


methodology for how musical analysis balances song's text, context, and subject-matter. Including this interesting topic.

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***Living from Music in Salvador: Professional Musicians and the Capital of Afro-Brazil.* By Jeff Packman. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2021. 320 pp. ISBN: 978-0-819-58048-1**

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Jeff Packman's fascinating ethnographic study, conducted in Salvador de Bahía in the northeast of Brazil, via multiple trips over 16 years, takes up music-making as a collective activity within the capitalist gig economy, in informal environments that rarely reach the professional studio. Packman emphasises music as a site where race, gender, social prestige and human relationships to technology converge; music-making is an exaggerated case of the flexibility associated with precarious labour conditions. Packman writes from his own experience as a drummer in Los Angeles, where just as in Bahía, musicians insist they are working, not playing, a crucial distinction given that music can be seen as a 'blurring of work and "leisure" activities' (p. 17). Packman's method is to attend performances and rehearsals, and participate in the lives of collaborators he happens to meet, which grants him a lively, if partial, look at what his musicians call 'the Scenes'.

In the context of Salvador, entrenched precarity across labour sectors is 'compounded by particular sedimented constructions of racialized social inequity' (p. 10). As Packman argues, stereotypes of 'pleasure-seeking labor-avoiding baianos who readily sing and dance are conceived in enduring notions of layabout,

naturally musical Black bodies' (p. 16). The general public, he observes, tends to consider MPB (*música popular brasileira*) from the south of Brazil, which is more industrialised, affluent and 'European' than Bahía, to be more 'artistic' than rhythmic music from the north; Packman also notes that patrons of expensive venues in Salvador look more European. Gender inequalities exist as well, the pattern being that men are singer-songwriters, composers and instrumentalists, while women (e.g. Elis Regina, Gal Costa, Marisa Monte) are vocalists and interpreters.

Packman is attentive to timings and locations, and how these define musical sounds. In this huge city of 3 million people, musical labour takes on many forms; Salvador is defined by the seasonal circuits of Carnaval (June), and Forró and *festas juninas* (December). Packman describes how musicians operate in contexts of paid work for mass popular events, along the way analysing local musical forms such as *arrocha*, *seresta* and *pagode*, the latter especially featuring in Carnaval parades; he also discusses smaller private events and concerts, and work for venues like bars, clubs and restaurants. In Salvador, an interviewee tells Packman that there is music that moves the mind, music that moves the heart (e.g. *dor de cotovelo*, so-called because it evokes holding the head in hands with elbows on the table, as a response to lost love), and music that moves the waist (*axé*, *pagode*). He also gives vivid physical descriptions of the challenges musicians can navigate performing during Carnaval, such as ambient noise, poor visibility, poor communication with sound engineers, and shifting, lurching, bouncing floors (p. 204).

The Scenes often work based on an economy of reciprocity, such as 'canjas', featuring in others' performances. Packman becomes somewhat philosophical when discussing how, beyond individual shows, musicians perform 'selves' and adopt tactical affiliations, where every answer to questions like 'What do you play?' and 'With whom?' becomes a demonstration of taste or (in Foucault's words) 'technology of the self', capable of forging careers and reputations (p. 119). Social capital translates as 'QI', local slang for *Quem indicou?* (Who recommended you?). Conversations between musicians are ways of claiming notions of musicianship, asserting affiliations with notable performers, and taking up positions crucial for creating opportunities, relying on distancings and alignments (p. 124). As with the larger public, *axé*, *pagode* and *arrocha* tend to be seen by interviewees as lower genres – especially *pagoda* with its sexualised lyrics and performance – while Euro-mimetic, contemplative genres like jazz have more cultural prestige, even if jobbing musicians often pick up work across genres as a source of cash (p. 215). Contacts and reputation matter; performers want to seem easy to work with and dependable, and tell Packman it is easier to get work when they already have work, seeming neither too busy nor too available. All of this forms part of what Packman calls 'working to work', the behind-the-scenes labour necessary to obtain a job.

Many musicians who make a living from their work have 'portfolio' careers, dependent on informal affiliations with multiple employers. This helps them navigate industry conditions like contractless employment, high substitutability and low pay, but also entrenches these same conditions. Intersecting networks create what Packman calls the 'musical work nexus', and a 'core artist' can be a producer, investor or team rather than an individual artist. Versatility is key in the hunt for income; musicians must quickly master songs in multiple keys, with the ability to perform *releituras* (rereadings) with situation-appropriate flexibility (p. 218), and many work as *músicos da noite* (night musicians), where the ideal set is a mix of familiar and new songs (p. 210). In describing the varied careers of his interviewees,

Packman alludes to financial uncertainties, sponsorships, roadies, mafias, scams, disregard for copyright laws, clandestine rehearsals, late nights and extended periods away from home which take their toll on relationships; musical life and life itself bleed together in complex, occasionally distressing ways, even if musicians insist on professionalism.

There is a group element to this musical field, involving the iterations of popular tunes as a 'flexible, collective remembering' (p. 162) or 'embodied cultural capital' (p. 174). Packman notes that interviewees share and emphasise the importance of the *suíngado*, *suíngue baiano*, *balancado* or *sotaque* (Bahian 'accent'), incorporating a fluid rhythm; his *violão* teacher criticised his playing as '*muito ruim*' (very bad) for its perceived stiffness. He also describes various forms of notation like the *pesca* (cheat sheet) or onomatopoeic forms of notating parts, but says many musicians don't read scores at all, and prefer to internalise the music instead of relying on the written page.

Packman includes an interesting chapter about how human experience is made richer through technological interactions, rather than threatened or erased by them (p. 191). He reflects on how musicians fuse with their instruments like the *timbal* (Bahian drum), and how audiences are exposed to 'mediated listening' (p. 109) via mixers and other machines; he also writes of a 'hybrid understanding of creativity', where technology augments human ingenuity (p. 196). He also provides some descriptions of the studio recording process – which a few of live performers have the funds and luck to access – where his interlocutors say that tracking bass and drums creates a more 'human' time feel, but still rely heavily on technologies. He begins and ends his book by acknowledging the effect of Covid on live music, which exacerbates ongoing trends toward technological forms of making music.

Packman's last section traces musicians' career paths; the majority go on to work outside music as teachers, actors or researchers, with many exploring parallel projects, and open to recalculating career directions. The word 'entanglements' repeats throughout the book, somewhat vaguely suggesting a knottiness of concepts without explaining how this knot works; perhaps there is another book to be written about how the huge categories of race, class and gender relate to the Bahian music scene, and to regional and geographical divisions across Brazil. Given the study's long gestation, the differences in realities between years and trips is not always clear, and it might have been helpful to track some changes more precisely, beyond the inflection point of the pandemic. Packman layers 'old' research go back to the early 2000s with more current references to digital technologies. All the same, his study is a deft, well-described, loving look at the local scene and its musicians, which also convincingly interrogates some of the structural issues that enable it to exist.

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