



friend's nickname, or in a more philosophical interpretation, a stock-taking of what life has given.

Here, as in many cases, Sharp's readings offer a refreshing alternative to more abstract or panoramic studies of Brazilian music, and justify the 33 1/3 series. An idiosyncratic figure like Vasconcelos, difficult to locate in national categories and musical genres, is well served by Sharp's more particular and speculative listenings made from his own sensibility, which infuse dense history with a more personal, indefinable nostalgia of remembrance, grief and love – his own *saudades*.

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***Music City Melbourne: Urban Culture, History and Policy.* By Shane Homan, Seamus O'Hanlon, Catherine Strong and John Tebbutt. New York: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2022. 213 pp. ISBN 978-1-501-36572-0
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'City' and 'music' are terms that have been yoked together in different ways and to different ends over the last few years. 'Music city', for example, has circulated widely as of late, speaking to and for a diverse set of constituencies involved in urban music-making. Under this rubric, certain cities over others come to be called 'music cities'. For some, this occurs organically, and informally, by virtue of the depth of their musical histories, notable artists or renowned scenes, a legacy anchored to a culture supported by bars, bands, record shops, labels, local media (and, more recently, underwritten by urban policy makers). It is a title earned over time, emerging out of some combination of these aspects, in such a way that the city acquires a certain gravitas or a distinctive mythology. This can then serve as a semi-otic resource, which can be drawn from or mobilised by any number of those stakeholders invested in music-making. The results can be altruistic and/or opportunistic, shaping affective and creative affinities as much as political or policy responses, available as it is to musicians, audiences, venue owners, label owners, etc., through to the media, tourism operators, policy makers and urban brand managers.

'City of Music' shares in some of these aspects, but as of late has acquired a more formal dimension, being a title granted by application to UNESCO. Cities of Music around the globe include Auckland (Aotearoa/New Zealand), Ghent (Belgium), London (Canada), Ramallah (Palestine) and Norrköping (Sweden), among many others. It is up for debate that these cities of music are in fact the pre-eminent music cities in their respective nations, although they no doubt have robust musical cultures. That is, in part, because this appellation comes down to strategy, shoring up a city's musical resources to meet certain criteria as defined by UNESCO (hosting festivals, having institutional and industrial networks that feed into the city's musical culture, attract national and international artists, etc.). Teams need to be formed, blessings of local governments sought, bids then need to be packaged up and nominations entered before the designation is secured. And while there are advantages to being anointed a 'City of Music', connecting that city to others in the network for instance, where that title sits in the national

imaginary might be seen by some as somewhat dubious, as the means to that end may suffer from being campaigned for deliberately, rather than properly earned.

In Australia, to take a pertinent example, Adelaide has been nominated the nation's City of Music. No one is going to dispute that the South Australian state capital meets the criteria. It has a thriving musical culture and has made numerous contributions to Australia's musical history. However, if one is thinking about which Australian city has properly earned the title of the country's 'music city', most people, locally and internationally, would settle on Melbourne, in the neighbouring state of Victoria. There might be cases made for Sydney, Perth or Brisbane as possible rivals, but, as the authors of *Music City Melbourne* make clear, the Victorian capital offers a compelling case as to why they pale in comparison as musical hubs.

This status of Melbourne as Australia's preeminent music city is underpinned by the guiding logic of the book, the authors suggest, which is their interest in 'the ways that mythologies contain the potential to provide closed feedback loops between agendas, outcomes and discourses' (p. 14). There are challenges and struggles, then, that sit at the heart of this project as each of these manifests in and across different domains over time. In mapping out these problems, and how many of them were or were not solved, the authors lay out their case by organising the chapters thematically: the transformed city, the live music city, the media city, the branded city, etc. Taken in sum, these dimensions give the city its characteristic *gestalt*, which in their estimation resolutely sets it apart from other Australian cities. In some of these chapters, parts of the city's musical history are explored around that particular theme, and in others and more contemporaneous issues are considered, a weighting that works well to cover ample ground. The chapter on the legendary city does this quite effectively, for instance, drawing on the protests around the closure or fining of venues around noise control, making extensive use of those who drove and participated in this moment, a movement really, which evolved into large-scale protests courtesy of those involved in SLAM (Save Live Music Australia). Music-makers and supporters of Melbourne's musical culture engaged in large-scale protests that impacted the city's urban politics in ways that reverberated throughout the country, got local policies changed and served as models for policies in other Australian states as well as overseas cities. As is noted, Melbourne is one of the first cities in the world to introduce 'agent of change' policies, whereby new residential housing or commercial spaces must pay heed to established neighbours and ensure that noise-mitigation, among other measures, is part of their build. This particular concept has been put into practice in many cities since its implementation in Melbourne.

The authors make extensive use of interviews and archival material as part of the story being told here. They are careful to allow music makers of all sorts to speak up, from industry stalwarts to established performers and those who have otherwise been denied access to adequate platforms from which to make themselves heard. These give the story of Melbourne's emergence as Australia's music city its human and creative dimensions, forming a distinctive discursive framework around musical practice and experiences in the city. Policy too, they note, employs certain discourses as it comes to play a much more central role in shaping the city, sometimes setting up frameworks that have more material consequence over many decades (the discussion around history and heritage offers salient insights into the tensions between creative and policy discourses).

As the authors argue convincingly, part of what makes Melbourne the pre-eminent music city in Australia has much to do with the city's multi-dimensionality around music and culture more generally, which infuses it with a rich history that has ratified its place as the nation's dynamic creative hub. This richness, however, did not come about without opposition, struggle or resistance, and each chapter situates and maps historical moments and trajectories where music becomes the battleground for several hegemonic struggles: against mainstream morality, institutional conservatism and recalcitrance, and more recently, gentrification, to name but a few foregrounded throughout. Along these lines, this book does an admirable job challenging certain entrenched hegemonies around music-making in the city, working to re-centre otherwise marginalised groups, focusing primarily on Indigenous and women's voices. This is an approach which, in the case of Melbourne, productively maps out some of its diverse histories and cultures while simultaneously offering an incisively critical take on the city's politics and its policies at key moments in its music-making history. The authors very astutely make the case that while there have been advances in certain areas around Indigenous and gender equity as they pertain to improved access, participation and visibility, there are long-standing injustices around other marginalised voices that still need addressing. In all cases, small victories or otherwise, as history has demonstrated, these are never guaranteed. Thus, a certain vigilance is still necessary and knowing the precedents, as recounted here, is useful leverage for current and future struggles.

The book was reaching completion at the height of the global pandemic. COVID hit Melbourne particularly hard, with extended lockdowns and a devastating impact on its live music sector and the city's creative communities. The authors address this fact in a cogent conclusion that speaks to the negative consequences of the pandemic on music-making, pointing to the limits of a cultural economy resting on a tired take on the 'virtues' of post-industrial Melbourne, which themselves were nearing exhaustion *before* the pandemic hit. They strongly advocate for imagining other ways forward for music and culture in the city, getting beyond strategies and policies that have been too complacent in the past. The 'fragility' of music-making in Melbourne has been laid bare by the pandemic, and an effective response needs to both acknowledge the city's musical history as a resource and as find ways to better deal with the precarity felt acutely by so many striving to make music now and into the future.

As a deep dive into a city's musical life, *Music City Melbourne* is exemplary. The breadth of scope here – historical, social, cultural, economic, political – is commendable and makes this a model for the study of other urban musics. The authors are careful to note that the focus is primarily pop and rock, which leaves the door open for much more to be said about how other genres contribute to Melbourne as music city (dance music, DJ culture, jazz, diasporic music, etc.). And while this volume has done a lot of the leg work for future studies of Melbourne, it has also raised the bar for how this work might be done in other music cities.

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