

## Publication Reviews

**Taylor, S (2003) *False Prophet: Field Notes from the Punk Underground*, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press (Includes six track CD of False Prophet Songs)**

Taylor's "two books for the price of one" (81) provide an idiosyncratic history of the origins and trajectory of punk, alongside his detailed diaries of the time he spent working and touring with False Prophets.

A musical collaborator of Allen Ginsberg, Taylor traces the genesis of punk back to the Beats, and outlines a similar path to that of the recent Don Letts documentary *Punk: An Attitude*, tracing The Velvet, MC5, The Stooges, New York Dolls and the CBGBs scene and its influence on the UK explosion that followed. He then takes us through the 1980s, a time under-represented in most punk histories where the punk ethos spread through various political movements and musical scenes. It is an interesting discussion with theoretical musings about Adorno, Benjamin, Kristeva and Grossberg and others. That said, this section struggles to postulate a coherent theoretical position.

The second 'book' sees Taylor use his extensive journals to give an excellent and entertaining account of life on the road in a DIY rock band. There is much humour as he describes the minutiae of the exhausting trips from squat to hovel that touring entails, and the (im)possibilities of forging a living between band and job. The many anecdotes and details provide a rare and honest glimpse of the interpersonal relationships between band members, the juxtapositions between art, lifestyle and commerce, and the problems these pose for the political and cultural motivations of those involved. This section of the book is very enjoyable. It is so rare to read about the rock musician's experience from a participant with such intelligence, insight and wit; especially as this genre is usually filled by the sensationalist and macho revisions of sex-crazed and drug fuelled hair metallers or shock rockers.

The final journal entry begins: "There has never been writing about rock that can approach the experience of the music" (300). This is very true; even fan experiences of music are difficult to put into words: hairs on the back of the neck; tears to the eye; nostalgic reminisces relating specific songs with people and places and memories. It is difficult not to deal in clichés when trying to elicit the emotions and reactions a song or show generates. Nevertheless, the book misses a great opportunity to fuse the rich description of band life that the 'field notes' contain and the theoretical foundation laid in the beginning chapters. This task seems to be left up to the reader. There are moments throughout the narrative where one imagines that Adorno would have loved to use as evidence for his critiques of popular culture. But there are many more, especially in the attitudes of those involved, that are too complex to be reconciled with notions of pseudo-individuality or fetishisation. Despite a segue chapter entitled 'Between Reality and Thesis' that attempts to explain his "effort at synthesis" that demands a "rigorous reflexivity" to the point of which "everything I say is a lie" (80), the author never really manages to bring together the experiences and observations

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of Taylor the musician and the ethnomusicological ambitions of Taylor the academic. The introductions to each journal chapter do not do this and the book screams out for a final chapter that ties the theory and practice, or, highlights the strengths and weaknesses of specific theories demonstrated through the use of the field notes.

These small quibbles aside, the book is a very worthwhile read and I would recommend it for anyone interested in popular music, as both academics and fans. This is especially the case for the journal section which offers an exceptional insider's account.

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### **Evans, M & Walden, G (eds) (2005) *Markets & Margins: Australian Country Music, Volume 3, Gympie (Queensland): AICM Press***

*Markets & Margins* is the third volume of *Australian Country Music* from the Australian Institute of Country Music (AICM). Like its two predecessors, *Outback & Urban* and *Roots & Crossovers*, *Markets & Margins* is a collection of papers presented at the annual AICM Conference, Gympie, Queensland as part of the *Toyota National Country Music Muster, 2004*. Focusing on a wide range of topics including the country music industry, its audiences, artists and the genre itself, this series represents the only systematic academic research into Australian country music to date. As a result, the writers are simultaneously engaged in creating, as well as critiquing, this often neglected area of popular music studies and this accounts for an unexpected degree of coherence in each volume despite the necessarily eclectic mix of topics.

In this latest volume, artists Lee Kernaghan, Tex Morton, Troy Cassar-Daley, Felicity Urquhart and Ted Egan are each the subject of a separate chapter. A further two chapters examine hillbilly musical connections in unexpected settings; one by Philip Hayward that examines the phenomenon on Norfolk Island and the other by John Whiteoak that examines the history and adoption of hillbilly styles in urban popular music. Rebecca Coyle's compelling critique of filmic representations of Nashville and the Australian outback in her chapter about the film, *Doing Time for Patsy Cline* completes the collection. The quality of research and writing is high, making it difficult to single out any specific chapter for attention within the word limit of this review so the following general comments are aimed more at providing an overview of this important anthology.

In such a collection there is the potential for fragmentation but the editors have successfully drawn the threads together in the introduction, 'Marketing an Industry at the Margins'. Continuing an apparent convention of naming each volume using semantic pairings of opposite terms, Mark Evans explains that the title *Markets & Margins* "has been chosen with the dual meanings of both words