



***The Pop Palimpsest: Intertextuality in Recorded Popular Music.*** Edited by Lori Burns and Serge Lacasse. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018. 360 pp. ISBN 9780472130672.

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It's always exciting to dive into a work that attempts to break new ground. In *The Pop Palimpsest*, the editors argue that theirs is the first publication to *specifically* consider intertextual relationships in recorded popular music. Their approach is both overarching and local; the collection mixes analyses of single songs with bird's-eye views of genres as well as

methodologies and theories for examining intertextual relationships. The essays are arranged into four sections: Transtextualities, Intertextual Analyses, Intermedial Subjectivities, and Intertextual Productions.

Section I consists of two essays which can be considered anchors for the volume, as subsequent authors reference them, especially the first, Serge Lacasse's "Toward a Model of Transphonography." In it, Lacasse adapts Gérard Genette's literary model for transtextuality for sound analysis, developing five terms / concepts for use and demonstrating their application through specific examples. It's unfortunate that his example of metaphonography (evaluation) inaccurately describes the journal *Notes* as "exclusively devoted to reviews of music-related productions (books, digital media, printed music and so forth)" ( p. 35) when in fact it is a top-tier peer-reviewed journal of music librarianship that also includes reviews. Still, it will be interesting to see if Lacasse's methodology is applied in future scholarship and which facets scholars might be drawn to. The subsequent chapter in this section also concerns Gérard Genette's work on intertextuality. Roger Castonguay applies Genette's theory of



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hypertextuality to the album *A Trick of the Tail* (1976) by the band Genesis, thus demonstrating a full-scale analysis in this style.

Section II: Intertextual Analyses includes five essays that dive into intertextual relationships. The first, by Allan Moore, is a reprint of an article he published in 2007 about covers of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah." Moore examines Jeff Buckley's 1994 version of the song as well as covers by John Cale and Rufus Wainwright associated with the film *Shrek*. Moore's analysis, drawing on data from internet fan sites, raises an interesting problem as his sources are no longer extant—making it impossible to know what content (and voices) he chose to use and what he left out. Additionally, I would argue that given the song's continued popularity, Moore's introduction to the article would have been an ideal place to comment on subsequent covers of the song that have been culturally significant, notably k.d. lang's rendition which appeared on her 2004 album *Hymns of the 49th Parallel*. She also performed it at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games.

Mark Spicer's essay "The Electric Light Orchestra and the Anxiety of the Beatles' Influence" examines the artistic climate in which artists worked during the Beatles' heyday and shortly thereafter. He closely analyzes a few songs by the ELO and their relationship with the Beatles' oeuvre. Spicer argues that ELO profited from these connections whereas other groups fared less well. Walter Everett's "'If You're Gonna Have a Hit': Intratextual Mixes of Edits of Pop Recordings" is an historic catalogue of song edits and versions on physical media. It's a fascinating look at how a song is sliced, diced, and manipulated for the sake of marketing and promotion. He seeks to draw a connection between a decades-old practice and the modern landscape of mash-up collaboration. "Someone and Someone: Dialogic Intertextuality and Neil Young" by William Echard considers Young's shifting personal identity throughout his career and proposes a series of lenses through which we might examine Young. The final article in this section, "Intertextuality in the Nineteenth-Century French Vaudeville" by Mary S. Woodside, offers a refreshing divergence from the 20th and 21st centuries. She examines the use of popular tunes in both vaudeville and opera and creates a framework in which to compare the use of a popular tune from two different vaudevilles.

Section III: Intermedial Subjectivities is comprised of two essays that examine performative identities. In "Rap Gods and Monsters: Words, Music, and Images in the Hip-Hop Intertexts of Eminem, Jay-Z, and Kanye West" by Lori Burns and Alyssa Woods, the authors dissect three songs by these artists that explore mythmaking and notions of godhood. Burns and Woods's analysis considers intertextuality as it applies to the songs themselves, as well as the cultural and multimedia landscapes in which they were created. The second article in this section is Stan Hawkins's "Performative Strategies and Musical Markers in the Eurythmics' 'I Need a Man.'" In it he seeks to examine the idiolect of Annie Lennox and her performance of gender. He views

this through the various lenses of cock-rock, glam rock, drag, and camp. He takes a singular performance that he refers to as “feisty” and “spellbinding” (p. 252) and makes the argument that it “encapsulates the Eurythmics’ impact on popular music” (p. 266).

In the final section, Simon Zagorski-Thomas offers a theoretical approach to the palimpsest prompt. He looks at electronic music and how specific sounds function as a text that the listener references and contextualizes based on existing memory. Justin A. Williams’s piece, “Intertextuality and Lineage in The Game’s ‘We Ain’t’ and Kendrick Lamar’s ‘m.A.A.d. City’” places gangsta rap artists within a musical lineage. Finally, Serge Lacasse and Andy Bennett’s contribution “Mix Tapes, Memory, and Nostalgia” considers mix tape communities and the deep dives they perform in order to generate texts with new meanings (compilations) from existing works.

Overall, the essays in this collection are engaging and present a body of work advancing toward something new. The editors’ efforts toward incorporating well-established scholars who contributed chapters grounded in their areas of expertise is to be commended. However, the underrepresentation of women makes it hard to accept this picture as complete. Women are sorely lacking on all levels—as contributors, as sources of musical examples, and as the foci of essays. That the only essay in this collection on a female subject is about Annie Lennox performing “I Need a Man” is disheartening. I hope that future work on intertextuality in pop music will seek to counter this bias and include a broader spectrum of voices.