



This suggestion for development aside, *Fight the Power* is a well-written, accessible and insightful collection intended for anyone interested in hip-hop's usefulness in analysing law and policy in pursuit of a more just society.

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***Popular Music Autobiography: The Revolution in Life-Writing by 1960s Musicians and Their Descendants.* By Oliver Lovesey. New York: Bloomsbury, 2022. 366 pp. ISBN: 978-1501355837
 doi:10.1017/S0261143022000770**

In *Popular Music Autobiography: The Revolution in Life-Writing by 1960s Musicians and Their Descendants*, Oliver Lovesey offers a shrewd reading of pop music's 1960s creative renaissance and its implications across the ensuing decades. In particular, he maps an intriguing history of musicians' adoption of life-writing as an evolving means of expression. As a form of 'audio biography' in Lovesey's coinage, this shift towards transforming private experience into public exhibition has produced a considerable body of work during the postwar era.

In his analysis of the genre, Lovesey examines pop music's life-writer in a wide variety of forms, including traditional autobiographies and memoirs, auto-fiction, songwriting and self-fashioned museum exhibitions, among others. Lovesey posits a convincing theory that pop music's autobiographers often exhibit senses of anxiety regarding their perceived lack of authenticity. In addition, he argues that these same artists frequently wrestle with their own celebrity within the context of a warped postmodern culture.

In his most thought-provoking chapter, Lovesey identifies Beatles manager Brian Epstein's autobiography *A Cellarful of Noise* (1964) as 'an example of a distinctly late-Victorian genre of life writing which conceals or masks as much as it reveals its subject' (p. 74). In Lovesey's interpretation, *A Cellarful of Noise* succeeds in exposing 'internalized homophobia at a time when acts of "gross indecency" between men in "public or private" were criminalized under the provisions of 1885's Labouchere Amendment' (p. 74). Although Epstein managed the Beatles during the transitional period between 1957's Wolfenden Report, which recommended decriminalisation,

and 1967's Sexual Offences Act, which legalised the 1957 recommendation, this same era was marked by an increased sense of permissiveness.

As Lovesey points out, this era provided little in the way of solace for Epstein, who came of age during the 'queer panic', when extant laws actually 'broadened the scope for prosecution of male same-sex activity that was in legal terms the crime that dared not speak its name' (p. 75). Epstein's proclivity for indulging in the dangerous world of 'rough trade' placed him at even greater risk of exposure for his sexual orientation. In Lovesey's reading of the manager's autobiography, *A Cellarful of Noise* takes on intriguing layers of revelation, especially involving those instances in which Epstein seems to dare the reader to approach his narrative with even greater scrutiny: 'I don't mind people delving deep into me, searching for reasons and secrets because there is nothing too bad there' (p. 80), Epstein writes. 'Even if there were something to be ashamed of, if it were true and it were known and it were published, I could not complain. I am extremely fond of the truth, and I wish I could find it as often as I find the reverse in my day-by-day contacts with people' (p. 80).

As Lovesey demonstrates, such instances underscore the courage and caprice that typified Epstein's approach to an always potentially dangerous world. 'In his self-fashioning', Lovesey argues, 'Epstein is both the active agent of the Beatles' success as well as an almost passive recipient of good fortune, and he is acutely aware of the media's power in maintaining interest in his properties while potentially destroying him' (p. 81). In a similar vein, Lovesey considers the 'performative' nature inherent in rock music posturing. In a valuable chapter devoted to Patti Smith, Lovesey highlights the manner in which Smith's 1975 masterwork *Horses* functions as homage to 1960s-era rock, while simultaneously establishing her as punk rock's reigning performance poet. In so doing, she has concocted a lasting influence that had been carefully choreographed on *Horses*. As Lovesey notes, even the album cover participates in this exercise in identity-formation. 'For a physically striking woman', he writes, 'Smith has been adept at modeling androgyny, as in Robert Mapplethorpe's famous cover image for *Horses*, its louche elegance a striking contrast to the recording's self-consciously amateurish rawness that became a template for much alternative rock' (p. 138).

As with other chapters on Bob Dylan and Moby, among others, Lovesey astutely demonstrates the manner in which rock narrative is, across its history, inherently performative. With *Popular Music Autobiography*, the author has made vital inroads that not only assist us in understanding rock's heroes and denizens, but also the way in which their extra-textual efforts impinge upon their musical accomplishments. Lovesey's book offers powerful testimony for the ways in which cultural theory has the power to enhance our appreciation for pop music's soundtracks of our lives.

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