

The book was found

Interpreting Popular Music



Synopsis

David Brackett demonstrates that there is no one way of interpreting popular music but that different types of popular music use different types of rhetoric, refer to different arguments about musical complexity and familiarity, and draw upon different senses of history and tradition. He crosses the disciplines of cultural studies and music theory to consider how listeners evaluate popular songs and how they come to attribute a rich variety of meanings to them. Issues such as authorship, reception, musical codes, and different modes of representing and describing music are explored in the context of recordings made by Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Hank Williams, James Brown, and Elvis Costello. In analysing their music and lyrics, David Brackett shows how interpretations of songs develop in specific cultural and historical contexts.

Book Information

Hardcover: 274 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press (January 26, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521473373

ISBN-13: 978-0521473378

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,191,030 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Ethnic & International > World Beat](#) #136 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Songbooks > Popular](#) #1209 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Songbooks > Vocal](#)

Customer Reviews

David Brackett's work is a major contribution to the field of popular music scholarship, as well as to the growing debates about the future of music studies. It's wonderfully readable, thoughtful and wide-ranging, and he challenges some sacred cows in both musicology and popular music studies. There's something for everyone here: chapter topics range from Hank Williams to James Brown to Elvis Costello. And Brackett smoothly uses a stunning array of approaches tailored to each of these widely varied musics. If you're interested in popular culture, popular music, or music studies, DON'T MISS THIS BOOK! --Anahid Kassabia

David Brackett's "Interpreting Popular Music" is a very valuable addition to the field of popular music scholarship. It self-consciously avoids a general theory of popular music scholarship, but rather makes the case that a wide variety of individual approaches, best tailored to 1) the music involved, and 2) the relative, changing stance of the interpreter to the kind of music at hand, provide the most honest and productive hermeneutic. Add this to a forceful defense of paying attention to popular music (take note, musicologists and ethnomusicologists!) and you have a brilliant, rigorous, but open-ended approach to an area of music until recently mostly ignored by musicology. Having said that, Brackett takes several subjects for analysis: Hank Williams "You're Cheating Heart," Billie Holiday and Bing Crosby's "I'll Be Seeing You", James Brown's "Superbad," and Elvis Costello's "Pills and Soap." At each point he critiques and complicates some commonly-held notions, such as biographical relationships between artists and their music (Holiday), notions of immediate 'authenticity' (Williams), and the notions that one can't really write about music, or that musical difference and marketability are at odds (Costello). Drawing on the work of Richard Middleton, Simon Frith and other music scholars, Brackett builds his case at each turn with the help of speech-act theory, African-American literary theory, and "spectrum graphs"-- pitch vs time graphs that help the reader analyze and compare inflection, timbre, style and scope in a more tangible way than simple adjectives. But for the more casual reader, the writing itself is easy and unencumbered. This is a good introduction (without intending to be so) for the beginning scholar of cultural music studies, as the reader really gets a good look at the wide variety of tools available to examine music--not just formal analysis.

The analyses are interesting but I found myself skipping over parts that would have read better if Mr. Brackett had used simpler style that was not so over-worked with academic pedantry (Superbad) "Other utterances that might be considered marginal from and Eurocentric viewpoint, including a variety of grunts and groans, also occur on the latter part of beat four . . . ". The overflowing of original terminology reminds me more of the Saturday Night Live skits that referred to the obtuse and obscure phraseology of self-made Black intellectuals who were prisoners in jail. Ouch. Attempting to work in a reference to the "golden section" in "Superbad" is not legitimate, IMHO. Such proportions do not hold up during a live performance where changes would naturally occur.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

CLEP Analyzing & Interpreting Literature with CD-ROM (REA): The Best Test Prep for the CLEP Analyzing and Interpreting Literature Exam with REA's TESTware (Test Preps) Interpreting Difficult

History at Museums and Historic Sites (Interpreting History) Interpreting Food at Museums and Historic Sites (Interpreting History) Interpreting Popular Music The Complete Portrait Manual (Popular Photography): 200+ Tips and Techniques for Shooting Perfect Photos of People (Popular Photography Books) Popular Christmas Memories, Bk 1: 9 Early Intermediate to Intermediate Piano Arrangements of the Season's Most Popular Songs (Memories Series) Double Agent! Piano Duets: Hal Leonard Student Piano Library Popular Songs Series Intermediate 1 Piano, 4 Hands (Popular Songs, Hal Leonard Student Piano Library) On The Human Condition: St Basil the Great (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press "Popular Patristics" Series) (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press "Popular Patristics" Series) On This Day in Music History: Over 2,000 Popular Music Facts Covering Every Day of the Year Top-Requested Christian Sheet Music: 16 Popular Praise Songs for Worship (Piano/Vocal/Guitar) (Top-Requested Sheet Music) Five Percenter Rap: God Hop's Music, Message, and Black Muslim Mission (Profiles in Popular Music) Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music (Profiles in Popular Music) Mexican American Mojo: Popular Music, Dance, and Urban Culture in Los Angeles, 1935-1968 (Refiguring American Music) Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures (Music/Culture) Top-Requested Irish Sheet Music: 23 Popular and Traditional Favorites (Easy Piano) (Top-Requested Sheet Music) Interpreting Our Heritage Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible The Wisdom Literature: Interpreting Biblical Texts Series Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible Interpreting the Pauline Epistles

[Dmca](#)