

## Review essay

Psychology of Music

*Psychology of Music*

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ADRIAN C. NORTH and DAVID J. HARGREAVES, *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 476 pp, 14 illus. ISBN 9780198567424 (pbk) £ 29.95/\$59.95.

Recently an MRI was done on my right knee. Before the technician rolled me into the tomb-like scanner, he offered me headphones ‘as protection from noise’. As soon as I put them on, I was struck by inane pop music. I asked the technician to turn it off and he helpfully offered me ‘classical’ music instead; I declined and finally gained silence. Once the machine came to life, however, I began to pay attention to its ‘voices’. There were overlapping streams of beeps and tick-tocks originating in different locations and I found myself computing their rhythmic relationships, forming expectations, and occasionally having them violated. Twenty minutes passed quickly as I actively explored this novel aural ambience. Afterwards I asked the technician if he was surprised that I declined the music. He said that a few patients did, but that many acquiesced – ‘perhaps because they felt obliged’. So the UK-based ‘Pipedown’ activists (pp. 268–9 of the book under review) are not alone in disliking being forced to endure exposure to unwanted music of *any* kind, most of which, they and I know from experience, is sonic rubbish – often a syrupy metamorphosis of something once only mediocre. We also dislike – perhaps especially the musicians among us – the imposed ‘music’ preventing us from listening to the authentic sounds of a locale.

Judging by the tenor of their book (interestingly, with the exception of its preface), North and Hargreaves (N & H) would not commiserate with my negative reaction to the supposedly helpful music in the scanner – for the authors are relentless music enthusiasts, or more accurately, articulate advocates for the well-nigh universal presence and use of music. There is little complaint in the book about the forcible insertion of music into every nook and cranny of public and semi-private space, and no echo of Bottum’s (2000) powerful critique of the often shrill ubiquity of music.

The book consists of seven chapters, of which the first (‘The social and applied psychology of music’) and the last (‘Concluding remarks’) are very brief. Chapters 2 (‘Composition and musicianship’) and 3 (‘Musical preference and taste’) are meant to be basic, yet they only tangentially set the stage for the three subsequent, quite heterogeneous chapters devoted to applications, which jointly comprise about 60% of the text: Chapter 4 on ‘“Problem music” and subcultures’, Chapter 5 on ‘Music, business, and health’, and Chapter 6 on ‘Music development and education’.

The book is billed as ‘the successor to the bestselling and influential *Social Psychology of Music*’ (1997) that was edited by Hargreaves and North, and to which they contributed three chapters. Their own material has been updated, expanded, and

spread over Chapters 2–6 of the present volume. The extent of coverage of the material presented in the remaining 12 chapters of the 1997 book varies a great deal. At one extreme are chapters with material that is extensively covered and updated, such as O'Neill's 'Gender and music', Simonton's survey of his historiometric analyses of compositional creativity, Zillmann's and Gan's 'Musical taste in adolescence', Wilson's 'Performance anxiety', and Bunt's 'Clinical and therapeutic uses of music'. Topics originally addressed by Crozier – conformity, prestige effects, personal and social identity, mood, arousal – are also closely covered (except for conformity), to the extent of N & H occasionally accepting a misinterpretation in the original chapter of some researchers' theoretical positions.

At the other extreme are chapters that are rather neglected in the present volume. One example is Gregory's wide-ranging ethnomusicological perspective (with notable social-psychological implications) on music in lullabies, battles, markets, courts, dancing, storytelling, festivals, healing, trance, and religious ceremonies; this material is hardly addressed in the present book (except for healing) – with the almost complete omission of an analysis of the relationship between music and dance being especially regrettable from both theoretical and practical points of view, especially in an approach so concerned with youth and thus, presumably, with displays of reproductive fitness (cf. Konečni, Brown, & Wanic, 2008). Another example is Davidson's valuable chapter, 'The social in musical performance', on a variety of key social-psychological processes; some of these receive a surprisingly limited coverage. And in the case of Russell's chapter, the data on the differences in musical taste due to educational level and age are only indirectly covered.

In summary, a non-obvious way in which the present volume (with the main text longer by some 60 pages) should be considered only a partial successor to the 1997 edited book is that the emphasis on applications has resulted in a removal of some useful social-psychological content. One could say that in reaching for breadth and trendy topics, some of the original core has been sacrificed.

In Chapter 1, the authors carefully justify their essentially topic-based approach (while stating that the book can be comprehended without reading this chapter). To some degree, such an approach is indeed dictated by the fragmentation of social psychology and, to an even greater extent, of almost any applied domain in social science. But the authors themselves contribute to the appearance of freestanding and unconnected chapters by the disparateness of their choices of topics for inclusion. In the attempt to cross-pollinate by the rake method, they have risked being accused of overreaching. In their defense, one could say that the goal of people from very diverse fields (including advertising, business, music education, and music therapy) being able to find something of interest in the book has certainly been accomplished.

In Chapter 1 and elsewhere, N & H claim that 'the paradigm of music psychology has shifted [away from music cognition and] towards social factors' (p. 9), which seems to this reviewer to be both incorrect and undesirable. The authors support this claim by conflating a social emphasis with naturalistic methods (themselves often conflated as a category with the problem-ridden survey and experience-sampling techniques). Equally unconvincing as support for their thesis is the authors' recruitment of the titles of some recent books that interpret psychological principles and findings to musicians and performing artists.

The topic-oriented structure of the book as a whole is also applied to the organization of some individual chapters. For example, in Chapter 2 the sections on 'Creativity', 'Composition, eminence, and fashion', and 'Musicianship' coexist uneasily. Moreover, one can justifiably question the criteria by which material was included and excluded. The 'Creativity' section devotes considerable space to general theories of creativity, but only a page to the creative process, and just a line to music (mentioning Mozart on p. 16; incidentally, there is a single appearance of Mozart in the Name Index, although not for this page). There is no discussion of the ways in which composers, conductors, and performing artists solve micro- and macro-problems as they work on a score. For researchers who usually emphasize the importance of multiple methods, N & H display a reluctance to use data from archival and music-historiographic sources – and such data are indispensable if one is going to talk about the creative process in music at all. Similarly, if the 'Eureka' moment is going to be – deservedly – mentioned (p. 16), readers might have profited from even a brief description of the recent psychological and neuroscientific work on insight by researchers such as Jung-Beeman, Bhattacharya, and Kounios, among others: Even though this work has not been directly concerned with *musical* insight, the right hemisphere has been heavily implicated.

On the other hand, one is puzzled by the amount of space devoted to the eminence of art-music composers. Simonton's historiometric work is excellent, but it is unclear how it contributes to the purpose of the book; it certainly does not provide a substantive counterweight to the book's emphasis on youth and pop. And when the relationship of a complex organismic-social-cultural predictor such as composers' gender is discussed with regard to eminence, the topic would perhaps be better off omitted altogether rather than receive a one-page treatment in which all the conclusions are essentially foregone – in the light of the prevalent academic-political doctrine. Most of the factors studied by Simonton are biographical and macro-sociological, and actually may have useful points of contact with a music-memetic analysis (Jan, 2007); however, one learns little about music *qua* music – or about its creation, reception, and enjoyment. The one exception is melodic originality (as both a predictor and dependent variable), but factors such as stressful life events, a competitive environment, and geographic marginality appear to account for only about 5% of the variance in melodic originality (p. 32).

The final section of Chapter 2, entitled 'Musicianship', begins with a discussion of personality, relying mostly on the work by Kemp (described in his chapter in the 1997 book), and identity, which draws heavily on work by MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002) and several chapters by other contributors to that edited volume. It is unfortunate that within these otherwise solid subsections one encounters a sweeping relativization of quality and accomplishment (pp. 47–48): On one hand, one finds essentially a caricature of the traditional notion of what it means to be a musician and a straw-man position of the 'hierarchy' in the making of music – and on the other, a misleadingly optimistic (or oversimplifying) view of the sort of 'music' that a person with 'no formal musical training' can produce by means of computer software. Digitalization indeed facilitates dissemination, but software does not make the task of producing sound – *that is acceptable at least to one's in-group* – any easier than that facing a youngster with a couple of spoons and some glass and steel objects on a Trinidad sidewalk. One wonders where research stops and identity politics begins when one encounters statements to

the effect that N & H find it 'hugely disappointing' that so much of the current research involves traditional instruments, 'often in the classical music education tradition', and that no psychological research has addressed 'identity among "digital musicians", such as, for example, how a DJ uses music to affirm self-esteem.' The section continues with a survey of environmental and motivational influences on the development of musical skill, with one of the controversial conclusions being that the 'key point to emerge from the "nature vs. nurture" debate on musical skill is that everyone is capable of skilled musical behaviour' (p. 51). One would need from the authors quite precise definitions of 'capable', 'skilled', and 'musical behaviour' to decide whether such broad egalitarianism can survive a reality check.

In the next part of the section, before Chapter 2 concludes with a balanced examination of the so-called 'Mozart effect', there is an all too brief consideration of music performance. The ten pages in question are divided equally between the social aspects of performance and performance anxiety (including drug use), with the former topic striking one as rudimentary indeed, especially considering that much of the space is devoted to the effects of physical attractiveness. Many of the interesting social-psychological factors discussed by Davidson in the 1997 book receive only a passing mention or none at all. These include: Ritualistic aspects of etiquette and conformity in live performance (in both art music and rock); social facilitation and co-action involving the musicians and the audience; verbal and nonverbal communication; and aspects of leadership in both chamber groups and orchestras. N & H correctly note the absence of key research but do not attempt to outline the theoretical issues that new research should address. Among such issues might be: To what extent do musicians use bodily expressiveness for the purpose of guiding execution as opposed to communicating affect to the audience? Does a musician's physical expressiveness differ in concerts vs. studio recording sessions? Do solo, chamber, and orchestra musicians differ in this regard? Are there objective differences in the quality of the recorded product – as judged by people without access to the visual information?

The book is described on the back cover as 'written in a highly accessible style', but this is not correct. One problem is the book's structure. Perhaps in order to minimize the unwelcome side-effects of freestanding, rather unconnected thematic entities, there is a relatively small number of chapters for a book of this length. This means that in various chapters quite disparate topics are forced into each other's uneasy proximity. Moreover, given such a book plan, the rigid hierarchies of headings within chapters almost force the authors' hand in the direction of debatable substantive and organizational decisions. Several examples from Chapter 3 will suffice: Within the section on 'The music', there is a brief (five-page) subsection entitled 'Experimental aesthetics', which makes sense only if this term, which properly stands for a broad field encompassing a scientific approach to aesthetics in all the domains of the arts and therefore organizationally includes *all* of the psychology of music, is instead arbitrarily and misleadingly limited to a single methodology, a time period in the past, and particular (no longer living) researchers. Meanwhile in another section, on 'The listener', there is within the subsection on 'Personality' a one-page sub-subsection on the important issue of 'Listening strategies', but a much longer discussion of 'Responses to music in non-humans'. This admittedly interesting and well-researched four-page sub-subsection – which, however, raises more questions than it

answers about animal response – has not (because of arbitrary hierarchical enumeration) even earned a place in the table of contents. Moreover, the material in ‘Listening strategies’ loses much by not being considered jointly with that in an earlier section of Chapter 3, ‘Subjective complexity and repetition’; the latter, needlessly circumscribed title refers to the psychologically important effects of *repeated listening* – arguably one of the key unsolved mysteries of the hedonic consequences of people’s voluntary and involuntary multiple exposures to a piece of music over various, often very long, units of time.

Also in Chapter 3, and closely following the treatment of animal responses, there is the section on (human) ‘Emotional responses to music’. It would seem that one can justifiably question the scope and depth of this section in a book with ‘social psychology’ in its title, given that emotion has increasingly assumed one of the very central places in social, cognitive, and music psychologies, as well as in neuroscientific inquiries pertinent to these fields (see, for example, the target article and the peer commentaries in Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008; see also Konečni, 2008). For both theoretical and practical (applied) reasons one could have expected N & H to provide a more extensive and updated coverage of this topic.

It seems clear that the authors consider the three chapters devoted to applications to be the book’s most important contribution. Chapter 4, at over 90 pages the longest in the book, is, according to N & H, ‘the first comprehensive review of psychological research on music censorship, delinquency and subculture’ (p. 11), and it is indeed a formidable effort of literature search and integration. The authors tackle criminality, illegal drugs, permissive sexual attitudes, sexual and racial discrimination, idolization of musicians, and music-connected suicide – all this in the context of parental protests, censorial attempts, the documented ‘prevalence of pop music’, and adolescents’ ‘massive economic clout’ (p. 154). The vividness and intensity of some parts of the narrative describing episodes involving Elvis Presley, John Lennon, the Sex Pistols, and Marilyn Manson are refreshing<sup>1</sup> – in part because of the contrast with the unrelieved density of much of the text, with the longer sections typically divided into ‘correlational studies’, ‘experimental studies’, and ‘caveats’. Most of the survey concerns the various relationships within the following constellation of concepts: adolescence – music (pop and rap) – stereotyping – discrimination – gender – race – sex(uality) – violence – drugs and alcohol – delinquency. Of course, this is the net of relationships over which the ‘culture wars’ have been waged since at least 1980 (roughly from the beginning of the AIDS epidemic). The careful reader, sifting dutifully through the myriad findings and conclusions – and especially after consulting many of the cited studies first-hand – may end up disagreeing with the authors’ conclusions too numerous to list here. Try as they might, N & H fail to remain on the inferential sidelines of what is essentially a political and macro-sociological battleground. Therefore, the reader feels safer trusting the authors with regard to how the massive research effort has been apportioned to the various contentious issues than about what can be legitimately concluded. And one is not talking here only about the utterly politicized issues of gender, race, stereotyping, and discrimination, but also about the politics of music’s involvement with drugs, sexual promiscuity, and violence.

As N & H themselves structure the argument (over about 40 pages of text), the key point is that the imposition of ‘censorship requires the case against problem

music to establish not just that the music has salacious content, but also *proof* that exposure to problem music media actually *causes* deleterious effects [on “thoughts and behaviors”] among listeners and viewers’ (p. 165; italics in the original). Note, first, that music with lyrics and music videos are (unavoidably) at issue here, so that all research on absolute music has been made irrelevant. The problem should clearly be seen as one requiring sound methodology and applied social psychology, rather than musical knowledge: One cannot, almost by definition, learn anything about music *qua* music here – and one does not (except which genres have been studied). The music in this approach is essentially an environmental factor analogous to the equally politicized and frequently misinterpreted issues of violence and pornography in the media.

Readers’ acceptance of the results of this inquiry will depend to a large extent on their judgment of the quality and consistency of the authors’ application of the concepts of proof and causality in evaluating the available research. As just one of the many issues to which one must pay attention in applied research, significance tests are not nearly as informative as what percent of variance in a concrete measure (e.g., arrests for delinquency; pregnancies; venereal disease; sniffing glue) can be legitimately attributed to the factor in question (e.g., pre-teens’ involvement in pop vs. rap vs. (say) sports or ballet – while controlling for other critical factors).

By and large, N & H seem insufficiently critical of both the many poorly designed individual studies and of entire groups of studies that do not meet the rigorous standards of reliability and validity that must be required of the kind of research that aspires to influence the legislative and judicial decisions and police actions that may powerfully affect the lives of real people. Nor do the authors perform what would be a very useful service to the new generations of researchers (many members of which have apparently not been instructed to take seriously the early social science methodological bibles, such as Campbell and Stanley, 1963) and specify the attributes of the research that is needed. And there are complex grey areas that are not discussed, such as what kind of research should be done if ‘society’ prefers its youth not to hold certain attitudes because they are unaesthetic or repugnant, even if they do not result in problem *behavior* – in short, the complex attitude–behavior relationship is not adequately tackled.

Especially because the available research is inadequate and insufficient, social scientists should oppose any form of censorship (including self-censorship and advisory stickers on CDs). And needless to say, scientists and musicians should jointly oppose calls for censorship based on hysteria, often slavishly accommodated by the bottom-line-oriented music industry, which regards music as a product no different than toothpaste. The authors and the reviewer clearly agree on the above points (even if their reasoning might be somewhat different). However, N & H seem unwilling – perhaps because of their defensiveness (sometimes sympathetic, sometimes patronizing) regarding youth and ‘problem music’ – to acknowledge the one conclusion that can be unequivocally reached on the basis of the research that they have so admirably amassed: From a parental viewpoint, an inordinately heavy involvement by pre-teens and teens in *any* kind of music (other than classical) – whether in the bedroom, in clubs, or in youth centers – is a red flag concerning the possibility of drug use, early sex, alcohol, poor school grades, and detachment from home and parents. Another red flag is engaging in the worship of musicians

(pp. 230–232); yet in the entire book, the authors do not mention the (female) ‘groupie’ phenomenon – too ‘sexist’ a term and topic?

In Chapter 5, music disappears altogether into the commercial quicksand, as N & H address topics as diverse as Tin Pan Alley, music purchasing and piracy, music in advertising and commercial establishments, and music therapy – and try to juggle entertaining journalistic accessibility with discussions of Bayesian models and salivary immunoglobulin A. Several observations seem worth considering. N & H are either genuinely overawed by the size of the music industry or they are trying to give their book’s chosen focus a boost by overemphasizing the industry’s size. A key issue must nevertheless be confronted: What is the implication for future research in music psychology of the prevalence of pop music, given the absolute dominance of classical music in the laboratory, but with its sales (including jazz) accounting for only 5% of the total? Should the prevalence of taste guide research, even though most popular musical stimuli are objectively impoverished and scientifically uninteresting? This reviewer’s opinion is that the prevalence of taste should not be depended on to guide scientific endeavor – not even in *applied* science, one that is conceived soundly enough to remain a science. In addition, to the extent that the use of music in advertising and commercial establishments is worth studying, and it clearly is, the question arises whether this nod to prevalence should be conducted with university funds and with students as participants, or should researchers do such work only as custom-made projects, while engaged as consultants by the advertisers and owners of commercial establishments? (An analogue of the latter model already exists, for example, in legal psychology.) N & H only occasionally let on that they are fully aware of such inherent, and perhaps irreconcilable, contradictions (for the field and for the book): One could say that they are ambivalent (see, for instance, pp. 255–256), rather than constructive, about how the research in (especially social and applied) music psychology should proceed. And since the authors are among the most qualified and best-positioned anywhere to put forward the needed far-reaching proposals, one hopes that they might address the currently existing contradictions in a future edition.

Hargreaves and North have for many years been exceptionally prolific researchers in some of the areas covered by this book. Perhaps their most important attributes as researchers have been the consistency with which they have pursued the key goal of increasing the generalizability of results through broad music stimulus-, participant-, and research locale-sampling, and having a sharp eye, when selecting research problems, for detecting the fast-changing music-use conditions. Significantly, in being attentive to ecological validity, N & H have in the past not sacrificed rigor; they have been equally skilful and innovative in designing laboratory and field experiments, and in carrying out both hypothesis-testing and exploratory investigations. Such qualities, and the two researchers’ somewhat different, but complementary, backgrounds in psychology, would lead one to think of them as an ideal team to author a comprehensive, ambitious, and critical book. It is therefore disappointing that as this book’s authors N & H sometimes drop to a noticeable degree the guard they have held as researchers. The book’s advocacy of the marketability of music, and the desire (to some extent understandable) to increase the book’s (and music’s) domain, have unfortunately resulted in an occasional decrease in the rigor with which the empirical base has been evaluated and presented.

One example of this is the rather uncritical acceptance of the findings from surveys and, especially, experience-sampling studies, but also of written retrospective self-reports (such as those in Gabrielsson's Strong Experiences with Music project). Such surveys are very useful for obtaining information about the reported prevalence of music-related phenomena, but it is a dubious, though frequent, practice to use the correlated data so imperfectly obtained for the purpose of theory-building and comparative testing.

Another example is the authors' strong advocacy of the use of music in therapy. Although a separate essay would be needed to review properly the 15-page section on 'Music and health' at the end of Chapter 5, suffice it to say that there is an over-reliance on the conclusions of some meta-analyses and an insufficient skepticism about many of the practices used in the evaluation of both the process and outcomes of music therapy. The questions of experimenter bias and demand, the lack of appropriate control groups, self-fulfilling prophecy, the lack of double-blind procedures (for example, about who receives the music treatment and who receives pain medication or is released and when), the possibility of placebo effects and of the true causes of patient improvement being non-musical factors that are correlated with the music treatment, are not granted a sufficient airing. Especially suspect seems to be the optimism regarding the beneficial long-term effects of music on the immune system: For example, is it really justifiable to expect that minor and transient decreases in the level of cortisol due to music listening (or factors associated with it) are important because '[H]igh levels of cortisol are associated with numerous specific health problems, and generally lowered immunity' (p. 307)? One thing is clear, however: Playing music to patients is cheap and so is giving patients control over what and how often to hear; having music available therefore represents an easily accomplished improvement in patients' hospital lives. But what about good nutrition, less room-sharing, more air, light, and plants, and the availability of books? One would not be surprised if most patients would prefer to watch TV soap operas rather than listen to music. In fact, most hospital rooms in Western countries are equipped with TV sets – without an entire community of experts existing to supervise their use in 'therapy'. All of which is not to say that music cannot be very useful in many situations, for example, by diverting attention and partitioning time during childbearing labor, and during Lamaze, breathing (for people with respiratory problems), and gait exercises.

Chapter 6 is exceptionally well written; it draws in equal measures on Hargreaves's involvement in the Music Development Task Group of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England, and on many of the themes developed throughout the present book. One of these is a general relativization of music, of music ability and accomplishment, and of musicianship – all of this captured in the UK in the (Blair) Government's 2004 *Music Manifesto*. Because of social and technological change, music 'encompasses an increasingly diverse range of skills and abilities' and 'music educators need to be able to take this diversity on board'; in fact, '[I]nformal music-making and listening, which usually takes place outside school, is becoming seen as just as important as the formal music-making that takes place in schools, universities and conservatories' (p. 338). The resultant music-bureaucratic 'globe model of opportunities in music education' (pp. 339–341) is described in detail and one's impression is that it is being readied for export. A key aspect of the globe model is its



'south-eastern quadrant' that incorporates the 'third environment ... contexts in which musical learning takes place in the absence of parents and teachers ... such as playgrounds, garages, youth clubs, or the street' (p. 340). A related theme is the claim that music teachers' classical 'background may be inappropriate for the demands of the contemporary secondary school classroom' (p. 352) and there is the implicit pressure on them to improve their currently inadequate knowledge of pop music less than 25 years old: N & H take the time to mention that a study by York showed that 'only 13.1% [of "750 heads of secondary school music"] had any familiarity with Fatboy Slim's dance music classic *The Rockafeller Skank*' (p. 353). Since Fatboy Slim (the British DJ Norman Cook) released *The Rockafeller Skank* in 1998, and York's study was published in 2001 (by 'University of Westminster and Rockscool Ltd.', according to the N & H references), music in this domain apparently becomes a 'classic' rather quickly. All this should be viewed, according to N & H, together with the findings of their own surveys that there are all kinds of 'benefits of playing and listening to pop music ... [that are] very different [from] those for classical music' (p. 351).

Readers must, of course, judge for themselves the validity of the implications of Chapter 6. It is important for them to keep in mind the results of another survey (in 2003, of 758 English girls and 721 boys between 8 and 14 years of age), which showed that '14-year-olds reported listening [to music *outside* school] for approximately 13 hours per week' (p. 345). If correct, this means two hours less a day available to these young teens for learning *content*, enjoying poetry, novels, and history, and generally improving their verbal-analytical and logical operations that are not music's forte – except at the highest levels of composition and performance.

In their 'Concluding remarks', N & H write: 'the [pop music] audience places less emphasis on revering the music as high art and more on it as a "friend" that supports them throughout their everyday life, so that pop is less like a god and more like a dog' (p. 358).<sup>2</sup> This is a clever observation: Music as dog – or all-purpose tissue-paper, or, to others, sonic wallpaper, or irritant. The thought raises several questions that N & H do not attempt to answer. Is music truly a better friend than books, which the 'digital revolution' has largely cast aside? Is a mind always filled with sound healthier and happier than one that introspects or listens to the wind, the birds, and the chatter of children? Is electronic talk about the latest band that one adulates more personally and socially constructive than sports, chess, and friendly banter? In short, is the contemporary digitalized youth more fulfilled than one that preceded it? And, with regard to the commercialization of music that knows no bounds, is all music to become a jingle?

In terms of individual music movements, genres, and artists, there is no mention in the book – despite their social-psychological importance – of the Blues, of Oi! punk,<sup>3</sup> of Reggae, Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Joy Division, Kraftwerk, and Radiohead, to mention just a few absences. Much of what is referred to as music is pop and, to a smaller extent, rap. The music industry cleverly shapes this music to suit the hormonal preoccupations of older pre-teens, teens, and very young adults and caters to the teens' 'natural' (but transient) rebelliousness and alienation from parents, schools, and 'society' (tentatively hinted at on p. 150). To some extent, the industry and the musicians it supports cruelly exploit the ('natural?') experimentation with the (currently) illegal substances. To pursue enormous profits, the music industry has tethered adolescent

preoccupations to a general anti-intellectual (including anti-narrative) climate of relativized values and a universal, vacuous emotivism. The omnipresent and intrusive piping of pop and the accompanying marketing through all the media channels (including the fashion and apparel industries) recruits young children into the ranks wearing pop-group t-shirts and terrorizes adults of all ages into accepting the onslaught – or else being labeled as ‘insensitive’ or ‘not hip’. Such conformity is somewhat euphemized in the book as the wearing of ‘badges’ and the acquisition of a ‘social identity’ (pp. 218–223) and – in line with the authors’ relative reluctance to be critical of young people’s use of music artifacts – played down as a potentially detrimental and far-reaching social-psychological phenomenon. A major social rethinking seems necessary about music, about emotivism, and about the digitalization of life, but that would be a very different book.

In ways other than the organizational ones mentioned earlier, the book is not reader-friendly. The writing cannot be described as consistently polished – it occasionally seems hurried and uneven. The text is visually tedious, with an exceptionally small number of tables and illustrations. There are many examples of the unusual practice of providing very long lists of references – sometimes reaching ten uninterrupted lines – that have not been assimilated and that stand for research that, on close inspection, varies a great deal in quality, purpose, and conclusions. Occasionally, the authors ‘hype things up’ through hyperbole and exclamation marks, but this effort is a mixed blessing. Finally, regarding OUP and their customary high standards, there are too many typographic errors, as well as errors in the references and the indexes. When preparing future editions of this challenging, rather controversial, and therefore important book, such critical comments may be of use.

A personal complaint concerns the choice of John Cage’s *A Dip in the Lake: Ten Quicksteps, Sixty-two Waltzes, and Fifty-six Marches for Chicago and Vicinity* (1978) for the book’s cover. First, the illustration is too esoteric and visually unattractive for the book’s good. Second, given that the authors introduced into the discussion the objectionable concept of ‘dead, white males’ (p. 357), what is Cage doing on the front cover? Why are all seven quotes at the beginning of chapters by white males, all but one dead, and most European? And why are Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle cited as authorities when N & H need support for the allegedly universal nature of their largely anti-elitist views? And third, in the entire book there is not a single mention of Cage (not even of his ‘4’33” for its social-psychological shock value); in fact, other than for one passing, non-substantive mention of Pierre Boulez, there is no mention whatsoever of art music from the second half of the 20th century, including the accessible ‘new tonality’ movement (Teachout, 1997). This is the case even though the aleatoric approach, and other examples of ‘bluff art’ and ‘destructive deconstruction’ (Konečni, 2005) that can be traced to Marcel Duchamp, as well as minimalism, are highly interesting in a variety of ways from a social-psychological standpoint.

#### NOTES

1. Such episodes are also refreshing because they are absent from the description of any of the (very few) classical musicians mentioned in the book: Even those that may objectively be considered good candidates for inclusion, at least as political ‘hot potatoes’, are entirely ignored. Throughout the book, N & H shy away from discussing the social-psychological

- implications of music-political issues beyond adolescence, such as, to give just one example, the semi-official ban on performances of Richard Wagner's operas in Israel – despite these works' repeated, and fully deserved, advocacy by prominent Jewish musicians (e.g., Zubin Mehta in 1981 and Daniel Barenboim in 2001).
2. Pop music is 'like a dog' and can be sold to pop music lovers as a Christmas gift for their dog. According to Reuters and *Mail & Guardian Online*, 'A Very Silent Night, recorded at a frequency that only dogs can hear, was so popular among [dog] owners it hit number one [on the New Zealand record charts] at Christmas [2007].' Moreover, the CD 'contained an instrumental and a vocal version of the song'. See <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-02-17-new-zealand-record-charts-go-to-the-dogs>
  3. Skinhead music also goes unmentioned despite its indisputable sociological importance and occasional criminal consequences in the UK, Germany, and several other European countries; this neglect may be a conscious attempt by the authors not to give an airing to music that is politically unpalatable to them, but this is a scientifically debatable choice.

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