



beneficial in the first chapter to recapitulate the social analysis of the audience attending the Beatles' sets at the Cavern Club, and in the last chapter when the author demonstrates the rise of female scholars in Beatles Studies. A clear presentation of the data would have clarified the argument and been a great help in understanding the evolution of the social dynamics that are analysed.

As previously stated, the main subject of this book is not musical analysis, and its focus on sociological and historical aspects of women's narratives is well demonstrated. Indeed, Popular Music Studies are vitally multidisciplinary: we cannot speak about the music of the Beatles out of its context and analysing women's reception of this phenomenon is a great input to Beatles studies. However, the opposite can also be true: dedicating a chapter to how the Beatles' music influenced female musicians or how female bands influenced the Beatles without discussing music-making can be problematic. By occulting musical analysis in the fourth chapter, the Beatles' influence on female musicians between the 1960s and the 2000s cannot be demonstrated firmly, likewise the influence of female performers on the Beatles. It would have been very interesting to show how female performers such as the Marvelettes or the Ronettes majorly influenced the Beatles, aesthetically and musically speaking. This point could have been developed in a book about women's creativity and empowerment. Maybe a solution would have been to concentrate the chapter on a few musicians or bands – for example, the subversive approach to the Beatles' music by Siouxsie Sioux or the *beatlesque* echoes in Sam Phillips' repertoire – and to analyse their work in detail. However, this section has the great quality of making us discover or rediscover a lot of all-female bands or female musicians.

In conclusion, *A Women's History of the Beatles* is a sociological and historical approach of how the band contributed to women's emancipation during the last 60 years and how personal stories can help rebuild a new gendered history, put in perspective with second and third-wave feminism. The profuse testimonies give a precious view on the past decades and constitute a remarkable collection of work, which might open new paths to future research, either in Cultural History or in Feminist Studies.

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***Sonic Mobilities. Producing Worlds in Southern China.* By Adam Kielman. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2022. 216 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-81780-4 doi:10.1017/S026114302200071X**

In *Sonic Mobilities. Producing Worlds in Southern China*, Adam Kielman offers a captivating and much-needed ethnography of two Guangzhou-based bands, Mabang 马帮 and Wanju Chuanzhang 玩具船长 (also known as Toy Captain). While studies of Chinese popular music have been traditionally centred on Beijing's rock and roll sub-culture and tended to put 'an emphasis on hegemony/resistance models and approaches from cultural studies in understanding music's relationship to state power' (p. 164), Kielman provides in contrast a very detailed and comprehensive

account of these two Southern China bands who sing in ‘dialects no one understands’ (p. 68).

Himself a ‘jazz saxophonist by training’ (p. 19), Kielman collaborated for years with a wide variety of musicians in Guangzhou, before completing a PhD in ethnomusicology ‘during which time [he] started playing regularly with the two bands at the center of this book’ (p. 20). His unique position allowed him to participate in the recording of music albums, share the stage with the bands and collect their life stories. Using short ethnographic vignettes, Kielman shows how the musical creative process – following in the footsteps of Howard Becker (1983) – is in fact a collaboration and a negotiation between a plurality of actors: musicians, managers, sound designers, etc. The genre of each band is also a negotiation and an assemblage of various elements: Mabang rebranded themselves as a ‘Southern Chinese fusion world music’ (p. 31) band under the influence of their label, while Wanju Chuanzhang consider themselves as an ‘ocean folk’ band.

Kielman’s most innovative contribution involves the various ‘dialects’ – or ‘local languages’, a better translation of the Chinese *fangyan* 方言 – used by the two bands in their songs. Indeed, Mabang sings in Guiliuhua, a local variety of Pinghua spoken in the singer’s hometown of Liuzhou in Guangxi province, while Wanju Chuanzhang sings in a southern Min dialect spoken on the band’s hometown of Nan’ao island in Guangzhou province, similar to Hokkien or Taiwanese (Taiyu). These different local languages connect southern Chinese bands to a larger network of Sinophone music consumers in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the wider diaspora. Yet it is also at odds with the Chinese state language policy, which ‘has not only promoted Mandarin use in the service of national integration historically but also continues in the present to restrict the use of dialects in a way that directly affects musical production’ (p. 74). Kielman’s work here interestingly echoes Gina Ann Tam’s excellent scholarship on dialect and nationalism in China (2020). The presence of Kielman during Wanju Chuanzhang’s rehearsal allows him to show how the band’s songs are phonetically transcribed for the backing vocalists, and how ‘feelings’ – as opposed to ‘understanding’ – are nonetheless transmitted to the audience during concerts (p. 78). The author’s exclusive focus on these two southern bands, however, prevents him from looking at other successful artists who recently rose to fame singing in their own languages, such as Wutiaoren 五条人 (in Haifenghua) or Jiulian Zhenren 九连真人 (in Hakka), two indie-folk bands from Guangdong with similar backgrounds. While the discussion, at the end of the book, of the Guangzhou label Xingwaixing helps us understand the state of folk and popular music in southern China, the lack of analysis of the larger media environment in Guangdong deprives us of the complexity of the relationship between artists and local media, and between local media and the state’s cultural and linguistic policies – which can take various forms, like the recent participation of Wanju Chuanzhang in the talent TV show (in Cantonese) ‘Storm of the bands’ (*Yuedui fengbao* 乐队风暴) broadcast by China Guangdong TV Variety Channel in 2021.

Following Helen Rees’ seminal edited volume (2009) on individual Chinese musicians’ lives, Kielman provides a very useful and precise account of each musician ‘musical life’. It allows the author to discover the various musical influences of this generation of Chinese musicians, born between the end of the 1970s and the mid-1980s, and socialised during the reform and opening era initiated by Deng Xiaoping. Contrary to the vast majority of scholarship centred on Beijing which

puts too much emphasis on *dakou* 打口 records (literally ‘cut-out’ CDs and tapes, unsold albums sent by Western countries to China in order to be recycled but sold on the black market instead; see De Kloet 2010), Kielman shows that virtually all the musicians he interviewed were heavily influenced by the famous Hong Kong rock band Beyond, and by pirate tapes of popular musicians from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The impact of Beyond’s influence would require a chapter (or a book) by itself, and not only for southern China and the Cantonese-speaking world, as mentioned by the author. As skilfully pointed out by Kielman, ‘the centrality of a popular band from Hong Kong in all of these individuals’ musical developments draws attention to South China as a transborder region where connections to Hong Kong and Taiwan are as important, if not more important, than connection to Beijing’ (p. 136). While the circulation of music between the various centres of the Sinophone world, as well as mutual influences, are rightfully celebrated in this book, there is however no discussion of the two bands’ reception in these different places – which is unfortunate since Mabang and Wanju Chuanzhang are fairly well known in Taiwan, Mabang having released an album through the Taiwanese label Wind Music in 2018, including new musical arrangement and songs.

Kielman’s book provides an innovative and fascinating account of popular music in China, but it becomes somewhat less convincing when the author moves away from his ethnographic fieldwork and mobilises the concept of *tianxia* 天下 (usually translated as ‘all under heaven’), here understood as ‘musical cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics’ (p. 162). The short section related to China’s ‘sonic infrastructures’ (p. 140), whether it is Maoist wired radio – analysed in more detail in Andrew Jones’s recent work (2020) – or *dakou* records, might also appear detached from the brilliant ethnographic work undertaken by the author. *Sonic Mobilities* is nonetheless a ground-breaking work in the field of Chinese and Sinophone popular music studies, stressing the importance of multi-sited ethnography and the exploration of cultural productions in minor Sinitic languages. Breaking away from a Beijing-centric approach and the hegemony/resistance framework, *Sonic Mobilities* pays attention to the actual production of songs and music worlds by bands too often neglected by the scientific literature.

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