

Áine Mangaoang, John O'Flynn and Lonán Ó Briain (eds.), *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music* (2021).

ÁINE MANGAOANG, JOHN O'FLYNN AND LONÁN Ó BRIAIN (EDS.), *MADE IN IRELAND: STUDIES IN POPULAR MUSIC*, (New York: Routledge, 2021). ISBN 9781138336032, 269 pp, £27.99 (paperback).

The Routledge Global Popular Music Series—including *Made in Poland*, *Made in Korea*, *Made in Brazil*, and others—represents a rock-solid addition to the literature on popular musics of the world. As ethnomusicological works on popular music have shifted from single footnotes in global music textbooks to articles to more comprehensive texts—such as Peter Manuel's *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World* or Andrew Shahriari's *Popular World Music*¹—the field has finally embraced the fact that it should not ignore some of the world's most vital and urgent music. The tendency for some outsiders to characterize Irish popular music as limited to a small handful of performers and 'Have you seen *The Commitments*?' stops here and now. Popular music is well represented in Irish academia, with programmes and scholars at multiple universities in both Ireland and abroad. *Made in Ireland*, rejecting essentialist binaries such as folk vs. popular, covers broad territories and crosses genres in a way that gleefully shreds images of Ireland as the home of *only* traditional music to the exclusion of all else. That destruction is both welcome and a long time in coming.

Made in Ireland is divided into three sections: Music Industries and Historiographies, Roots and Routes, and Scenes and Networks. Each section includes strong, effective contextual information that fills in some historical gaps and broadens the contexts for popular music. The introduction to each section—each one written by one of the three editors—reveals an elegant division of labour and a helpful first step. The first section features case studies on rock memoirs, a century of record labels, first-wave punk, popular music on the radio, and women's music (focusing on Sinéad O'Connor and the lesbian duo Zrazy). It is a fascinating foray into the histories of individual performers, but also on Ireland's links with the long reach of its diaspora, ways in which people and institutions worked to define and redefine what it meant to be Irish and to represent Irish music through performance, and how Irish popular music and musicians both kept up with and instigated some of the groundbreaking changes of the 1990s that define the popular music scene today.

Roots and Routes, the second section of the book, includes the blues of Otilie Patterson, post-colonial identity in Irish-language songs, songwriters Tom a'tSeoighe

1 Peter Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Andrew Shahriari, *Popular World Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017).

and Ciarán Ó Fátharta, post-revival and rebel songs, and the connection of contemporary media with the 'Other Voices' organization. In engaging the reader with issues of identity and performance practices, this section chips away at such misconceptions as, for example, the only way to explore modern Irish identity is to use English rather than Gaeilge; that *sean-nós* singing is best relegated to the dustbin of the nineteenth century; that Irish popular music is relentlessly male; that traditional and popular musics are not profoundly interwoven; and that music is always benign and cannot function as a weapon. This second section creates important historical and intellectual building blocks on which contemporary performers and scholars can stand with a new depth of clarity. Furthermore, the repeated engagement with authenticity (both implicit and explicit) in this section gets at one of the centres of both thought and debate in understanding Irish popular musics.

The third major section of *Made in Ireland—Scenes and Networks*—outlines some current regional issues such as the Cork music scene, the DIY scene, local hip hop, fanzine culture, and music in Dublin in the digital age. The urgency of this section arises from its discussion of what is happening *right now*, in the 2020s, in multiple layers of community networks. One of the key features of this section is its foregrounding of the Internet as a rich tool of both connection and dissemination as the world moves well beyond the era of technology associated with compact discs. A further challenge for us all, as Irish music moves at the same rate of change as we do, is to recognize the odd confluence of place-bound sounds and the unforgiving no-place of the Internet. The collective insistence on in-person performance, fanzines that we can hold in our hands, and the changing nature of venues serve collectively as uncomfortable place-markers and harbingers of what might happen during COVID, which surged just as the book went to press.

Essential reading includes the editors' introductory chapter, 'Popular Music in Ireland: Mapping the Field'. It brings the outsider up to date on Ireland's contemporary sociopolitical scene by setting up a post-World War II context in a remarkably effective and concise few pages. It also engages the reader with a point-by-point *précis* of Irish popular music from the 1950s through to 2020 and clarifies the institutional and media venues for the study and promulgation of popular music in Ireland. One final piece by prolific author and playwright Gerry Smyth, appropriately in a coda section of its own, is titled 'Making Spaces, Saving Places: Modern Irish Popular Music and the Green Turn'. Smyth's work is cited in about a third of the chapters, so it is fitting to give him pride of place near the close of the book. His informed, interdisciplinary take on Irish popular music in 2020 offers glimpses of ecocriticism, globalization, literature, politics, and much more. Áine Mangaoang's afterword, with its focus on Derry-born pop musician Neil Hannon, offers a lengthy

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interview with him that reveals layer after layer of identities. In that respect, it serves as a microcosm of Irish popular music (and of the book itself).

Part of the overall vibrancy of this book is that so many musicians and scholars (and musician-scholars) know each other, have played music together, and move seamlessly into and out of academic, concert, and pub settings. The idea of 'two degrees of separation' that drives Irish musical and social relations is alive and well in this volume to the point that the mention of a particular event—such as the *Crosbhealach an Cheoil*: The Crossroads Conference in 1996—or arrival of a landmark recording or emergence of a promising young performer or band elicits nods of recognition from the reader and the welcome ability to place those events, recordings, and performers into greater local context. And yet, for those with no prior understanding of either Ireland or Irish popular music, all of the background material is fully in place, sources are clear, and entry roads are well established to facilitate the absorption of a wealth of information.

Whereas a number of books on Irish traditional music tend to appear on the lists of academic presses, publications featuring Irish popular music usually fall under the aegis of commercial or local Irish presses and are often out of view of many ethnomusicologists (Irish or not). It is an important feature of this series that popular musics receive the academic attention that they deserve, and that these chapters in *Made in Ireland* highlight the work of connected, interesting scholars in Ireland who know their territory. It lands on my shelf between the academic and the journalistic accounts of Irish music, serving well as a smart liminal crossover text that easily holds its own.

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