

Philip Hayward (ed.), *Sound Alliances: Indigenous Peoples, Cultural Politics and Popular Music in the Pacific*

London: Cassell, 1998.

ISBN 0 304 70050 9, x+220pp., pb.

Philip Hayward, the editor of this anthology, explains in his introduction that, apart from a few exceptions, popular music has been primarily a study of the popular music cultures of northern America and the United Kingdom. Using the phrase 'North Atlantic axis' to define this region, Hayward argues that it is this cultural landscape that is understood as constituting the genre's essential culture and focus. Non-Western music practices have been the focus of study for ethnomusicologists, with an emphasis on their various traditional or classical musical forms. Research into popular music resulting from cultural contact has only recently been undertaken. Although the 1980s marketing of so-called world music or world beat has opened up the popular music genre considerably, Hayward points out that the North Atlantic maintains a hegemonic role through a position of cultural mediation, as both curator and facilitator of these newer cultural products. Yet, as Hayward argues, even within the discourse of world music, the music created in the Australia-Western/Central Pacific region has been marginalised due to the region's historical semi-isolation, geographical fragmentation and historical and cultural complexities. *Sound Alliances*, a selection of articles that were originally published in the Australian-based journal *Perfect Beat*, is a means of bringing the music of this region into the more general discussion of popular music and its production.

The book is divided into three broad sections although, as Hayward suggests, the themes and issues discussed by the various authors often are interrelated and speak across such divisions (and specific cross-references are pointed out to the reader in the body of relevant articles). The articles are presented without an all-encompassing hypothesis—a strategy employed by Hayward because of the historical and cultural complexities of interaction between the West and the Pacific—yet nonetheless each does augment the understanding of this rich and dynamic field of study.

The first section is entitled 'Music, Identity and Cultural Politics.' The focus of this collection is the development of the popular musics of indigenous Australians, Maoris, and Pacific Islanders, including the Kaneka music of New Caledonia. Concise histories of these places of hybridised¹ or indigenised² popular musics provide the social context within which these musical practices arose in the Pacific region. As these case studies illustrate, musical practices are political practices. For example, Robin Ryan's work on Koori music in Melbourne traces the strong musical and political presence of contemporary musicians to the activities and support of the Koori musicians' network first visible in the inner-suburban Melbourne of the 1930s and 1940s. Andrew Weintraub, in his study of Hawaiian Music, also explores the political positioning of a local musical scene, one that incorporates reggae, a genre with symbolic associations of class-based protest. These articles illustrate the significance of popular music forms for those who seek a political voice. Indigenous musicians consciously use varied lyrics,

¹ A process proposed by Tony Mitchell in his analysis of Maori popular music.

² The use of indigenous elements that then localises popular music production, as discussed by David Goldworthy.

melody, rhythm and instrumentation to signal and assert their independent ethnic, political and cultural identity.

Section two, 'Music, Commerce and the Media Industries,' is also an examination of the context of popular music production, but this time the focus is on aspects of the music industry itself and how this has influenced and facilitated popular music in the Australia/Pacific region. These case studies concentrate on the popular musics of either Papua New Guinea or the New Zealand Maori, examining issues such as radio broadcasting, music video production, and the influences of the music industry in developing local music scenes. The example of copyright takes on a more complex dynamic, as Din Niles demonstrates in his examination of the benefits and problems of copyright, where it may hinder the accessibility of potential popular music resources but also has the potential to encourage local creativity through increased revenue.

As with the first section of the anthology, issues of music production are also issues of politics, and these detailed case studies demonstrate the complex power relationships inherent in this industry when embedded within quite different cultural contexts. The final section, 'Access to the Mainstream,' deals with the indigenous Australian rock band, Yothu Yindi, formed in 1986. The first article, written by Hayward and Karl Neuenfeldt, provides an account of the unique historical and cultural influences from which the band arose, as well as giving a context for the subsequent articles. Alternate readings of the group's best-known single and music video, *Treaty* (1991), are presented in two articles, where the authors engage with one another's analysis and interpretation. In Hayward's analysis of the two different versions of the *Treaty* video, the framing of Aboriginality is seen to be made in terms of the 'primitive,' because the video's representation of Aboriginality is mediated through Euro-Australian cultural perceptions. Lisa Nicol argues that the processes involved in both versions maintain the values and beliefs of the Yolngu people (to which the indigenous members belong), rather than being personal or political compromises. The section ends with Neuenfeldt's examination of Yothu Yindi as both cultural product and cultural process, a discussion that understands the group as a musical commodity that will eventually end, but also one that continues to have significant influence on issues such as land rights and relationships between indigenous and Euro-Australians.

This anthology addresses the issue of the relationship of indigenous peoples of the Australia/Pacific region to popular music production and performance. As explained in its introduction, *Sound Alliances* is aimed at a North American and European readership, with the hope that these case studies will be included and engaged within a wider academic scholarship. However, with this intended audience in mind, the anthology would have been enhanced by the use of maps indicating the positions of these case studies, both within the region as a whole and in relation to major centres within their individual countries. Almost every article provides a discography, often quite extensive, demonstrating this region's rich source of popular music, as well as a comprehensive bibliography. *Sound Alliances* provides a collection of detailed and fascinating studies on the production of popular music in the Australia-Pacific region. The anthology demonstrates the ways in which local music practices are a means to establish and assert identity and culture, while engaging with and responding to global markets and music discourses. It is a significant part of the developing library of popular music studies which examine the production of music outside the United Kingdom and North America.