/or theoretical similarities are not so marked here as they are earlier in the volume. Some of the authors look at single genres or short time periods. Suzel Ana Reily examines the bossa nova era through an account of Tom Jobim's role in its formation; Yngvar B. Steinholt takes on the development of rock criticism in post-1980s' Russia; Szu-Wei Chen considers Shanghai popular songs in the 1930s and 40s; and Lara Allen discusses popular music's role in the construction of an urban black South African identity in the 1950s. Gage Averill, on the other hand, covers much of the twentieth century in his discussion of the ideologies and practices that informed Haitian jazz bands, providing an overview of the impact of race and class on popular genres. The section as a whole makes an argument for the value of historical research in popular music and acts as a reminder that ethnomusicologists stand in a strong position to conduct this research.

This book is the fifth volume of Ashgate's Library of Essays on Popular Music, a series edited by Allan F. Moore. The other volumes are devoted to jazz, rock, hip hop, popular music and multimedia, pop music, roots music and electronica. One might

understand the series as an attempt to materialize a canon of scholarly literature on popular music, drawing our attention to a kind of coming-of-age of popular music studies that is clearly evident in the growth of research and degree programmes on the subject in the Anglo-American academy. I can't help but detect an air of haste in certain aspects of the conceptualization and production of these volumes as a set. The series editor, for example, refers to this collection as the volume on 'world music', a label that Langlois, of course, goes out of his way to avoid. The articles themselves are simply reprints of scans from their original journals, and the changing fonts and spacing throughout makes the (expensive) volume feel a bit like a photocopied course reader. Obviously these small criticisms have nothing to do with the content and value of *Non-Western Popular Music*, but instead, I believe, say much more about the urgency with which popular music studies is advancing.

On the whole, this volume is likely to be an extremely useful resource, not only because it presents a series of significant and detailed articles on a subject that merits the attention of scholars teaching or researching popular music but also because of the care with which it was constructed. Many of the chapters speak to one another (for example, Swedenburg and Saada-Ophir, Manuel and Marcus, Yano and Schulz) and therefore lend themselves well to classroom discussion. Each section also takes care to combine broader theoretical considerations and small-scale and detailed case studies. The diversity of scholars, approaches and topics covered in this volume is impressive and stands as a testament both to Langlois's deep engagement with the subject and to the growing body of research upon which he is able to draw.

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