

interaction of drama in literary and musical terms. Lewsey's aim here (as in his *Who's Who and What's What in Wagner*), is to assist the uninitiated, the regular audiences, directors and singers. This he does successfully.

Stan Hawkins, *Settling the Pop Score: Pop Texts and Identity Politics*

Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate, 2002

ISBN 0 7546 0352 0; pb, 234pp, ill, music exx, bibl., discog., index

Reviewed by Gavin Carfoot

The scholarly study of popular music has its origins in sociology and cultural studies, disciplinary areas in which musical meaning is often attributed to aspects of economical and sociological function. Against this tradition, recent writers have offered what is now referred to as 'popular musicology': a method or approach that tends towards a specific engagement with 'pop texts' on aesthetic, and perhaps even 'musical' terms. Stan Hawkins uses the term popular musicology 'at his own peril,' clearly recognising the implicit scholarly danger in his approach, whereby 'formalist questions of musical analysis' are dealt with 'alongside the more intertextual discursive theorisations of musical expression' (p. xii). In other words, popular musicologists dare to tread that fine line between text and context. As editor of the journal *Popular Musicology Online*, Hawkins is a leading advocate of this practice, specifically in the application of music-analytical techniques to popular music. His methodology attests to the influence of other leading figures in the area, notably Richard Middleton, Allan F. Moore and Derek Scott (general editor of the Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series in which this book is published).

Settling the Pop Score is predominantly a collection of articles drawn from Hawkins's previously published research, looking at popular figures that typify the 1980s MTV generation: Madonna, Morrissey, Annie Lennox, the Pet Shop Boys and Prince. Throughout the book, Hawkins presents a plea on behalf of these artists: that their musical texts not be left out of discussions of musical meaning and identity, and the affective and signifying power immanent in the *sound* of their music be acknowledged. His case studies are thus meant to demonstrate how aspects of musical structure, or 'musical codes,' impinge upon aspects of identity; that is, how text and context interact in the construction of identity.

Hawkins's rather gun-totting title refers to his cross-disciplinary approach, as the score he wishes to settle seems to be with those who have ignored the fact that popular music is bound up with both socio-cultural practice *and* the affects of musical texts. In fact, *Settling the Pop Score* could be interpreted as a rather misleading title for the book. Hawkins's own understanding of what constitutes 'the score' is never really 'settled,' but remains suitably abstract, and he concedes that 'no amount of transcription or conventional musical analysis can ever render the pop score fixed' (p. 33). The emphasis throughout is on the open-ended nature of the musical score, whereby what constitutes 'the text' is always penetrated by new contexts

and new readings. The best way to understand the title might in fact be the concept of the 'settler' or 'nomad': Hawkins tries to 'settle' in musical texts for a while, producing what he freely calls 'personal' and contingent, rather than definitive, readings. In effect, his method is at times *unsettling*, notably interdisciplinary and inclusive of sometimes-disparate theoretical ideas.

The book opens with the customary 'theoretical introduction' (Chapter 1), an attempt by Hawkins to produce a common umbrella for the following chapters. The groundwork here represents a significant effort to codify themes that recur in the musical case studies. Here the author professes the influence of 'the work of non-musicologists whose thoughts have *impinged on the field of popular music research*' (p. 8, emphasis added). This statement holds a clue to something that becomes more evident throughout the work: the author comes to contemporary theory via popular music scholars, generally preferring to steer clear of an in-depth engagement with the authors that he lists as influences (p. 34, fn. 11). Admittedly, this is pre-empted by his assertion that 'a general problem commonly encountered in scholarly books on musicology is located in the tendency to focus more on the intricacies of theoretical debate than to attempt the interpretation' (p. 7). In response to this, I would add that *Settling the Pop Score* suffers slightly from the inverse problem: because Hawkins's engagement with poststructuralism appears on occasion to be second-hand, his interpretations lose some scholarly weight. As a case in point, his brief reference to Deleuze and Guattari in Chapter 6 (p. 163) displays a clear misreading of their concepts (in particular the 'body without organs'), not least of all due to the fact that he engages with them via a secondary source. Other references to aspects of contemporary theory can feel laboured amidst the fore-grounded interpretations of pop texts. Generally, this strategy does not impart a *useful* and *critical* engagement with theory, whether for lay or expert readers. Having said this, Hawkins' fragmented methodology does suit the postmodern 'MTV generation' of pop artists that he writes about. And steering clear of theoretical debate allows him the space to explore his plainly stated area of interest: the pop texts themselves. In particular, the insistent theme is the desire to walk that path between structural analyses of pop texts and identity politics. His defining question thus becomes: How does the *affect* of music, alongside socio-cultural contexts, account for aspects of identity formation?

There is a palpable sense of the text 'opening out' when Hawkins turns to the music and musicians of Chapters 2 to 6. Within all of the case studies, five musical elements appear as the codes through which identity is expressed: rhythm, vocal style, melody or 'tunes,' harmonic functions, and aspects of technical production. Thus, issues of sexuality, gender and race are expressed in 'grooves,' vocal timbre, melodic patterns, harmonic ambiguity and the 'sound-box' created by recording techniques. Musical codes bear each artist's unique identity: they impel the body, encouraging a non-representational use of language; harmonic progressions deny tonal closure, signifying an ambiguity of identity; digital production techniques, such as equalisation, reinforce poetic sentiment. Linking these musical aspects to the formation of identity is no mean semiotic feat, a task that Hawkins tackles head-on. His interpretations of musical codes as semiotic systems are frequently punctuated by the necessary clarification that meaning can only arise in acquired cultural contexts.

Chapter 2 looks at the case of Madonna: a formidable target, and the focus of an enormous amount of prior scholarly attention. Hawkins's approach is not surprising given his stated methodological position: he insists that the attention afforded Madonna has 'steered away from any serious consideration of her music' (p. 37). Whereas Cultural Studies has situated Madonna's importance firmly in the realm of production and consumption, Hawkins insists that 'qualities of musicianship should not be ignored for the sake of economic deterministic arguments' (p. 37). Madonna's identity is thus found in the musical codes mentioned above, particularly in the 'groove' and vocal timbre, in combination with what is read as an ironic sensibility. The reading of ironic intent through musical codes is indeed problematic, and the author is forced on more than one occasion (and throughout the book) to concede that such readings ultimately define his interpretations personal. As he writes,

any evaluation of musical codes as ironic markers is also problematic when theorising the motives of intent ... Yet, I would insist that the limitation of this practice of interpretation should not be shirked in the interest of theoretical merit (pp. 44-5).

The readings that Hawkins makes in later chapters, regardless of their 'theoretical merit,' are generally convincing interpretations of varied musical expressions. In Chapter 3, for example, his investigation of Morrissey displays a sharp sense of both the cultural context *and* the musical expression of this enigmatic '80s pop anti-hero. Irony here is placed within a specific setting that denotes meaning, and in the case of Morrissey it is expressed through a marked contrast between musical style and lyrical content. In Chapter 4, Annie Lennox's gendered identity is interpreted as a type of masquerade, reflecting a fluid construction of gender and sexuality that she shares with Madonna. Chapter 5's exploration of the Pet Shop Boys reveals their particular sense of irony and camp, especially as it is expressed through vocal delivery and the use of stylistic markers (mostly from Disco). In Chapter 6, Hawkins examines the issue of race in musical identity, using the example of Prince, an artist who provides an interesting site of contestation considering his seemingly ambivalent relationship with African-American identity. In terms of the internal themes within these chapters, there is a distinct dovetailing: chapters 2 and 4 share themes of 'gender troubling,' and chapters 3 and 5 focus on male identity, with Chapter 6 examining race and male identity. The links between Morrissey and the Pet Shop Boys stand out, despite their highly divergent styles: they share what Hawkins sees as a distinct English sensibility and sense of irony expressed through contrasts between musical style and poetic content. Madonna and Annie Lennox both confront rigid categories of identity with a performative approach to subjectivity, preferring subversive self-parody to essentialist notions of gender. The chapter on Prince follows earlier studies by Hawkins that utilised traditional techniques of harmonic analysis. His chapter in this book is thankfully less formalistic, focusing on a profusion of music styles as examples of how Prince's musical texts reflect his multiple and performative identity.

Hawkins' writing style fluctuates between short, journalistic-type biography and scholarly prose, and the demarcations between these sections are generally quite clear. Musical examples and analytical figures are notated and incorporated into the text appropriately, and in most cases they provide an invaluable support to the argument. In particular, the 'semiotic transcript table' of Prince's *Diamonds and Pearls* (p. 179) provides a useful outline of the album as a

whole, and significantly enhances an understanding of stylistic diversity in this artist. And as with most studies of musical texts, the reader will be at an advantage if recordings and/or music videos are at hand. Hawkins notes that the benefit of examining commercial artists is the ready availability of such resources. To this end, the book includes a discography for those readers who decide to follow the music closely. The bibliography principally covers works in the fields of popular music studies and cultural theory, and in these areas it is a useful, although not exhaustive, resource.

Throughout *Settling the Pop Score*, Hawkins presents some of the interpretive possibilities afforded by examining pop texts alongside issues of identity and culture. Broadly conceived, the book is concerned with the relationship between text and context; surely familiar, albeit rocky terrain in musicology. As a sustained effort to re-inject aesthetic concerns into the study of popular music, this work provides evidence that both texts and contexts are involved in producing meaning, even in commercially produced and supposedly 'image-driven' music. While some problems arise through an avoidance of 'theoretical debate,' the author's emphasis on interpreting particular pop musicians and their 'identities' is a valuable and engaging exercise. Indeed, at its best, Hawkins's method of interpretation flirts with the same sense of *jouissance* that he often finds in the artists themselves.

Graeme Leak, *Performance Making: A Manual for Music Workshops*

Sydney: Currency Press, 2003

ISBN 0 86819 673 8; pb, xiv+146pp, ill.

Reviewed by Judith Clingan, AM

Graeme Leak's *Performance Making* offers advice and workshop ideas useful for those musicians who wish to or are required to lead mixed groups of people in exploring creative group improvisation. Perhaps a subtitle to the book, making clear the improvisatory nature of the 'performances' to be made, would help steer the right people to it—or perhaps Leak enjoys the possibility that 'straight' musicians or music educators might peruse it, anticipating something else, and then be hooked. Certainly I enjoyed reading it and, apart from a few reservations, I would happily recommend it to music educators of all sorts, as well as to practising improvisatory performers.

Leak's main thesis is that 'the body is the ultimate instrument,' an instrument which is rarely explored by those musicians who have concentrated on mastering the technical difficulties inherent in most classical Western instruments. It is refreshing to come across a musician who believes that music is so much more than dots on paper, and that even totally untrained people, using nothing but the human voice, body percussion, found sounds and movement, can be led in a short space of time to becoming convincing performers. Such results can only be fostered by aware, courageous, innovative, empathetic and versatile workshop