

Editorial

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This Open Issue showcases the diversity of active scholarship across the International Association for the Study of Popular Music. We have seven contributions from scholars along multiple career stages, covering diverse topics from streaming to composing. They encompass a variety of methodological traditions, notably musicological and ethnographic ways into thinking about the production and consumption of popular music. This richness and variety of scholarship extends across diverse institutions, locations and points of departure, resulting in a dynamic, global academic ecosystem of popular music enquiry. We are a journal with an international reach and membership, and this dynamic richness is what makes reading these pieces so rewarding.

Our first article, from De Almeida and Soares, reignites the thorny issue of “liveness” and how this was complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Live-streamed concerts, better known as “Lives” in Brazil, became a phenomenon in 2020, resulting in multiple “regimes of presence” that afforded simultaneous connection between geographically disparate individuals, structuring new sociabilities in interesting ways. While the clamour for live-streams has perhaps dissipated with the return of in-person shows, there is now a demonstrative co-existence of these channels, allowing new forms of spectatorship to take hold. Specifically, they confront the increasing platformisation of culture, archiving, and how “being live” can be fabulated (recreated through fiction), via means such as holograms, and retransmission of archived performances.

Later in the volume, Muchitsch keeps our minds focused on mediation in the digital world, interrogating the notion that listening habits in the era of Spotify and Apple Music have become “genrefluid”. Through a study of a popular curated-playlist on Spotify, known as *Lorem*, Muchitsch offers a nuanced rebuttal to this claim. Rather, the very ambivalent and loose mappings of genre and identity in the streaming era offer a sense of fluidity that is never quite reached.

As Spotify has started to curate our tastes, YouTube has become a space for pop pedagogy and collaboration. In the first of two articles that address the platform, Kayla Rush explores the informal role of the platform in popular music pedagogy, suggesting that ‘watching and copying’ is an emergent method of learning music. She argues that it enables learners to extract riffs and melodies from the whole musical text, to abstract them from their contexts. Using ethnographic

research conducted in Ireland in 2021 with Rock Jam, a private, fees-based popular music organisation, Rush details the vectors of digital nativism and popular music learning.

As a practitioner and active employer of YouTube for its capabilities to foster musical communities, Hammad Rashid shows us how collaboration can happen via live streaming; perhaps hearkening back to our earlier concerns with the multifaceted nature of “liveness” in our digital world. Set against the backdrop of a COVID-impacted United Kingdom – as opposed to Brazil – this paper argues that livestreaming has the potential to create micro-communities of creative musical practice. With lockdowns delimiting live musical performance, Rashid reflects on his own practice as research and the bonds developed with this audience.

Concerns of compositional approach are at the forefront of James Bell’s chapter, which – rather than look to co-construction with others online – turns to the interaction between the electronic music composer and their compositional tools. This exercise employs autoethnographic journaling as a process mapper, and unpacks some fascinating affordances of particular technologies, with the human simply one actor amongst many.

Despite all these engagements with the online and the technological, the importance of place remains pertinent and is attended to in the remaining two chapters of the collection. Lena Dražić takes us to a street in Vienna that is the home of ‘turbo folk’, a popular music genre coming out of 1990s’ Serbia. Played in clubs in Vienna’s sixteenth and seventeenth districts, to Viennese residents with roots in Serbia, Dražić’s ethnographic research spotlights what she argues is a ritual process that is about memory and collective identities. A pilot phase of a larger project encompassing Belgrade and Vienna, here, she focuses on a small focal point to test her methodologies and questions. We hear the voices of turbo-folk listeners themselves and Dražić foregrounds the interplay between singing, sound and collective trauma.

Finally, Monika E. Schoop and Renato Aguila undertake a highly personal study of collective remembrance following the closure of a beloved Manila musical venue, Route 196. Drawing from a wide range of cultural studies on memory as both a personal and a cultural practice, they investigate how audiences, promoters, and musicians responded together to memorialize Route 196. As Schoop and Aguila reveal, the construction of narratives is key to this process. Accordingly, they guide readers through two main tropes that facilitate collective memory: 1) Route 196 as home (a safe space, a returning point for emerging artists, a local scene) and 2) Route 196 as experience (sensory, lived, reenactable). This approach allows them to ethnographically analyze how individuals are variously accommodated or ignored within the construction of the collective as their personal narratives are rejected, challenged or welcomed. By examining the ways that different people were touched by Route 196 and responded to its closure, including the authors themselves, Schoop and Aguila contribute to a broader scholarly reflection globally underway on the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as resilient adaptations to it as we move forward.

We are also delighted to include five book reviews that are the result of the hard work of our new book reviews editor, Susan O’Shea, two members of her five strong team, Fred Hosken and Tal Vaizman, as well as the reviewers themselves.

They cover a wide range of subjects, from pop stardom and film to heavy metal in post-colonial Africa. First, we have Jan Butler reviewing *Pop Stars on Film: Popular Culture in a Global Market*, edited by Kirsty Fairclough and Jason Wood. This is followed by Katie Chatburn on *Sounding Conflict: From Resistance to Reconciliation* by Fiona Magowan, Pedro Rebelo, Stefanie Lehner, Julie M. Norman, Ariana Phillips-Hutton. Rosemary Lucy Hill reviews *Hearing Sexism: Gender in the Sound of Popular Music. A Feminist Approach* by LJ Müller with Manu Reyes. Finally, Catherine Hoad reviews Edward Banchs' *Scream for me, Africa! Heavy Metal Identities in Post-Colonial Africa*.

To end on a note of urgency, some of our UK members who have contributed to this issue are experiencing proposed cuts in music education that directly threaten their ability to continue such scholarship. This is the latest in a series of cuts to UK Arts and Humanities courses and, along with IASPM UK and Eire, we wish to express our disappointment with the short-termism of such proposals. The dynamic diversity of our scholarship, that extends our work globally and enriches it with multiple perspectives we could not obtain as single individuals, is jeopardised by these cuts. Alongside our solidarity with those affected most immediately, we want to underscore how it impacts us all.